

The Leopard's Claw



George W. Ellis, Proprietor, R.F.S.

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THE LEOPARD'S CLAW

A thrilling story of love and adventure from a European castle through the West African jungle, disclosing a deep insight into the quality and spiritual influence of African social institutions and conditions, and revealing a profound psychic interpretation of African inner life, all clustered about the mysterious function and significance of the Leopard's Claw,

By

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My fainting soul doth yearn
For thy green hills afar;
So let thy mercy burn—
My greater, guiding star.
Paul Laurence Dunbar.

TO
CLAYENDER SHERMAN ELLIS

A versatile and promising writer of short stories, whose special knowledge of African life and conditions, whose unflinching frankness and fidelity to the cause of presenting the Africans before the world as he really is, and because of whose rare devotion to truth and letters she was a constant source of inspiration and help, this volume is respectfully dedicated.

PUBLISHERS' FOREWORD

We have, as publishers, a sincere pleasure and satisfaction in presenting to the great reading public, this thrilling story of the "Leopard's Claw" by Mr. George W. Ellis. It is a story of true mystery and adventure, in which is interwoven several charming phases of the gentle passion of love set in different parts of the globe, ranging from picturesque by-ways of the English countryside to the wild and lawless interiors of Africa. The descriptions and character-drawing are done by one familiar with not only the places and persons concerned but with human actions and motives and with an eye to the exciting in fiction that betrays one long versed in the art of story-telling. We get in the last chapters a glimpse of the great war just about to spread its heavy pall over the world. All in all it is one of the best narratives on which we have ever placed our imprint and we feel sure the great reading public will heartily and instantly respond to the fascinations of the tale.

THE PUBLISHERS.

New York, April, 1918.

THE LEOPARD'S CLAW

CHAPTER I

DURLEY CASTLE

In the county of Worcestershire, Durley Castle stands upon a high eminence overlooking Fitting Hill, the great industrial center of coal mining, iron and electrical works. Built in the twelfth century, the old feudal castle is surrounded by high walls, containing port holes for guns as in feudal times. The castle and the surrounding works are the property of his Lordship, the Earl of Montroy, one of the wealthiest noblemen of the realm.

In the library of his ancient castle, the Earl sat in a large arm-chair before an open grate fire although it was a bright summer morning. For many years he had suffered with chronic gout. His infirmity, together with the loss of his young wife in early life, had rather increased his choleric and stern disposition. Of middle size in height and a tendency to stoutness, a clean shaven face showing his firm and stubborn lips and chin, his Lordship looked to be about three score and ten.

His two sons, Harold, now the Earl of Montroy, and the Honorable Oliver Montcrief, were trained under his stern discipline.

Lord Montroy, a man of about 35, had made a very satisfactory settlement when he married into a very wealthy but newly made aristocratic family according to the plans of his father. His light mustache covered

the weak lips inherited from his mother, which represented a desire for peace at personal sacrifice rather than cowardice. His admiration and love for his young brother had remained unshaken ever since he assumed an almost parental relationship in Oliver's early childhood.

Possessed of his father's obstinacy, Oliver was continually in friction with the Earl, his father, and Lord Montroy was the irascible peacemaker between the two.

This morning the Earl of Dudley's features expressed impatience as he frequently looked thru the windows out upon the road leading to the castle. Finally, he struck upon the floor with his heavy cane, which leaned against a nearby desk. Peter, his favorite old valet, in uniform, stoop shouldered and about 60 years of age, entered silently and awaited his lordship's pleasure.

"Say to the Honorable Oliver Montcrief that I desire his presence immediately."

"Yes, my lord." After the valet retired, the Earl frowned impatiently while he listened for his son's approach. But Peter returning, said: "My Lord, the Honorable Oliver did not sleep within the castle last evening, and he cannot be found."

Just then an automobile drove up the side driveway. Lord Dudley turned his head and saw, thru the window, a dark complexioned young man, of about five feet seven inches, clean shaven, showing a determined contour about the chin and lips, driving the machine. Five minutes later he entered the room hurriedly, "Good morning, father. I hope that you are not suffering from the gout this morning."

"Sit down," the earl commanded. "I am not suffering very much, thank you. But where were you last evening and this morning?"

"I slept in London last night, father."

"In London? I see that you need to settle down. The castle has been too long without a mistress. When are you going to announce your engagement to Lady CHE?

I want the matter settled very soon," the Earl announced.

Oliver turned in his chair uneasily, then he arose and approached his father appealingly. "Father, that can never be. I am already married to Miss Eva Ennis, the daughter of squire Ennis, of Stanshenge County, Wiltshire. We were married last evening, and I have come to ask your forgiveness and blessing."

Lord Durbly leaped from his seat and shaking his fist, he exclaimed: "Oliver Montcrief, have you really married the daughter of that pauper squire of Stanshenge? You will never have a farthing from me to support that family."

"But father, Eva is from a very aristocratic family, and——"

"Go away and never return to this castle! Oliver! ——"

As he struck the table a violent blow, the goat seized the old Earl. So he dropped into the chair and grabbed his right foot with one hand as he shook his fist at Oliver with the other. Oliver rushed to his rescue, but pushing him away, the Earl pointed his finger and exclaimed: "Oliver Montcrief, you are no longer my son. Go!"

Oliver turned and started away, but turned, as he reached the door, and made a last appeal to his father for forgiveness and his blessing. But the Earl was obdurate and ordered Oliver to begone. So Oliver directed his chaffeur to drive to Montroy castle, in the Scottish moorlands.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG MONTCRIEF SEEKS AID OF BROTHER

Driving through vales and over hills, crossing rivulets and creeks, over well constructed bridges, they crossed Northumberland and reached Montroy castle.

The castle is a conspicuously well built structure of sixteenth century Gothic architecture, towering above the peak of a northern cliff. Viewing it from the main entrance, one sees the portico of huge marble columns of fifteen or sixteen feet high, and twenty by twenty feet square, and the flat roof of which is covered with lead.

The three roofs of the main building, about fifty feet high, are covered with tiles. The whole is surrounded by a semi-circular wall, ten feet high, of brick, which meets a segment of iron rails.

Oliver drove up to the castle as the sun disappeared behind the distant hills. The cool summer breeze wafted the melodiously sweet musical interpretation of "Scots who hae wi' Wallace bled, Scots wha Bruce has often led," rendered by Lord Montroy's Scottish band, picturesquely attired in kilts or plaid petticoats, playing upon the bag-pipes in the grand pavilion on the side lawn.

Upon entering the grounds he found Lord Montroy holding the hand of Georgiana, his five-year-old daughter, as they fed the animals of the menagerie in his Lordship's park. After a warm greeting Lord Montroy detected that Oliver's errand was more than an ordinary visit. He bade Georgiana feed the mongoose as he and the uncle left for the castle. When they were seated in his Lordship's private office, Lord Montroy inquired in his affectionate manner under what new difficulty was Oliver laboring.

"Harold, old boy," Oliver exclaimed, "I am in a bally tight corner this time. Dad has turned me out penniless." He then related the circumstances of his marriage and paternal disavowment, to which Lord Montroy listened sympathetically.

"Where have you left your wife?" Lord Montroy asked, after he had heard the account.

"She is still with her parents, Harold, old chap. Expecting something like this, we precipitated the marriage before consulting you, for which I pray your forgiveness.

"We would like to have enough to go to some other country, say to Alaska, out in the American wilds, or Australia. Eva loves the country and we both have decided to try our fortunes in some foreign land, until father relents. If you can manage to help us get a start, old fellow, we will be very grateful."

Lord Mestroy tried to discourage the idea of leaving England and promised to act as mediator. He also placed his country seat at Rotherborough at Oliver's disposal. Thanking him, Oliver promised to remove his wife to Rotherborough villa, with the understanding that Lord Mestroy would use his influence to obtain a colonial appointment from the British Colonial Office in case the Earl of Durbly refused reconciliation.

Parting from Lord Mestroy in a happier frame of mind, Oliver rode through the evening shadows into the English frontier.

Early the next morning, driving down a long country lane, they approached a large old brick mansion, the right wing of which seemed to be a recent addition, while the ivy vines covering the main structure partly obscured the ravages of time. A gravel walk, the side of which was bordered with beautiful flowered hedges, led to the front entrance of the building.

A slender girl in white, reveling in the glow of health and sunshine, ran down the walk with cheeks which rivaled the nearby primroses. Her heavy waves of dark brown hair, escaping their confinement, blew about her face in curls, causing her conspicuously to display the little gold circle upon her third finger as she tried to brush away the mischievous curls.

Oliver stopped the automobile, leaped out and ran to meet her. Folding her in his arms she inquired about their fate. They remained at the mansion until the late afternoon, when with the last sa reverie over they returned to the automobile and drove away as the twilight enshrouded the surrounding scenery.

After Oliver's departure Lord Montroy entered his wife's boudoir. Lady Montroy, sitting in a graceful pose, upon his entrance looked up from the book which she was reading. A blonde of medium height, she looked to be not over thirty. Her haughty bearing marred the soft lines of a very handsome face, sometimes causing her to appear comical with her rather rotund appearance.

Lord Montroy seated himself in an armchair opposite and related his brother's marriage. "You will do me a great favor, my dear," he ended, "by accompanying me to-morrow and making Eva feel welcome."

"Never," she exclaimed, "I shall not visit the bankrupt squire's daughter. Oliver might have married Lady Cliff, who is related to the duchess of Roxborough and would have acted as sponsor for our Georgiana when she makes her debut."

"My dear, you must remember that Eva Ernie comes from a very old and aristocratic family even if they are poor," Lord Montroy replied, as he left the room.

He ordered his limousine, and directed the chauffeur to drive to Dubley castle. He found the old Earl still obdurate, and after several futile attempts to reopen the subject of his brother's marriage, he retired in a very crestfallen state. Leaving Dubley castle early the next morning, Lord Montroy took the train for London.

CHAPTER III

LORD MONTROY MEETS AN OLD FRIEND

At the St. Pancras station, he hailed a cab and drove down Russell Square, down the Strand, crossed over to the Thames embankment down to Westminster, where he entered the St. Stephen's Club. Seeking one of the deserted writing rooms he sat in a pensive mood, when a short, thick built man, with rounded shoulders and a

brick movement, approached him. Lord Montroy recognized in the tanned features and stubby brownish red hair upon the low forehead, William Servier, an old classmate and close friend.

After a hearty greeting and reminiscences, Mr. Servier described his recent African tour of business inspection and mentioned that his errand in London was to secure a manager for one of his West African branch business houses at Freetown, Sierra Leone.

"What about the climate, William? That part of Africa is called the white man's grave," Lord Montroy remarked.

"The health of Sierra Leone has been very greatly improved since our Colonial Office sent Sir Matthew Nathan as governor. Sir Matthew being a splendid engineer has put it in a state of sanitation that is almost incredible to believe, with a population of over 45,000, 15,000 of which are white, the death rate being perfectly normal when compared with European cities of that size.

"The electric lights and water supply with the European colony make living quite decent and enjoyable for an Englishman," Mr. Servier replied.

"What emoluments are paid your manager," Lord Montroy next inquired.

"This particular vacancy pays £500 (\$5,000), house rent and all perquisites free, with an opportunity to make a commission if the manager is worthy and works the business above a certain paying dividend."

Lord Montroy then related his brother's hasty marriage and desire to go to the colonies or some foreign country. Mr. Servier expressed his great pleasure in offering the berth to the brother of his friend, and urged Lord Montroy to give the matter immediate consideration and to report their decision as early as possible.

Lord Montroy then left the Club and drove out to Rosbury, the country seat. The Rosbury is a large concrete villa of Italian model, situated upon a small knoll.

It is surrounded by terraces and lawns, and orchards and oak trees form a wooded background.

Driving upon the cement driveway on that bright moonlight evening, Lord Montroy saw the couple seated in the floating marquise of the Japanese garden. They were enraptured so in each other that they did not note his approach until he hailed them.

When Oliver looked around and saw his brother at the landing, he quickly reversed the lever which controlled the automatic pulley, and stood holding his arms around Eva's waist as they floated back to their moorings. Oliver presented his blushing bride, who, after kissing her brother-in-law, stood still as Lord Montroy placed her hand in Oliver's and gave them both his blessing.

Lord Montroy expressed a desire to remain in the boat. He expressed his approval of his sister-in-law, sitting opposite, by his almost paternal and devoted glances. The principal subject of his visit became more difficult to mention, for to his mind, the picture of the delicate water-nymph in African surroundings was very unpleasant. Eva finally retired in order to supervise the preparation of tea upon the terrace.

Lord Montroy watched her tripping gracefully through the variegated bordered walks as the moonbeams played upon her tressed curls, and an almost inaudible sigh escaped him as he wondered if it were a premonition of evil in consequence of his tidings.

"Pull up, old man, I know the old pater is badly cut up and you hesitate to tell me," Oliver remarked.

"Yes, that is a part of the unpleasant news, Oliver. Are you really serious about the colonial proposition?"

"Yes, Harold, we have quite made up our minds upon that subject," Oliver replied. Lord Montroy then stated the proposition of Mr. Servier, but tried to dissuade him from accepting. Grasping his brother's hand, Oliver expressed his thanks in his usual impetuous manner.

Eva returned and taking her brother's arm invited them

to tea. Under a spreading hawthorne they sat down in tea served by a Japanese violet. Oliver related their good fortune to Eva as the trio wandered about the garden.

Lord Montroy then offered Eva the permanent use of the Rosbury estate and the perquisites which would bring an income adequate for a modest living. But thanking him, Eva expressed in a very delicate manner her desire to have her husband earn his own income and finally win his father's respect and blessing.

CHAPTER IV

OLIVER AND EVA SAIL FOR WEST AFRICA

A fortnight afterwards, Oliver had made ready for his departure. Lord Montroy accompanied him to Dublin castle in an effort to obtain the paternal blessing. The Earl of Dublin refused to grant an interview and permitted his son to go away without a word.

At Euston station Lord Montroy assisted Eva to enter the first class carriage of the 10 A. M. express for Liverpool and accompanied them to the Elder Dempster steamship *Farguer*.

At the Liverpool docks the party was supplemented by Mr. Servier, who also boarded the West African steamer. As the signal bell rung, Lord Montroy pleaded for the abandonment of the proposed journey. When the liner steamed from the dock, Lord Montroy stood waving as he watched the two figures disappear in the misty fog. An audible sigh escaped him and aroused his companion's attention, who noticed Lord Montroy's pensive mood.

Mr. Servier slapped him upon the back, saying, "Cheer up, Monty. You are not at a funeral. Do not think of Sierra Leone as the African jungle. Why, think of the cable communication and remember that you will always be in touch with Oliver."

Passing down the Mersey Oliver and Eva proceeded along the Channel watching the scenery of the Devonshire and French coasts. Two days afterwards they passed through the Bay of Biscay and only by a change of luck and a capable captain they emerged out of one of the roughest passages the steamer had ever had.

The first stop was at Funchal, Madeira, one of the Portuguese islands off the African coast. A party consisting of Oliver, Eva, and Captain Griffith and a few other passengers, went up by rail to the Catholic establishment on Mount Carmel and lunched. The scenery of the way are multifarious tropical fruits: bananas, plantains, oranges, mangoes, pineapples, star apples, sugar cane, grapes and sweet plums, as well as a rich abundance of variegated flowers of the sweetest fragrance.

They decided to try the thrills of the human locomotive power down the steep incline. Seating themselves in basket sledges, holding a couple of passengers each and drawn by two strong Portuguese coolies, they began their exciting toboggan ride down a snowless landslide. Running pell-mell at breakneck pace, the coolies refused to heed the loud and excited cries of "Stop, mad men! Oh, help!" and numerous other complaints, threats and pleas, but continued as they shouted in reply: "No stop, no stop, unless we get vino bibo."

The party finally acquiesced to their debauching demands, when they immediately halted on the ledge in front of a public house. The publican, who was well up in the graft, immediately appeared with a large tray of sparkling quart bottles of red Madeira and glasses. The coolies did not allow the wine to be served in the customary goblet, but emptied several bottles in the quickest possible moment.

They also had a little grubbing business in view, for Dr. Barnes, one of the passengers, who understood Portuguese, heard the head carrier say to the publican: "These are rich people, you must charge them twice as much for

the wine and split the profit equally with us when we return."

When Senor Publican presented his extortionate bill in accordance with the tip, he was most disagreeably surprised to understand that Dr. Barnes had already cooked his goose when he repeated for his information Senor Coote's tip in El Senor's own tongue. Standing dumb-founded for a moment, he finally recovered himself and sighingly cut down his bill to per cent., as he offered a sort of shame-faced apology.

Once more the party resumed their journey to the wharf at a less perilous pace. Boarding a rowboat they returned to the ship.

Eva stood on the upper deck viewing the picturesque sceneries of the high eminence of the Madeira mountains until the country vanished in the distant horizon. Oliver called Eva's attention to the snow-capped peaks of Tenerife towering in the distance. Looking through the telescope they viewed the fine docks of Las Palmas Island, and the numerous ships and warships in the harbor, as they steamed away in a southeast by east course.

CHAPTER V

ARRIVAL IN WEST AFRICA

On the early morning of the tenth day, standing by her husband's side, Eva leaned over the rails of the upper deck, watching the African landscape, as the steamer neared the jetty of the Sierra Leone port.

Freetown presented a panorama quite similar in building constructions and plans to Dominica of the West Indies. The two British West African barracks for white and colored troops are situated upon two salubrious peaks about two miles apart in the rear of the town.

Eva, who had never visited the tropics, was very much

amused by the sight of the half nude black boys, who swarmed around the steamer in small skiffs and from their little craft dived and scrambled for the silver pieces which the passengers threw to their special favorites.

Mr. Solomon, a representative of the firm, met them upon the deck and introduced himself. They had almost to fight their way to the stairway, through the numerous boat boys who tried to assist in taking the baggage and renting their respective craft to tow the party to the landing. At the wharf Mr. Solomon assisted Eva into the sedan chair borne by four boys with an ornamental and canopy shaped parasol which shaded the sun.

Seating themselves in similar conveyances the two men followed through a curious group of Sierra Leone market men, women and children, changing in color from black to light brown. The loose wrappers, slippers without hose and bright chrome yellow colored handkerchiefs of the women were to Eva as a replica of an exhibition scene at the Crystal Palace.

The black coolies trotted along at a very fast pace and soon turned up Market Street and Regent Road. The party passed numbers of passengers in hammocks and similar conveyances to their own. Imposing stone and brick buildings arose along the principal residential sections. The coolies, trotting a short distance down the Regent Road, halted in front of an iron gateway which opened upon a cement terrace leading to a short stone stairway of a brown stone residence.

The house was of a pattern most unusual for the tropics, an almost square and massive stone structure; plain outside except for the green lattice window shutters and rough stones, it had no pretense at architectural beauty.

Two ill-kept flower gardens bloomed at the front on each side of the cement walk, enclosed in an iron fence.

If the outside were not as picturesque as they might have hoped, they were agreeably surprised upon entering to find themselves ushered into a spacious hall of polished

hardwood floors with a circular stairway, and a wide mahogany balustrade facing the vestibule. On the first floor, the hall extended to the back porch. On one side a long dining room opened to the butler's pantry, leading into the spacious and bright kitchen. On the other side were the drawing room and a library which opened into a side entrance leading to a large flower garden containing palms and other tropical ornamental trees and the travelers' fountain, while a small room in the rear assigned to the maids, overlooked the back yard and an outhouse of brick used as the servant quarters.

Up the stairway Eva discovered her private suite and immediately decided upon the change of her headair.

Oliver and Eva were both delighted over their quarters and would have doubtly appreciated it had they known the cost of cabins and other efforts to persuade the late owner to accept a grant of a lease, when Mr. Servier learned that the brother of his chum would consent to take charge of his interest.

After taking the couple through the house Mr. Solomon summoned the servants and explained that they were Mr. Servier's personal attendants, whom he had desired, if acceptable, to be retained in their old positions.

A medium sized, stout and good-natured young black Ebo girl, dressed in a loose gown, stood before her mistress in a grinning and open admiration.

"Yanga is my name, Mam," she said, in answer to Eva's smiling query.

"Well, Yanga, I think we will get along nicely, so let us begin at once by unpacking," Eva remarked.

Yamee, the Val valet and steward, was the next interesting character. Of about 6 feet, erect and quick carriage, he seemed to have been about 20, and was possessed of straight features and copper brown in color. He wore a clean white gown over a large pair of dark colored bloomers. His ready wit soon won both his master and mistress.

The Accra cook rest caused a roar of laughter when he uttered a name which neither of the prospective employers could pronounce; so they compromised on Tobey and advised him to prove his culinary arts by serving a short order quick lunch to the hungry party.

Tobey wore about 12 yards of cloth draped from the left shoulder, while his left arm and side and lower limbs remained partly nude, showing his stockingsless feet enclosed in slippers. His bony gait did not promise much for a quick dinner when, slowly bending his 6 feet 3 inches he arched away. That appearance often deceives was very soon demonstrated, when Varnoe announced dinner in a surprisingly short time. If Tobey's name and appearance did not appeal to the esthetic and critical faculties of the couple, the dinner certainly must have appealed to their epicurean tastes, if the remnants of the repast expressed their approval.

Mr. Solomon joined in the dinner and afterward invited Oliver to accompany him to the mercantile house. Standing together Mr. Solomon stood the same height as Oliver, and but for a dark mustache and distinctive, racial, long, straight, pointed nose they might have passed as doubles.

They left the house at last, after Oliver had run back several times to say good-bye, about 3 o'clock p. m., and walked to the Kiny Road. Through the narrow streets they picked their way, and jostled with the crowds of market buyers and very insistent peddlers who pulled at their coat sleeves as they offered their wares spread along the road side.

Mr. Solomon pointed out to Oliver a large two-story standing roof and corrugated iron building about fifty by seventy feet with a thirty-foot L attached to the rear. From the direction of their approach it stood at the right side of the street and presented a side view, showing the veranda of the L joining the porch of the rear half of the main building, and the wide front portico upon

which stood quite a number of natives of Sierra Leone as they patronized the upper store.

Around the acre of barren ground was a six-foot wire netting fence, which enclosed, beside the store, several iron warehouses with thick heavy double wooden doors, and iron bars leaning beside the front walls.

In the front yard about thirty square feet on one side was covered with loose piasava, African palm fibre, which two squatting half-bred yard boys lazily turned over to dry in the sun, while two other boys in long shirts bound up into small bundles the little piles which the other first two laid aside, and added them to a large pile that strong men were preparing for shipment. While the front and side yards contained coffee, kernels and loose bags and crated piasava for shipment, the back yard was the scene of great activity, stacked high with cases of dry goods and gin which the store boys were busily stowing into their respective warehouses, under the inspection of two European clerks.

On entering the open gate, Oliver read the two signs in large letters over the upper front door, "P. Z. & Co.'s Store," and the lower, "P. Z. & Co.'s Retail Store." Two long stairways led up to the upper piazza from opposite sides and terminated in a wooden banister rail in juxtaposition.

Mr. Selomon escorted Oliver up one of the stairways, clearing his way through the gaping crowd as they went along. Oliver entered a long store room down the middle aisle of which two rows of counters extended.

Back of the counters were shelves built upon the walls, reaching to the top and packed with merchandise, while the European salesmen and native African store boys moved about attending to the customers.

Mr. Selomon introduced Oliver as he passed along and entered the L. compartment containing storerooms and the office departments. He ushered Oliver into his future apartment of two rooms at the rear. The small recep-

tion room was plainly but tastefully and comfortably furnished and opened into the private office furnished in the usual office style. They both opened into French windows upon the side veranda shaded by green canvas movable shades. Scattered upon the veranda were cosy Madeira and deck chairs, in the midst of which stood several small tables.

Mr. Solomon presented the office force to the future manager, in conjunction with which post he filled, ad interim, with his position of head salesman. They spent half an hour upon the veranda, where they were served whiskey and soda and other drinks by the steward boy, wearing a clean long white shirt. This Oliver noticed that the European merchant traders were not entirely void of luxuries in their African quarters.

After dispatching one of the accountants to obtain a temporary permit for Oliver to drive his machine, Mr. Solomon summoned the office porter. A heavy-set black giant, of about seven feet, whose heavy muscles well might cause the envy of Jack Johnson, answered the call. Acting upon instructions he unbolted and raised a heavy trap door, which no two men of ordinary strength could budge. After securing it against the wall, he stood in readiness for further orders.

Oliver hesitated a little to proceed when he noticed the slender iron hook holding up the door, but Mr. Solomon, assuring him of its firmness, proceeded down the steps.

They entered the retail department from the rear entrance and passed up the ill-smelling and littered aisle. Oliver interrupted the lifting of some of the tobacco boxes from the open drum propped against the rear end of the counter by some small articles who seized the opportunity while the party conversed.

The retail department was under a young Sierra Leonean of about thirty, dressed in stylish European clothes, and with an English college education. Two underclerks

of the same nationality and a native store boy completed the force of this department.

They then proceeded to the front yard when Oliver supervised the uncrating of his automobile, in the presence of a curious crowd of the Market Street Sierra Leoneans. The hook of the auto-horn caused a general panic, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Oliver piloted the machine under the direction of Mr. Solomon down the Klay Road through the ruined market wares and stumbling pedestrians.

CHAPTER VI

OLIVER MEETS GOVERNOR OF SIERRA LEONE

THE next morning at 11 a. m. Oliver drove up to the capital, where he had an appointment to meet the Governor. The large mansion, constructed of stone and brick, was built with two wings in which the legislative bodies assembled.

Situated upon a sloping hill side, it is surrounded by court yards and ornamental trees. Oliver was ushered into the Governor's private office, where Governor Row, a middle-sized man of about thirty-five, light complexion, sandy hair, blue eyes and with a sharp pointed mustache and goatee, sat beside a table. When Oliver was announced Governor Row arose and, holding out his hand to Oliver, exclaimed: "I take great pleasure in welcoming to our colony the son-in-law of my old friend, Squire Irons. I have not had the good fortune to visit Stonehenge since your good wife was quite an infant."

Oliver remained to lunch and left very happy in the anticipation of the surprise and pleasure Eva would express at his tidings.

During the cool of an afternoon Mr. Solomon accompanied the couple on a drive through the town. On pass-

ing the large three-story brick building of the British West African bank, they halted and watched the large crowd of Sierra Leone natives passing up and down the stairway, on to the large Farabay College, the massive historic buildings on the outskirts of the town, then down the country road to Fulla Town, passing tropical fruit trees, fence cottages, log cabins and bamboo huts.

They halted before a small native village and watched the syncopated steps of the half clad young women dancers who whirled and danced to the sounds of the *ton-ton*, ground music, hand-clapping and sweet, melodious but wild minor strains. The excitement of the automobile caused a loud crowd to attempt to race with the iron horse, and to give vent to a boisterous expression of mirth when the motors found themselves quickly out-distanced.

Arriving at Fulla's Town the party halted at a distance and discouragingly walked a few paces where they stood listening to the Fatir and watched the Mohammedan villagers, some clothed in flowing gowns, while others, wearing only waist draperies, bowed silently with the faces toward Mecca amid the Islamic strains of "Bismil Allahi."

A fortnight after they were settled in their colonial home, Eva stood watching Oliver coming home to lunch, as she peeped through the curtains of the drawing room, until he was near the gate, then running through the library entrance to the side garden she stood conspicuously in hiding behind a large cabbage rose bush, as the pink and fragrant petals of a large half open bud brushed against her tress.

Oliver pretended to search for her when finally running suddenly, he smothered her in his arms, crushing the gallant rose bud against her cheek.

"Guess who this letter is from dearie," he said, as he held an envelope behind him. After a childish guessing game and forfeited kisses, Oliver opened an envelope bearing the executive official seal and they both read together

an invitation to the Governor's ball, of which they were to be the guests of honor.

This was to be Eva's first debut into society and for a few minutes an anxious frown flitted across her forehead. "Oh, Oliver, what shall I wear to such a swell affair?" she exclaimed.

"Why," said Oliver, in careless surprise, "you are not allowing a small thing like that to annoy you, darling? You will rival the fairies in anything you wear, so come in and let the ball look after its own affairs, dear."

CHAPTER VII

AFTER EVA'S FIRST BALL

On the evening of the ball Eva certainly fulfilled Oliver's predictions, when in a simple evening gown of white crepe de chine, she stood before the mirror, clasping a pearl necklace around her throat. She wore no other jewels except a large solitary upon her finger. Her simple costume made a perfect setting for her rich cream and pink complexion, and very girlish figure.

In the large reception of the Governor's mansion, Eva made her first debut amid the bejeweled dames of European and Sierra Leone official elite.

One morning Oliver walked to the store during a heavy shower, and upon reaching the yard he saw the piles of planks and loose fibre crated for shipment, standing outside in the rain, while the yard boys sat and reclined under the porch.

Walking quickly up the store steps in a thoughtful mood, he decided to inaugurate his contemplated reforms that same morning. He called up the chief shipping clerk over the office telephone, immediately upon his entry. Mr. Anderson answered the summons. That this was an unusual procedure could be readily seen by his surprised expression as he entered the office.

"Good morning, Mr. Anderson, please be seated," Oliver began, as he pointed to a chair. "I want a little information upon the export commodities under your supervision. Will you please enlighten me as to the best method of preserving the fibres for shipment so as to obtain the highest European market prices?"

"By thoroughly drying the pinnava and grading it before shipment," Mr. Anderson replied.

"I notice that you take the opposite method in this firm. May I inquire if the bales stacked in the yards for shipment were registered as first or second grades?"

"Both," the clerk replied.

"You will kindly oblige me by personally supervising the loading and drying of the same and whatever loss occurs from next week will be borne pro rata in proportion to your salaries."

Oliver spent a very strenuous day, and before closing time, every department showed signs of the new era. He had set the store boys to work under a European clerk, separating the broken grains from the good grains of coffee. He repeated the same with the palm kernels, and then turned his attention to the rubber which lay strewn under the counters, stuck to the floor and full of trash. He then assembled the employees, and told them that beginning Monday the company would only bear the loss of perishable commodities when it was through no fault of the employee, and that he would take stock at the end of the week.

On the next day he visited the cooper shop and watched the colored American youth of about 20 as he dexterously handled the iron gauge while measuring palm oil in the large wooden galleons. Oliver borrowed the gauge and surprised the gauger when he pushed it through the bung of the barrel as if he had gauged oil all his life.

After examining the registered number of gallons recorded upon the iron rod, he compared the same with the numbers recently recorded upon the books. Detecting

a discrepancy, he tested others with the same result, and not until by an accident the red slipped and registered a higher figure, did he solve the puzzle and discover the tricks of the gauges and shipping clerks' neatly planned grabbing schemes.

True to his impetuous and firm disposition Oliver was determined to make a success of his undertaking, and in an incredibly short while he was drawing a commission upon the surplus profits of an increased dividend.

But it was not all business life with Oliver; he spent much time with Eva also, sometimes helping her in the kitchen as she made the butter-scotch and fudge that he said could not be equalled. On these occasions they afforded much amusement for Varree and Yangs—their devoted worshippers—and aroused the anxiety and impatience of Tobee, who sat in the window of the outhouse viewing through the kitchen window, the scene of Eva trying an apron string around Oliver's neck amid kisses, and shrugging his shoulders with an air of disgust he said to a visiting crew, "Dem two English people be too much crazy and all some piccaroons. Lookum at de master, he say he lil helpum Missus cook. Oh, oh! I smell dem candy. Dey go leavum dat pan wid plenty burned candy and me go wash de had mess. White woman be plenty spoiled; he set down house all day, when man bring de money, umph!"

CHAPTER VIII

OLIVER MEETS THE AFRICAN MINER

Thus the time passed for the voluntary exiles very pleasantly. After about eight months of their residence Oliver was out in the plasawa yard inspecting the boys at work one afternoon, when he was approached by a tall, black, native African, wearing a striped native shirt

of coarse cloth and of native manufacture and reaching to his knees. Over this hung down the right side a large leather bag suspended from the left shoulder. His hair was in a checkered pattern of four inch small plaits and separated by cleanly shaven inch wide lines, sometimes varying from square divisions, triangles and circles, just as his tonsorial artist had fancied.

Extracting a red baruchara parcel from his bag he squatted upon the ground in front of Oliver and unloaded the package. "You wanna buye de silver daddies," he added as he held up two bars of platinum of about three or four ounces respectively.

Oliver examined them and said, "This is no silver, where did you get them from?"

"Dat be for silver, true it get some brass dere, but true, true, I tell you, me no put him dere; so me get him from dem mountain."

The poor fellow had been unable to use the hard substance and decided it was amalgamated with brass or copper, therefore he had hesitated to take the metal into the store for fear of being detected.

Oliver paid him £2 (\$2.60), twice as much as he had asked, and thus won the confidence of the man. He told Oliver of the Karree Mountain, or gold mountain, at a short distance in the interior. Oliver made notes and obtained his promise to return shortly with more and to act as a guide.

After supper Oliver sat in his favorite armchair as he watched Eva embroidering the dainty little articles over which she smiled so dreamily. "Eva, here are two pieces of platinum weighing nearly half a pound. I paid £2 for them to a fellow from the interior who asked only one," Oliver remarked as he walked over to Eva's chair and held the bars for her inspection.

"He promised to take me to the mountain where he says gold and other metals are also plentiful."

A cloud passed over Eva's face. "Oh, Oliver," she exclaimed, "you are not going to leave me."

"Silly, what are you talking about?" Oliver replied as he kissed her. "Do you think I would leave my little girl at this time? Not for all the diamonds in Africa. But I refer to some time in the near future, when I shall try prospecting so as to make enough money to take you back home and support you in the manner our social standing demands."

"But we are happy here, and I am satisfied. Why don't you wait until we can save enough from your salary?" Eva replied.

"Because, dear, I never cared for the mercantile life. If you will recall it was prospecting we both decided upon at first. I don't want our child to grow up in Africa, and I could not accept my brother's bounty. He has a daughter of his own and my sister-in-law has never had very much love for me. Let us say that for dress and incidental, the commission will suffice, and I can place \$500 to my credit. How many years it will take to accumulate a sufficient sum to retire and live in England. It will require at least \$1000 per annum to live through, so you see if I can locate the gold mountain I can sell the mine and soon return to our native heath."

"Yes, darling, I understand, especially since you are trying to assist father recover a part of our ruined fortunes. Oh, you naughty boy, you tried to hide it from me. Never mind who told me. I know and must kiss you for it.

"But Oliver," she continued in a more serious tone, "promise me upon your honor that you will never attempt to make the trip without me."

"But that would be impossible, Eva, I could not take you into the interior; the risk would be too great."

Eva smiled but continued to urge her plea very insistently until Oliver made her the promise. Would that some fairy had tipped her to urge the abandonment of his

project, for then their lives might have remained one of unbroken happiness.

The advent of Miss Lucretia Montcrief soon occupied their time, so that the mining proposition was for a time forgotten.

CHAPTER IX

MISS LUCRETIA MONTCRIEF

MISS LUCRETIA'S aristocratic rule and patronizing manner tended to draw the couple closer, rather than the monopoly of Eva's attention; for to the latter's chagrin, Lucretia let it be plainly understood from the first that she preferred the arms of Yanga when she desired repose, and Eva and Oliver only when she cared to satisfy the appetite or to be amused.

Eva had a large-sized photo taken of Lucretia when she reached her first birthday. She wrote upon the same "to Grandpapa, from Lucretia Montcrief, Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa." She mailed this to the Earl of Dudley and repeated this each succeeding year.

If her countenance expressed a little wistful sadness when the home mails failed to bear an acknowledgment of the receipt of the photograph, no one noticed it, and she carried her secret with the hope that some day the Earl would relent.

After a year or two Oliver began the study of mineralogy and thought seriously of the interior trip. That the Earl had not relented caused him a bit of unhappiness as Lucretia grew older.

Thus the Montcriefs lived an uneventful life in their colonial home. One afternoon, as luck would have it, as Oliver was about to leave the front yard of the store, the fancy barbed head fellow of the platinum deal five years before, approached him again. Oliver soon recog-

sized the hair cut and stopped to greet him. "Hello pluta, so you are back at last."

"My name be Fahn, Sar," the evil genius grinningly replied. "Me bringee some fine rock dis time, see you wanna buyee."

Oliver examined the stones which he took from the same bag. He discovered among the white diamonds three rare stones of pink and a dozen or more rubies.

Oliver determined then to make the trip at once. Perhaps had Oliver stopped to figure the length of time Fahn had taken to return, he would not so easily have been deceived and made to believe that he could reach the mines and return in a year's time. But such is fate. He acted in this as in everything, and began the preparations of his interior trip.

When he showed the stone to Eva and told her of his determination, Eva only reminded him of his promise and asked, "Oliver, Lucretia will be five years old next week; won't you write a letter to your father asking his forgiveness with Lucretia's photograph enclosed? I don't think that you should leave for the interior without his blessings." Was that a foreboding which she felt?

"All right, little one, I shall write Dad by the same mail that I write Harold. I am writing Mr. Serrier for a year's leave of absence. I am sure that it will be granted, for I have remained upon the field these five years. Eva, I feel like an exile and had hoped that Harold could have managed Dad; but it seems that I am really disinherited, so that you see, my dear, we will have to make our own fortunes and return to our country very shortly."

Had Oliver followed Eva's wishes and written the letter to the Earl immediately, all might have ended well; but he allowed the rush of the preparations to crowd the letter to the last moment.

CHAPTER X

DEATH OF THE EARL OF DUSLEY

LORD DUSLEY sat before the fire in his library when old Peter, his valet and faithful servant handed him the first photograph of Lucretia in the morning's mail.

The Earl looked earnestly at it, but when he realized that the handwriting was not that of Oliver, his features contracted and, opening a drawer to his desk, he slipped it gently within and locked it.

Many times when he was alone the little face of Lucretia kept him company and several times when Lord Montroy called he hardly had time to conceal his secret.

If Oliver had been less like his father and had taken the original of the photographs to Worcestershire to plead his forgiveness, or even had written himself along with the photograph which Eva so faithfully sent, the Earl would have relented and urged their return; for he felt the loneliness very keenly, especially when he thought of the beautiful grand-daughter so far away in Africa, who would bring sunshine into his castle.

When Oliver's letter accompanying the photograph arrived, it was with shaking hands and dazzling eyes that the old Earl first opened them.

Fortunate for him he did not understand Oliver's tidings about prospecting for minerals, but the world had changed for Lord Dusley, and now his face was all sunshine and, summoning his valet, he bade him call in his lawyer.

When old David Payton, the old family lawyer and friend arrived, he found the Earl still smiling and looking upon the row of photographs.

Lord Dusley made his will, bestowing upon Oliver the greater part of his private fortune, and completely restored him to his original good standing, forgetting neither Eva nor Lucretia.

After Mr. Puyton retired, the Earl read Oliver's letter and began an immediate reply.

In the meantime Lord Montroy had met Mr. Servier in London and had learned of the preparation Oliver was making for the interior trip, which Mr. Servier disapproved, but had been unable to prevent. Hurrying to his club where his mail was sent, he found the letter from Oliver informing him of his early departure in January, during the dry season in Africa.

Lord Montroy took the noon train for Worcestershire and rushed to make a last plea with the Earl, his father, to prevent the mad attempt of Oliver.

Arriving at Dudley castle just at dusk, Lord Montroy hastened to his father's library. Walking in unannounced he saw the old Earl sitting in his chair, with the row of photographs propped before him, while in his left hand he held Oliver's open letter, and in the right the pen with which he had just signed his name to the following letter:

Dudley Castle,
Worcestershire.

My dear Oliver:

Your long expected letter has just reached me. We both have been too stubborn in our dispositions; but your dear wife has brought sunshine into my life for the last five years. Bring Eva and Lucretia at once to your dear old dad. I need little Lucretia's sweet face to cheer me.

Come at once to dad. All is forgiven.

Your father,

The Earl of Dudley.

And upon the Earl's face the smile remained after the spirit had taken its flight. So he was spared the tortures of the suspense and grief, soon to follow.

Lord Montroy hurriedly dispatched a cable to his brother:

Oliver Montcrief, Freetown, Sierra Leone,
C/o P. Z. & Co.,

Come at once. The Earl of Dabley died just after
forgiving. Come by first steamer.

Harold.

Oliver and his party had left Freetown before the telegram arrived. Mr. Solomon dispatched Kiaka, a native messenger, to intercept Oliver enroute. Kiaka arrived at Penderba, the first native town of consequence, two days after Oliver had left the town. The villagers were making merry over the birth of a young prince. Kiaka happened not to have been a Mohammedan, so he drank freely of the palm-wine and liquors, which were an important part of the celebration. The festivities lasted two weeks, after which time Kiaka recalled his mission, but decided that the hospitable town was preferable to the woods and so extended his visit two weeks longer.

When Kiaka finally decided to return to Freetown, he slipped into Mr. Solomon's presence, a pitiable object in rags, with a harrowing tale of his bare escape in the jungles and the important report that Oliver had advanced far into the interior.

Mr. Solomon reported the circumstances to Lord Montroy, who anxiously awaited further tidings of Oliver.

CHAPTER XI

OLIVER'S INTERIOR TRIP

AFTER mailing the letters to England, Oliver prepared to start upon his interior trip. Arriving at the Government railway station, he saw to the shipping of his large amount of supplies, and took the train with Eva, Lucretia and Yanga in the first class carriage; and Varnoe, Tobey and Fahn rode in the second class compartment.

Through woodland scenery and native villages, they rode for 200 miles until they reached the terminus at Penderaba.

Penderaba is a large African town of mud huts, many of which are plastered with kaolin clay and polished to a smooth and glistening surface.

The houses are arranged almost in circular rows, the center of which is the court, or open "kitchen," where the king holds audiences. Numerous palm trees surround the town and are enclosed by a heavily bordered forest.

King Kymdornah was also the caliph of the Mohammedan faith in that section. He was a tall, imposing, black man; clean faced and dressed in a long striped outer robe of native manufacture under which was a white robe. Around his neck hung beads, several rows of leopard teeth and claws, and upon his feet were sandals. By his side lay an elephant tusk, while behind him two boys in white robes fanned away the troublesome flies with palm leaf fans.

Seated upon a stool in his kitchen court sat the King with others as he received.

He received Oliver's party kindly after the exchange of gifts in the court and offered the hospitality of the village, as he made efforts to secure carriers and interpreters according to the Governor's previous instructions.

After two days the party began their journey; Eva was carried in a hammock by four men; Yanga with Lucretia in another, Oliver with a long staff with a sharp pointed iron on the bottom, walked between either at the side or behind, as the road permitted. He carried his coat across his arm, while a rifle was strapped to his shoulders and two revolvers and cartridges belted around his waist. He as well as Eva wore a helmet, while Lucretia wore a bonnet.

Yarnes, Tobey and Fahn carried light articles for immediate use and a gun strapped upon their shoulders, while a caravan of 40 men carried the camp and mining

supplies strapped to their backs in kingjars, palm leaf constructed articles for bearing heavy loads upon the back, and large packages upon their heads.

The party began their journey at 7 o'clock as the sun began to shed its beams across the high mountain peak towering in the distance.

Passing through the palm grove they penetrated the thick forest and disturbed the morning solitude of the birds and monkeys, which began loud chirping and chattering as they proceeded.

Traveling through the forest with no adventure other than the shooting of a few wild pigeons, wood chuck, some game and an antelope, which they ate in the afternoon in a temporary camp. Oliver had a little shock and was very much provoked when he saw Fahn about to kill a monkey, which held a baby monkey in her arms in an attitude of supplication before her, and in spite of which and Oliver's warning, Fahn killed both monkeys and proceeded calmly in the midst of Oliver's imprecation to prepare them for a meal.

That was Oliver's first experience of the other side of African life.

Emerging from the forest about 5 o'clock, they heard the echo of the *ton-ton* o'er the distant hill, sounding faintly and then louder as they approached the hillside.

Upon the summit, they entered a dark forest, when the weird music burst forth in confusing and loud minor strains.

CHAPTER XII

WEST AFRICAN FUNERAL RITE

As they approached the middle they found a space cleared of trees and vegetation, in the center of which was a tall black man, wearing a long white robe, over which were hung numerous charms and jujus. He wore his

hair in numerous small plaits of about 6 inches long, to the end of each was attached a small horn, leopard claw, leopard tooth and other charms and fetiches. His face was covered with a long beard which terminated in a plait and a small leopard tooth.

In his hand he held a long torch, which he flourished as he danced and performed other mystic rites. Around him, in the twilight, were about a score of young maidens wearing only white waist draperies as they whirled in a most phantasmic dance, clapping their hands and singing in loud but plaintive soprano voices.

The musicians kept step also as they shook the tassels (guards with beads on them) and beat the drums.

They were paying their respects to their dead chief so as to start him upon the road to the mysterious regions, with a lighted taper and the sound of music.

Passing on, a town was sighted down on the plains. Kahn re la Han is a large and prosperous town of the Mandi country and is composed of pagan and Mohammedan natives.

The mud huts are circular, clean and cozy. Numerous lilies abound back of the huts in the rear of the village. The chief assigned quarters for the party and informed Oliver of the death of the chief.

"Oh, Miss Eva," Yangs said, "tell de master to turn back; dis will bring bad luck to us all."

"What are you talking about, Yangs?" said Eva, who was also in a very uncomfortable mood.

"Come to new town meet dead man be no good, I tell you."

"Come now, Yangs, don't be silly. Lucretia will hear you soon and there will be trouble sure enough."

Oliver, who had been seeing to the quartering of his carriers and the stowing away of supplies, returned, and they soon were lost in a well earned sleep upon the bamboo cots within the huts.

The next morning the new chief, a young man of Mo-

harmedan faith, clothed in white robe and dross, sat in the open kitchen and received his guests.

Oliver presented him with the usual piece of white cloth, handkerchief cloth, rum and tobacco.

He in turn presented a goat, piece of ivory and beads, but his countenance did not express the goodwill that the king of Penderken had shown.

"Me wan some powder and gun all same one you got," this chief Quirebah made known to Oliver the dash was insufficient.

"Well, you will have to send to Europe and order the gun if you desire a duplicate of this, and my powder is not for dashes but for work I am going to do in the country. Sorry I cannot oblige you, chief," Oliver replied, as he started to unshoon his carriers.

Chief Quirebah's eyes flashed. "I must hab gun powder for shoot gun to bury de Chief," he called out to Oliver.

Turning back Oliver approached him and said, "What would you have done for salutes if I had not arrived? Don't try any of your tricks with me. Governor Row will see that you pay for any annoyance you may cause my party."

"Governor Row, loh, loh! (pshaw) dis country no belong to English, I be chief here, me be free people, no fear Governor."

Oliver soon realized the truth of this taunting boast when he left the audience court. His carriers crowded around him clamoring for their pay and refused to proceed. It seems as if they had been informed that war was on the pathway they had planned to traverse.

Oliver found himself helplessly tricked by Quirebah and decided to offer a compromise of gun powder so as to leave the unhappy town.

This restored order, the chief dashed Lucretia a casine rap and the carriers resumed the burdens. The caravan started interisland about 2 p.m.

Passing through a dense bush of wild coffee, ferns, etc., they entered a marshy forest. Oliver was taken upon the shoulders of one of the carriers and they waded the small ponds; sometimes the carriers' feet sank so deeply in the mud that they had to be relieved of some of their heavy burdens in order to be extricated. They made very slow progress and the night shadows approached just as they landed upon the dry ground, amid the dense forest.

CHAPTER XIII

JUNGLE TERRORS

With a pocket electric light Oliver assisted with the clearing of space and the putting up of a temporary tent.

Lucretia began to cry when the night shadows began to enshroud the forest and the cries of the owls and other night visitors protested at what they considered intruders.

The little dog curled up at Eva's feet, when without a sound, a leopard with a quick bound seized the little animal before anyone was aware of its approach. The yelp of the dog caused Eva and Yanga to look up to see the little creature disappearing in the dark jungles.

The whole camp became alarmed and Oliver was so nervous over the narrow escape that he would not leave their side and ordered fire to be made around the camp after staving his loved ones safety in the tent. He then divided the carriers into watches and stood guard nearly the whole night, only snatching a few moments of sleep when Varner and Tobey assisted and watched in his stead.

Lucretia rested well except for the mosquitoes, and Eva's and Yanga's faces showed the anxious vigil they had kept within the tent.

Continuing their journey through the forest, they an-

dived at a deep and swift-flowing creek. The carriers were obliged to cut trees which, acting as a bridge, enabled the party to cross them only with great difficulty.

At a short distance further they reached another creek with no suitable trees near for logs. Oliver started up the bank a little ways to search for means of fording, when Varcoe, who followed, cried, "Jump back, master."

On looking as he jumped Oliver saw a monstrous crocodile pursuing. They both began running, but remembering the wife and child, Oliver turned into the woods and thus lost sight of his pursuer.

When he returned he found Eva hysterical and Lucretia crying but trying to comfort her mamma.

The carriers in the meantime had discovered submerged logs waist deep under water, so they crossed on this slippery and uncertain footing upon the shoulders of the men, when one of them slipped and plunged in with Eva. The crocodile, which shortly before had been filled of its prey, leaped into the water and swam toward Eva.

Oliver jumped into the creek as soon as Eva fell and holding her in his arms, dived just as the crocodile was within three feet of Eva. As soon as their heads appeared above the surface they were assisted by Tobey and Felix, while Varcoe and some of the carriers beat away the crocodile and prodded it with Oliver's long sharp pointed traveler's staff.

They emerged from the forest at 4 p.m. and the bright sun upon the wide sandy plains dazzled their eyes. Their feet sank into the deep sand as they passed through fields of waving guinea grass, reaching to the waist.

For miles and miles they could see only a broad expanse of waving grass, dotted here and there with palms. They camped near a small wooded grove. Early the next morning, while they were busy in the camp, Lucretia became attracted by a beautiful butterfly, which she endeavored to catch. In this way she wandered far from the camp.

Suddenly she came upon a large elephant which was having its morning meal of rotten bark. The elephant picked up the child and placed it upon its back.

When Lucretia's disappearance was discovered the parents made a search and arrived just in time to behold the spectacle of Lucretia sitting upon the elephant's back and being chased by other elephants.

For a moment the situation was a tense one, as they did not know that this elephant at one time was a pet and a present of a native Indian prince to an African chief. Eva and Oliver climbed a tree, as luck would have it, and just as the elephant passed under them, Oliver reached from a limb and seized Lucretia from its back before the other elephants arrived.

The caravan resumed its journey and arrived at a town called Furca about 1 p.m. It was a gala day for them. Three Fembas or native devils, attired in grass robes and wearing wooden masks upon their heads, made the time merry for the numerous spectators enjoying the entertainment. They were celebrating the commencement of the gee-gee bush girls, who were just completing their work from a secret native school.

After the Famba whirled and danced the place was cleared for the snake charmers, who swayed and whirled as the serpents kept time with their heads. At one part of the dance the charmers kicked their feet into the air and the snakes leaped over them. This program frightened the party of Oliver, so that they decided to leave the village immediately.

CHAPTER XIV

DESERTION BY CARRIERS

PASSING along the main road they found a place to camp. During the night the carriers stole most of the

provisions from the camp, while Oliver was asleep, and ran away.

The next morning Oliver found, besides the three boys brought from Sierra Leone, only five carriers. While Oliver was puzzled over his dilemma, Varnes held counsel with the remaining carriers and approached Oliver and said, "If the antelope escapes the leopard, the leopard goes after other meat."

Before Oliver could understand what he meant they began gathering up ropes and dividing themselves up into couples, hid along the road behind clumps of bushes, awaiting the appearance of single pedestrians, upon whom they pounced unawares. Having bound their victims, using the slave system strategy, they returned to the camp.

Continuing this method for several days, they had secured twenty carriers to replace those who had run away. They abandoned some of their luggage and resumed their journey.

Traveling in the direction E.N.E., they crossed the Vakhah hills and came to Raffalatak at noon. They were halted before the gates of the barricaded town and waited until they were inspected by the town people outside.

The people wore many pieces of gold jewelry and offered to barter nuggets and rings for trade goods.

Oliver then became encouraged and questioned as to where the mineral was found. He was told of a river called the Maaqaa where gold abounds.

Taking a N.N.E. direction as instructed, they passed through long grass and cane breaks, until they reached a large plain dotted with hillocks and covered with grazing cattle.

They entered Muscha, a barricaded town of Western Soudan, containing a large market of earthen pots, soap, tobacco, corn, iron, kula, etc.

Oliver was very much surprised to see the progress of this Mandingo town. The town contained a number

of soldiers on horse back. They were preparing for a Mohammedan service.

The King in a long gaudy shirt of fine native manufacture, rode on horseback, holding an elephant tail in his hand.

The service was held outside of a cone shaped and polished mud mosque on the eastern side. The Imam, dressed in a scarlet cloak, carried a stool covered with a white cloth, while six attendants held a large white covering over his head, during the time he was reading the service, after which he blessed the head warriors and soldiers.

The congregation knelt in rows upon their knees. After the religious ceremony they brought out the most fiery and vicious horses, having a knack of kicking and biting, and offered prizes for the successful mounts. Oliver watched the tricks and finally volunteered to try. After a few attempts he successfully mounts, to the admiration of the villagers.

He, Eva and Lucretia were presented suitable mounts by the king.

Mulley, an old priest, wearing a white gown and squatting upon a mat in the court, sent for the party.

He offered to read their fate for them, and after reading from the sand spread out before them, he seized Oliver's hands and said: "Go back to the gold across the big waters which awaits you. Leave Africa's wealth and secret undisturbed. The price you will pay is too great. Take heed and return whence you came."

Eva became nervous and would not have him read for her, but for Lucretia he said as he shook his head and sighed: "It is your fate, oh, little one, whom the elephant would not harm, to finally bring happiness to this poor family, through the leopard's claw, in the Valley of Allah."

The party remained quite a while in Musudu when

they supplemented the carriers and started with fresh guides for the Maqua River.

"We are near the end of our journey, dear," Oliver said as he assisted Eva in the saddle upon her horse.

He did not allow the gloomy forebodings of Mulley to influence his feelings, for with the gold nuggets, rings and guides he felt sure that they would soon reach the Maqua River, if not the mountain they first started out to find.

Passing through a dark forest Fahn called out to Oliver; "Lookes, Master, dem biges flaya" (flying serpent), as he pushed the party back. Oliver saw the red eyes of a large green snake upon a tree just about to spring.

Startling very quickly, he saw the snake leap far into the air, twisting its tail as it flew away. The natives called it the flying snake and say that they are very poisonous.

Wandering through the forest, they sighted the wild serual, the hartse beasts and numerous other scampering jungle inhabitants. Finally, the rainy season set in and Oliver had not succeeded in locating either the mountain or river of his quest. So he decided to build a permanent camp and prepare for the heavy rains.

Oliver selected a high hill near a river. The site was very picturesque as well as strategic, in the event of an attack from either man or beast. It was then that both Oliver and Eva showed a surprising adaptability to circumstances.

Oliver donned his overalls and tackled the saw and axe with the native laborers, and in a short space of time he moved his family into a comfortable log cabin. Several bamboo huts were also erected for the accommodation of the servants and the carriers, while the largest of the tents was stationed in the rear of the cabin and served as the storehouse. The camp was enclosed with a double barricade of stout poles.

Oliver discovered a large tree which had been previously

out and left to season by the natives. He immediately set to work upon it and in a little while, they had burned and modeled it into a very serviceable canoe.

Yarnes and Tobey discovered a deserted farm nearby. Eva learned the first lessons in the West African culinary art. She assisted Tobey in peeling the sweet cassava (*manihot palmato*), in the preparation of the fufu and dumb-boy. The fufu was soon an indispensable dish upon the menu. So Eva learned to soak the peeled cassava until they fermented, and took advantage of physical culture training at the same time, while she pounded the soft cassavas in a large wooden mortar before straining and cooking them into the famous fufu. But the sauce! Oliver said it was "delicious!"

But cooking was not the only accomplishment that Eva acquired; while Oliver was supplying the table with venison, wild and river pork, fish and other game, Eva was learning to make soft and beautiful mats from the heart of the bamboo, which she dyed in lovely colors from the vegetable dyes, she made under Yanga's instruction.

Lucretia, in the meanwhile, took advantage of the fresh air and hardy country life to blossom into a beautiful young tom-boy, who looked to be at least ten years old.

CHAPTER XV

OLIVER LEAVES ON PROSPECTING TOUR

SOON after the heavy rains were over, Oliver said to Eva: "Eva, my dear, I found some iron pyrites while hunting, and I am sure that we are near the gold regions. I shall take Fahn and a few of the carriers and go a little distance, prospecting. You are safe and comfortable in the camp and I feel that you should remain here with Lucretia, because we have had too many adventures already to take further risks."

"But, Oliver—you promised never to leave me behind. I don't see how I can let you go, even for a short distance. When you are away hunting, I think of the flying snake, the crocodiles and the numerous other things in these jungles that might harm you. Oh, Oliver! we had better listen to old Mulley and go back home," Eva replied sabbingly.

Oliver managed to soothe her and assured her that he would not go more than a day's journey and would return in less than a week.

The next morning Oliver kissed Eva and Lucretia goodbye after committing them to Varnas, Tobey and the five original carriers for protection. He mounted his horse and started away with Fahn and five carriers, when he rode back and kissed Eva and Lucretia again.

"Oh, Mister Oliver," Yanga cried, "it is bad luck to turn back. Don't let him go away, Miss Eva."

"Do not start any of that stuff, Yanga. Eva is already upset and must not be bothered with absurd superstitions," Oliver commanded as he kissed Eva and Lucretia again.

Proceeding on his way once more, he waved as long as he was visible.

They took the river trail and surprised a large hippopotamus grazing in some wild cane beside the river bank. Oliver was close upon it before he was aware of its presence, when it plunged into the river just as he fired.

After missing such a prize, they watched along the way and killed a large red river hog (*potamochoerus porcus*), and halted and camped. After a feast of wild pork and the long day's journey, they soon fell into a sound sleep.

A war party was scouting along this route and came upon the camp at midnight. They were of a tribe never before met by Oliver. Dressed in grass petticoats and leathers, with heavy iron anklets and carrying long spears and bows and arrows, they made a frightful appearance. Creeping around the tent they sought one of the guards

while five rushed in and seized Oliver before he was able to pull out his .44 Colt revolver. They tied him as the others pillaged and destroyed the camp supplies. Fahn and another of the boys made their escape.

They bound Oliver hand and foot and strapped him to his horse's back, which they led as they continued the river trail. The next morning the party separated, one division continued the river trail while Oliver was sent in care of five into the open prairie upon the forest trail.

When the sun was at its zenith Oliver was nearly dead with thirst, fatigue and the heat which beat down upon his upturned face.

They suddenly came upon a wild buffalo which immediately charged upon the party. The horse, taking fright, galloped toward the river and arrived at the bank just as the other division was about to embark in canoes.

They unbound Oliver, who was unconscious, gave him water and bathed his head until he recovered. Then binding his hands and feet again, they placed him in a canoe and paddled down the stream.

They arrived at a large town of bamboo huts, not as clean and well made as the towns formerly visited.

The warriors took Oliver and the three other prisoners before the king, who sat in his grass, feathered and beaded dress in an open kitchen in the center of the town.

By his side stood two rival priests, one Alpha, an Arabian of light complexion and white gown and sandals feet. He was of a light figure, medium height and wore a gaiter. He possessed a very crafty appearance.

The other, Zedoyanga, was a tall, black African with a plaited beard and clean shaven head, with a grey band around. He wore only a grass petticoat, charms and fetich over his bearded body. His frowning countenance betrayed his open antagonism to the Arabic priest.

As soon as Alpha saw Oliver he thought of the gun which he naturally supposed Oliver would have had, so while the party approached the King, he left and walked

down toward the cañon. He met one of the warriors bearing the spoils and looking hastily over them he selected the .44 revolver, which contained only four cartridges and was the only piece of ammunition saved. Alpha secured the same and returned to witness the reception awarded Oliver.

King Wango nor any of his people had ever before seen a white man nor had they heard of firearms.

When Oliver was brought before him he was very much surprised at his color. But Zedopanga, who had disapproved of the war, stepped forth and, speaking in the African tongue, said: "Oh King and fellowmen, when the war party set out upon the path, I told it would be of no use and we would only lose our men. But you people listened to Alpha, who said there would be many slaves to take word to the other world for us and we would find plenty of rich spoils; but what has the party brought back? Only three slaves and one white man, who must be a moon man and not much good.

"I pray you hasten to send the white man on to old Chief Popova and have him beg Popova to lead us in our next battle."

Alpha stood forth and said: "Oh great and wise King Wango, the war has brought to you the greatest capture you have ever had. To you the god of lightning has sent his son to save you from your great enemy, the leopard, which destroys your people and keeps you from having.

"His father the lightning has given him a piece of iron that can kill the leopard and the elephant. Give to me the white man and I shall keep him until he destroys your enemies."

The king listened in doubtful amazement, while Zedopanga pressed his suit and argued that if the prisoner was really the son of the lightning, the God would send a bolt and secure him from the Bahrah (or Souferah) priests.

They placed Oliver's right leg in stocks and carried

him into a dark circular hut. He was glad for a place to rest and soon fell into slumber. When he awoke his eyes could not distinguish in the darkness; so that as he looked around he was surprised when he was addressed in English: "Dadde." A young brown-skin fellow about 20 years, very thin from fasting, crawled near Oliver and continued: "I am Tve, a mission boy, who was caught by a war party. I have been starving so as to try and slip through the ropes when they tie me for the Borfimah Society. I am so thin they say I cannot walk fast enough to go as messenger."

"Messenger to whom?" Oliver asked.

"They tie the prisoners and leave them near the river bank for the crocodile man to come and kill. The crocodile man are the Borfimah priests who meet in the woods near the river and hold their meetings where they take the prisoner's heart and make medicine, which they say sends the spirit of the dead body on to the other world to take messages, wait upon some king, or keep the company of some big person who has just died.

"The crocodile men come under the bottom of a canoe. They have a small canoe turned upside down under the large one (a kind of diving bell), so that the priest remains under the water and is not seen by any one passing."

Oliver unconsciously felt for his revolver as Tve told of the Borfimah Society, but he discovered that he was not left with even a pocket knife.

"I suppose they will dispatch me soon," Oliver remarked.

"I don't know. I heard the people talking about you outside and they said that Zopodanga wants to give you to the Borfimah, but Alpha is trying to save you. They never agree and they will do all in their power to have their way. If Alpha is in favor with the King he will save you," Tve replied.

Oliver remained in prison tortured with suspense for

three months, during which time Tve became very much attached to him.

One day the news came that the King's head warrior, Krynesch, had died on the battle field. The town was very much aroused as to who would bear Krynesch company upon his long journey into the unknown world.

Zododanga soon relieved the situation when, standing before the King, he said: "Oh King and people, we need a fast messenger to overtake Krynesch. We have in prison the son of the lightning god, so says Alpha; he must be very fleet-footed to keep up with his father, so we must give him to the Borfirah this afternoon, so that to-night he will be sent to join our beloved warrior. He should overtake Krynesch at the foot of the first mountain and bear him company through the dark forest."

This was readily accepted, since it saved the voluntary offering of the town people for the sacrifice.

Two stalwart warriors went into the hut of Oliver's confinement; lifting both him and the log, they started out when Tve leaped toward them. One of the men turned with a grin and gave him a light back-handed strike, when he fell upon the floor.

Oliver's hands were bound and his other foot tied to the log which held the right foot.

He was then taken through a bit of woods and laid face upwards upon a steep bank overlooking the river. Zododanga took a piece of brown chalk and marked a heart which he enclosed in a circle, upon Oliver's forehead, and the whole party returned, leaving Oliver to meet his fate alone.

Alpha realized that it was useless to oppose the sacrifice and would only cause the triumph of his rival over him, so he decided to use the occasion to show that he had championed the son of the lightning and thus humble his rival.

He had witnessed the loyalty of Tve and as soon as

the crowd gathered around Oliver, he slipped by the prison, opened the door and beckoned to Tve.

"Go to my house," he fairly hissed as he stroled back to the path. When they left for the bank with Oliver he went into his house, pushed something into Tve's hands and whispered instructions, and on leaving imitated an owl, shook his finger and went to the King's court.

Oliver opened his eyes and looked down the stream where he saw that silent messenger of death, the empty canoe, slowly drifting toward him.

His first thought was a fight for freedom, but twisting or turning could not free his hand, and even if the hands were freed, how would it be possible to remove the iron band which bound his leg to the log.

He finally saw the hopelessness of his position, and lay thinking of his Eva and Lucretia, of the old Earl of Dubbery, as he watched the silent messenger coming still nearer every minute.

"What a wretched death, thought out by fiends alone!" he exclaimed aloud.

"Mr. Oliver, thank God I am here before the crocodile man." Oliver turned his head and saw Tve's half nude body crawling upon his stomach.

Tve pulled a knife out and cut loose the rope on Oliver's hand, and then handed him the revolver which had been looted from Oliver, as he whispered: "There is only one cartridge, you must wait and be still until he comes near."

"But where are the other cartridges?" Oliver asked, before he had finished. Tve then slipped the knife into his hand and disappeared.

Oliver looked into the river when he saw the canoe nearing the landing. He gripped his revolver tightly and lay very quietly as a large black man, clean shaven and wearing only a loin cloth, emerged from the canoe, holding a long bowie knife in his right hand.

He leaped upon the landing, took several deep breaths, then danced a weird snake walk.

He then proceeded toward his victim. Just as he is about to spring upon him, holding the knife to plunge it into his victim's breast, Oliver pulled the trigger and the crocodile man threw up his hands and fell backwards near the edge of the embankment.

Two sprang toward Oliver and grasping his hand for a second, said:

"Mr. Oliver, give me the knife and gun and let me tie you quickly before the people come."

"But I must try and escape, Two. You may take the gun since it contains no more cartridges, but from the knife I shall never part," Oliver stubbornly repeated.

Two managed to persuade him to allow himself to be retied.

Slipping away with the gun Two hid behind some banana trees near the King's kitchen and hooted three times like an owl, according to the signal agreed upon.

As soon as the report of the revolver had sounded, the king and townspeople were all frightened. Zedopanda volunteered to go and find the cause when Alpha stepped forward and said: "Oh mighty king, to-day the great lightning god is defroding his son, let no one interfere, or venture near until his anger has calmed, for which I will offer prayer before you."

Turning around and swaying himself, Alpha performed mystic pantomime rites until he heard the signal hoots.

Howling before the king, he invited them all to follow him. When they reached the spot they were amazed at the sight of Oliver remaining still tied and unharmed, while the "crocodile" priest, for the first time visible to the layman, lay dead upon his back.

All might have gone well if Oliver had given up the knife.

After the shock was over, even Zedopanda was inclined to believe that it was a miracle, but when the king ce-

dered Oliver to be unbound and carried to town in triumph, Zedopanda stood watching the carrying out of the orders, when he noticed the knife which Oliver still clasped in his hand.

He at once denounced the whole as a scheme of Alpha's and claimed that Oliver had had assistance and had killed the priest with a knife.

This caused a great commotion and divided the townspeople. Oliver was again returned to prison.

Alpha was very angry at Oliver and Twe's blunder, but was obliged to stand by them in order to protect himself.

On the next day the king heard both sides of the argument and ended the matter by saying: "Oh Alpha! Oh Zedopanda! hear me, I pray. This matter is easily settled. If the lightning god defends his son, we will see if he can defend him from the wild bull, as we all look on. Now make ready for the test."

Oliver was more amenable to suggestions, since he discovered his blunder, so when Twe returned him his revolver and three cartridges, he listened attentively when he was told to be as calm as possible, and try to kill the wild bull which he was to face with one cartridge, so as to save the other two for some future use.

He realized that to attempt to escape would only mean to kill three men and eventually to be recaptured. He decided, therefore, to be guided by Twe's and Alpha's advice.

In the meantime, Zedopanda was busily overseeing the digging out of a pit arena. After a space of about 20 ft. diameter was leveled, they built a stout fence around the edge of the same, leaving an opening with a gate, as a slanting means of descent into the pit.

After this was completed, a number of stout warriors entered a small enclosure and drove a large, long horned wild steer, which they goaded with the ends of their spears until it entered the pit. They beat drums and threw missiles at the beast until it was mad and furious.

Oliver was then brought forth and taken out of the stock. He could hardly use his limbs at first, but soon overcame the stiffness as he walked.

He was led to the gate of the pit and hidden to descend. Some of the men threw a cloth over the bull's head just as Oliver began the descent.

The mad bull, succeeded in extricating himself, rushed at Oliver, who dodged his attack. This tactic continued until Oliver got a good aim at the back of his ear, when he fired and sent the ball straight to the brain.

The spectators were so frightened at the report, that they held their hands to their ears and ran in every direction, so that when Alpha called the king to witness the end of the bull, Wargi and Zedopanda returned to see the bull stretched upon the ground and Oliver standing with one foot upon it.

The warriors descended into the pit and bore Oliver upon their shoulders. He was finally seated in the audience court and asked to show the iron which could carry thunder and lightning, but taking a cue from Alpha, who had warned him against the same, he told them that it was within the steer's brain, and that his father gave him only one at a time because of its danger. To this they listened conclusively and held him in awe. But Zedopanda, seeing the advantage Alpha was gaining, stepped forth and asked how it was possible for Oliver to have been captured and held in captivity with such power at his command.

Alpha explained by saying that the gods had sent Oliver to defend his people from the great leopard and that he should not be harmed but carefully guarded and that he should be fed and housed and made his assistant.

Oliver was given a hut for his own use and offered a slave when he begged to be given Two. He was virtually Alpha's prisoner, and his hut was continually guarded. While Alpha jealously kept away all visitors, he was per-

mitted to walk around the town at certain hours under an escort of five.

At these times he usually pointed out to Twe such things as tobacco leaves, the small stems of wild cane and corn cob.

When he returned and prepared himself for the luxury of a smoke, he would in this way improve his condition as he continually planned his escape.

One day Twe handed him a large pearl, saying: "Master, this is what Alpha is doing in this town, buying pearls with beads from these silly people."

"Where did you get this?" Oliver asked.

"One of the men gave it to me for a small piece of your tobacco. I followed them and saw Alpha let them into his house, and when they came out they were laughing over some beads."

Oliver lighted his corncob and stretched out in his bamboo easy chair, manufactured by himself and Twe, before the fire in the center of the hut and built upon the floor.

He thought of the happy hours spent in their Sierra Leone home kitchen, when with an apron tied around his neck and shirt sleeves rolled back, he assisted Eva as she carved and molded wax beads for Lucretia's amusement.

An idea came into his mind. Why not try some of the Kaolin clay and the native dyes. Perhaps he could bribe Alpha to assist in his escape as the price of the secret, he thought.

Calling Twe to his side, he ordered him to bring in some of the gray clay, some small cane reeds and to beg some of the colored dyes from the women, especially the red and yellow.

When Twe returned with the articles as directed, Oliver mixed the clay with some of the bright red dyes, until he obtained the desired color. He directed Twe as to the length he wished the hollow reeds, then rolling the dough

over the rocks, he continued doing so until they were molded into oblong, slender and other shaped beads. After this he cut the ends off with a knife and placed them in an earthen pot over the fire until they hardened and finally polished to a bright glazing appearance.

His first attempt was a great success. He called Tve to him, and tying them in a banana leaf, instructed Tve to take them to Alpha with his compliments.

"Oh, master, you do a bad thing for send dose beads to Alpha. He go make you stay for make plenty more for him. You better make plenty more and leese buy you plenty of pearls. If no be Alpha is jealous of Zodo-panda, be no for save your life."

But Oliver's sense of gratitude and honor prompted him to disregard such advice and to send Tve on to Alpha.

Alpha naturally was very much surprised, and his cupidity aroused his cunning. He called upon Oliver immediately and was all smiles, and pretended friendship. He was also cautious because he suspected that his secret was out, and that Oliver would either become a rival or betray his secret by enlightening the oyster diver whom he had taught to search for pearls.

In the meantime his beads were nearly exhausted and in Oliver he saw the promise of a rich harvest.

Oliver soon made his proposition known, i. e., to sell the process of making the beads in exchange for his freedom. But this did not suit the ease-loving Arabian, when so competent a worker was already in his power.

He pretended to agree while he urged Oliver to make a large quantity at the time of instructions. Oliver soon realized that he was Alpha's dupe, and several times awoke just in time to discover Alpha crawling upon his knees, searching for the revolver in Oliver's hat.

Tve took a chance in the matter and bundled up quite a number of beads that he had secretly hidden. He approached Oliver and asked for a day off for hunting.

Upon his return he brought a small grass bag full of the most lustrous and perfect pearls.

Oliver gasped in amazement when Twe told him how he had visited the oyster beds and traded for the pearls, after obtaining a promise of secrecy. Twe continued his pearl trading.

One day Oliver ran to the door of his hut at the cries of some women who, running and beating their heads with their hands, ran to the king's court and fell upon their faces.

A leopard had entered a half town two nights successively, and taken away a child and a grown man. The bravest hunters were selected and Oliver was assigned the leadership.

Oliver was glad of the opportunity because he planned to attempt his escape. He informed Twe of his intention so that Twe bundled up their small stove and they started upon the hunt, after receiving Alpha's blessing.

As they were walking single file through the woods, Oliver had just time to raise his gun as he, Twe and the hunters scattered in the woods.

He saw the fiery eyes and extended claws, when he pulled the trigger and sent the bullet to the heart of the animal. But the great cat had been very accurate in her measurement of distance, for Oliver just had time to dodge, but not before one of her great forepaws landed upon his shoulders, as she fell on top of him, sinking her claws in farther. Twe was the first to recover from the shock and ran to Oliver's assistance.

The men returned and lifted the paw of the beast from Oliver's shoulder, while Twe tore the sleeve of his shirt and bound his arm, during the unconsciousness of the suffering man.

Twe then unwound a grass hammock which he had folded in the bundle, and instructed the men to cut a pole to which he tied it, and then placed Oliver in the hammock, while the other party secured the man-eating

leopard to another pole, and proceeded to the village.

Thus when Oliver recovered consciousness, he was very much surprised and disappointed to find himself back to his old surroundings.

But it was a gala day for the town. Oliver was borne in triumph to the king by the warriors. Around the kitchen young men and women dressed in grass petticoats, danced the Gombey, a very wild but graceful cakewalk. The king presented Oliver the hide and claws of the huge leopard. These being considered only the property of the king, with the teeth, owing to their rare value among all African tribes, Oliver was aware of the honor, and selecting one of the claws, he bade the king accept it as a remembrance of the occasion. He also presented one to Alpha. Something prompted him to offer one to Zedopanda, but knowing that Alpha would not like such a proceeding, he did not take advantage of the opportunity of winning a true friend who might have spared him some of the sad experiences he was to suffer through Alpha's treachery.

After the presentation of the claws, the king whispered into the ear of one of the courtiers, who left his royal side immediately.

Oliver was soon given an unpleasant surprise, when he was finally made to understand that the blushing black maiden attired in a grass petticoat, and numerous beads and leopard teeth around the neck and waist, bore the title of a young princess and was given to him as wife.

The king watched Oliver closely, and was disappointed at the lack of appreciation shown by the latter. When he finally understood that the great honor was rejected, he at once demanded the reason.

Oliver then related the separation from his wife and child, and begged to be permitted to return to his family.

"Oh," said King Wangu, "that makes no difference. I have many wives. The lightning god sent you to live

with us, so you must forget the other wife and take wives from among us."

Zodopanda whispered something into his ear, his face contracted into a frown, then turning to Oliver again he said, "Do you, oh mean man, refuse my daughter?"

Oliver protested again and told him that his religion permitted only one wife.

The conference finally closed, but the rejection of the royal bride had caused a perceptible coolness. It was only the hope of having permanent protection from the wild beast and the fear of the destruction of the iron which Oliver possessed that saved his life.

When the week had ended, and Oliver had not returned as promised, Eva was nearly distracted with grief. Every morning and evening she could be seen at the edge of the hill overlooking the direction of Oliver's departure, kneeling with Lucretia as they prayed for the father's safe return.

CHAPTER XVI

EVA STARTS SEARCH FOR HER HUSBAND

Six months passed, each day adding more and more to the suspense in her mind as to the fate of her husband.

Finally, calling Yanga to her one evening, she said, "Yanga, I can stand this suspense no longer. I shall take some of the boys and go searching for my husband. I know that you love Lucretia as if she were your own child, so I shall leave her in the care of you and Tobey. Lucretia is the only person Tobey really cares for and I know he would defend her with his life."

"Oh, Miss Eva, don't go away. You know I will give my life for Miss Lucretia, but I want us all to be together," Yanga replied.

"But you do not understand, Yanga. I have no right to risk my daughter's life any more than we have al-

ready. I am leaving a letter to be given to Governor Row, in case we do not return in six months. If after that time we are not returned, you and Tobey must join the first caravan going to Missada. Tell King Barma Kelly of your desire to be sent to Governor Row of Fort-town and he will send you on."

After completing the arrangements for her departure, Eva kissed Lucretia quietly as the latter slept upon her cot.

Taking Varnee as her escort, she started with eight carriers, two bearing her hammock and the others the camp supplies.

They proceeded along the river trail, camping at night, when they would put up a small camp tent for Eva.

One evening the boys were squatting around a fire near the tent, when a large leopard crept noiselessly along and snaked in between the flaps of the tent.

Eva lay in a hammock stretched lengthwise. She opened her eyes upon its entrance, and lay gazing at the fiery eyes of the beast as it watched closely, and remained in a springing attitude.

Eva realized that the least movement on her part meant instant death. She therefore lay very quiet, not even daring to bat her eyes.

Just as she had given up hope of rescue, she heard a loud growl, and saw Varnee run in from the back end of the tent with a large torch of fire which he shook before the leopard, and it retired with furious growls. Eva lost consciousness for a few minutes, but soon recovered, and learned that when the leopard's tail disappeared within the tent the carriers had all deserted, saying that she was killed, and that they must seek safety. Varnee alone ventured to attempt rescue.

They decided that it was unsafe to remain longer in the neighborhood of the infuriated beast, whose growls could be heard in the distance.

Varnee hurriedly bundled a few things, which he

strapped to his shoulders, as he also shouldered a Winchester rifle. He gave Eva a lighted torch, proceeded in a bending position, searching the narrow trail. Thus they continued, frightening the antelope and other beasts which scampered along the way. They finally came upon a small half town of bamboo huts and sleeping natives in the early morning. Eva questioned the frightened inhabitants, who could not understand Varnee's tongue, and with a pantomime conversation she soon realized that she could gain no tidings of Oliver from them.

After resting a day, Varnee managed to secure a canoe and paddles, and they started in the early morning by the water route.

As they were paddling near the bank, they came upon some wild cane which grew partly in the water. As Varnee was trying to extricate the canoe from the floating weeds, a hippopotamus was aroused from its slumber and plunged into the stream, upsetting the canoe in its hurried departure.

Eva managed to catch hold of the overturned canoe, and held on until Varnee rescued her just before the hippopotamus returned to investigate the cause of the recent excitement.

Taking to the woods with no means of making a fire and with no food, Varnee climbed into a tree to secure some monkey apples for their meal, when he saw a large elephant running in Eva's direction. He just had time to shout to her to climb a tree. It was close upon her before she reached a small tree which she hastily climbed.

The elephant wrapped its trunk around the slender tree and made an effort to uproot it. The tree top swayed and bent nearly to the ground, while Eva clung to its branches. It seemed only a question of a few minutes before the tree would be uprooted.

Several days after Eva had left the camp, Tobey ran to Yanga, who was preparing Loretta's noon-day meal.

and said, "Give me little un quick, quick, war lif fer come for here."

Picking up Lucretia, he started for the woods, while Yanga, true to her cautious disposition, gathered up some articles of clothing, food, and the letter, which she tied into a large madras handkerchief and bundled it into a large blanket shawl. She then followed Tobey's bush trail, just as the war party was nearing the barricade.

Tobey had concealed himself and waited until Yanga approached when, still carrying Lucretia they ran farther into the woods. But Yanga's delay had almost been fatal, for some of the warriors caught a glimpse of her calico wrapper as she disappeared into the woods. So that while the greater number despoiled and ravaged the camp, even to cutting up the canvas tents, a few pursued Yanga.

The warriors were very close upon them when Tobey handed Lucretia to Yanga and ran into view so as to throw them off Yanga's tracks.

His long cloth which he stoically wore across his shoulders even in a jungle flight readily deceived the party who had only caught a glimpse of Yanga's wrapper.

Yanga in the meantime lay down with Lucretia behind a large log and remained very quiet until their pursuers had disappeared in another direction.

Lifting Lucretia on one arm while she balanced the bundle upon her head with the other, she ran as rapidly as she could over the many roots and through the thick grass. When she reached a safe distance she stood Lucretia upon a rock and opened her bundle; after giving Lucretia a few biscuits, she had Lucretia hold on to her shoulders and sit upon her back as she tied the large blanket around her.

Yanga had frequently employed this method of conveyance since Lucretia was quite small, and now, although she was quite a little maid she still enjoyed the ride.

Placing the bundle upon her head Yanga held her shirt as she waded the ponds and marshy swamps.

When night approached she looked around until she found a large hollow tree. Taking a stick in her hand she prodded up the trunk and around until she was satisfied no serpents or poisonous insects were concealed within. She then gathered up a large pile of briars and thorny shrubs and placed them near the entrance. After placing Lucretia inside and creeping in upon her hands, she pulled the pile before the tree.

Opening and struggling in with Lucretia, wrapped snugly in the blanket, while she sat and watched a large ape return to its lair. She dared not make a move, and looked in terror as the huge monkey attempted to pull away the brush. But after several of the thorns had stuck into its paw, with a cry of pain and rage, it ambled away.

Thus the night passed as she watched the buffalo, antelope, hartbeest and other wild animals pass by seeking their respective lairs or prey.

Thus they wandered through the forest, eating wild figs, pineapples and other fruits and sleeping among the roots of the large cottonwood trees or caves.

Emerging from the forest they entered a hot, sandy plain. As far as Yanga could see was only a barren desert. Holding Lucretia's hand they wandered on. Lucretia looked up into Yanga's face and said, "Oh Yanga, I am so thirsty and want my mamma and papa so bad." Yanga picked her up and struggled along until she was hardly able to stand upon her feet, when Lucretia began crying.

Yanga threw up her hands in despair and lay exhausted for a while. Struggling to her feet she picked up her bundle and held Lucretia by the hand as they walked through the burning sands.

They finally reached a large tree when both Lucretia

and Yanga fell exhausted under its shade and were soon asleep.

Lucretia first awoke, crying for water, when Yanga opened her eyes in time to see a small monkey climbing a tree with some fruit in its hand and mouth.

Yanga looked around and discovered quite a number of little brown rough skin plums which partially allayed the thirst of both. After securing quite a number they resumed their journey. The parched lips refused to be cooled by the plums and just as Yanga had given up hope she recognized in a short distance the traveller's tree (*wrasia speciosa*). With renewed hope she picked up Lucretia and went as fast as her weak state would permit.

As soon as she reached the tree she opened a large pocket knife and cut away one of the fronds; as soon as the water flowed she satisfied Lucretia's thirst and then her own.

They entered a sparsely wooded forest and finally came upon a ruined native village. All of the houses except one small bamboo hut had been razed to the ground by fire. All of the vegetation and fruit trees near had also met the same fate.

It was about 4 p.m. when they reached the village, and Lucretia was fatigued.

Yanga fixed a pallet of the blanket in the small hut and lay Lucretia upon the same to rest.

After Lucretia had fallen asleep, Yanga wandered around in search for food. Lucretia awoke soon after she had gone and coming out of the hut she began crying and calling for Yanga. Just from behind a clump of dried banana bushes appeared a little black five-year-old baby girl, wearing only beads around her waist and holding the hand of a large chimpanzee almost as large as herself.

She looked in Lucretia's direction, first in fright, but the sight of Lucretia's tears overcame the first idea of flight.

Lucretia was so glad of human companionship and

having a fondness for monkey pets, she did not hesitate very long but ran to meet the queer pair. Recalling some of the African words she had heard Vasser and Yanga frequently use she said: "Yakana?" (How do you do).

The little girl's face became full of smiles, showing her little white baby teeth.

"Ushakura," she replied, returning the same compliments.

"Wa Two?" (What are your names?), Lucretia asked.

"Na tuhn Zina, ah tuhn Nogi," (My name is Zina and its name is Nogi), Zina replied, as she indicated the chimpanzee in her last reply.

Zina soon made Lucretia understand, with the addition of the African pantomime language, that the language they both spoke was a branch of the Mande tongue, and that she and her mother had lived long ago far, far away in the Mandingo country and had been caught in war and sold as slaves back farther into the interior.

Then the war had come upon the village a few weeks before and killed nearly all of the inhabitants, her mother among them. As she made the motion of cutting the throat, she burst into tears and was soothed by Lucretia, who patted her gently upon the back.

"Nogi," she continued, had fled with her to safety among the woods and had fed and acted as her mother ever since.

As the children conversed they wandered toward the woods, being led unconsciously by Nogi, which gently pulled Zina's hand as she ambled toward the forest.

Lucretia suddenly realized that it was becoming dark and she pulled Zina and Nogi back to the deserted village as she cried for Yanga.

But as the night shadows began to fall, Nogi, very insistently, led them toward the woods until they reached a small opening closed with brushwood.

Nogi opened the brush and entered the aperture and coming out again she gathered fresh leaves and carried

them into the cave, after which she drew her charges in and pulled the brush before the opening.

After the children lay in the rear upon the leaves, Nogi stretched across the front in order to protect them.

One day a hunting party of Abicans, clothed in cotton shirts and carrying spears, passed near the cave just as Nogi was about to enter with food for the children.

The men gave a shout as soon as they saw her. Nogi made no effort to escape nor to enter the cave, but threw down her fruit before the entrance in a defensive attitude.

One of the hunters wounded her before she could be removed from her stand.

The children heard the commotion and partly witnessed the struggle. They both began crying and when the men looked into the cavern they were overcome with awe at the sight of the two children, especially Loretta, whose golden hair was in wild disorder and her blue eyes expanded in fright.

The men had never before seen a white person; they therefore fell upon their faces in a worshipful attitude.

When they arose they brought forth the two children and looking around saw Nogi dead beside the entrance. They buried her inside the cave and left.

Placing each child upon the shoulders of the two men they proceeded in the same direction which they came.

Vance realized the imminent danger Eva was in; he therefore hastily descended from his safe perch and attracted the elephant's attention.

The huge animal suddenly unboomed his mouth from the tree, which bounded back so quickly that Eva was nearly thrown out.

Vance shouted to her to make her escape as the elephant chased him in fast pursuit.

One day as Eva wandered through the woods she heard voices of some natives passing on a nearby trail. She had been so long without human companionship that she preferred the risk of capture to the jungle terrors.

Emerging from the woods, she came upon the hunting party, bearing Lucretia. Calling out to Lucretia she ran as fast as she could, holding out her arms.

Lucretia recognized her mother and began kicking upon the man's breast as she screamed and called for her mamma.

The men halted at this other miracle and watched the two in their wild embrace.

Eva was too weak to walk with the party. The men therefore cut poles and bamboo and thatch and constructed a stretcher, upon which they placed Eva and Lucretia and which was placed upon the shoulders of four men.

They arrived at a large African town of mud huts, situated at the base of a mountain called the "Yawhey Mountain" or "Mountain of God."

The large clean town was arranged in circular streets.

The King and people decided that Eva and Lucretia had been sent by the "Moon God" whom they worshipped.

He therefore delivered Eva and the children to the priest from the mountain, and ordered that they should tend the fies and live upon the Yawhey Mountain.

They were led up the steep pathway to the summit, where a large space was cleared away and enclosed in a stout fence.

In the center stood a circular mosque shaped temple covered with thatch. In the center of the polished floor was a large ebony carved image of a man in a sitting posture. Upon its brow was a half moon shaped golden crown. In his right hand he held a long ebony staff surmounted by a half moon and a star in the center of the same metal.

Its stool was of gold, while large half moon rings were hanging from its ears and nose.

In the front of the idol a slow fire of sweet smelling twigs burned continuously night and day.

At the back of the temple several small huts were

reserved for the priests and virgins, who kept the fire burning.

Eva and the children were given a hut to themselves. They were given white robes, crowns and belts of gold to wear when performing the sacred rites.

When Oliver returned to his hut, Alpha called in a very bad mood. "What see matter you no marry king daughter?"

"There is no need in discussing the subject again, Alpha," Oliver replied.

"He make you bigge man so me be bigge priest. You li for spoil stoyting."

"Let me give you to understand now you will never add to your power by attempting to marry me to any one," Oliver replied, as he emphasized the same with his fist upon a log table.

Alpha then left in a rage. Some time afterward Tve came in and said: "Master Alpha done make a wide gashkin belt which he put all him big pearls and put it round him waist. I think he li for get ready to go away."

"Say, I guess we had better try our skill on the leopard hide and keep a watch upon his movements," Oliver replied.

The hide had been well tanned, so that they soon managed by punching holes to make a secure belt of five inches width, which they also filled with their best pearls.

CHAPTER XVII

OLIVER'S FLIGHT

One day the town was assembled in the open court, and Alpha announced that the King's oldest son was bewitched and lay at the point of death.

That the King had demanded a sunwood trial (trial

by poison ordeal), but that he had managed to locate the guilty party by occult means and thus that person only should be subjected to the ordeal.

The villagers were so glad to be relieved of the general taint that they received this announcement with applause.

Alpha then named the nephew of Zedopanga; this announcement was received in silence. Zedopanga stepped forth and accused Alpha in turn and ended, "If you kill my nephew, and the King's son fails to recover, you and your moon man will drink the sassawood; if you escape harm my nephew was the witch."

This speech was greeted with loud cheers and met the approval of King Wanga.

Alpha led away a tall, muscular young man of about six feet. They returned shortly afterward with Fulle's (the suspected witch) head clean shaven.

Alpha directed the arranging of a fire upon the ground over which a large earthen pot of water was placed upon three stones enclosing the fire. He next held in his hands several pieces of sassawood bark, over which he made incantations and dropped into the boiling water.

After the liquid had boiled a sufficient length of time, he dipped in a gourd dipper and tested the strength by tasting a little.

"Me make you bigge man so me be bigge priest. You lif for spell eberyting."

"Let me give you to understand now you will never add to your power by attempting to marry me to any one," Oliver replied.

The hide had been well tanned so that they soon managed by punching holes.

When the tea was cooled, Alpha made a speech and carried a quart of the liquid to Fulle, who spat out upon the ground in terror. He compelled the victim to drink the gourd dipper.

Fulle soon began to roll and groan in misery. The administering of the sassawood was continued two more times

at half hour intervals. The victim finally rushed around in a twisted position and fell dead at Alpha's feet.

When Oliver returned home after witnessing the terrible ordeal, he was very much upset and had determined to use his last cartridge in defense when he should be brought for trial. Alpha crept in shortly afterward and whispered, "Get ready, we'll for run away to-night." They discussed their plans and decided upon their meeting place before Alpha departed.

Oliver stored his leopard claws within his belt, together with his pearls, and fastened it around his waist. Two tied up the remaining pearls in a grass bag and banded it with a few provisions and grass mats. He left about 4 p.m. and passed unobserved to the meeting place agreed upon.

Shortly after he had gone, women ran from the huts and rolled upon the ground as they screamed that the young prince was dead.

Oliver took advantage of the confusion to slip through the crowd and enter the woods.

He had no more than reached Two, when Alpha ran upon them almost out of breath. He carried a large white parrot to which he clung tenaciously.

They started upon the river trail and had not proceeded very far when they heard sounds of their pursuers. They could distinguish several canoes upon the river, full of yelling mad men.

Suddenly they perceived that a portion of the pursuers had taken the river trail and were close upon them. They could hear the men piercing their spears into the bushes as they followed.

Unable to flee without revealing their presence, they hid behind a clump of bushes and remained very quiet, but the wary hunters continued prodding into the shrubs.

When they approached very near, Oliver had at first decided to use his last cartridge, but knowing the fury

of the crowd and the large numbers likely to be attracted from the river by the report, he concluded to try a ventriloquist's trick with which he used to amuse his companions in his school days. He gave a very accurate imitation of a leopard's growl.

The brave man hunters ran away in fright from the dreaded beast. Alpha and Two were also deceived and were it not that the men were in too great a haste to make their own escape, they would have seen Alpha also running in fright. Oliver decided not to let Alpha into the secret, but explained to Two, who soon ran back to his master's side.

The party continued their trail free from their pursuers.

One morning they came upon a full grown bull rhinoceros which immediately charged upon the party. Oliver and Two were quick in their movements and were soon up in the safety of two large trees.

Alpha was very much hampered by his wide gown, which flared in the wind, as the rhinoceros followed close upon him. When he attempted to climb a tree, the animal pinned the gown to the tree, and only when Oliver shouted several times did he slip out of the gown and continue his ascent.

The white gown soon covered the beast's head, and this infuriated the animal the more as it ran around trying to extricate itself. When it had finally trampled the gown to pieces, it kept a long vigil around the trees. Oliver stood the impelcment for several hours, when he fired his last shot at the jailor.

Although the shot missed the mark, it had the desired effect, and frightened the beast away.

They left the old trail and came upon a large field of guinea grass. They suffered much for water until they reached a small cluster of palm trees. Two climbed into a bamboo palm and tapped the top, from which the fresh palm wine spouted. He called to Oliver, but Alpha pushed Oliver out of the way and hastily ascended, fought

with Tve and satisfied his own thirst first. Thus again he showed his selfishness.

They camped under the trees, first having burned away a large patch of the grass. They then gathered grass and twigs and made a circle of fire around them and divided the night into watches.

During Alpha's watch, he fell asleep and fire caught the surrounding field and caused a general conflagration. The heat awakened Oliver, who discovered upon all sides flames of fire, the heat and smoke becoming more and more unbearable. Climbing hastily into the scorched palm tree, he saw numerous wild animals running in a certain direction. He decided that a stream must be the goal, so informing his terrified companions of his surmise and desperate determination, they cut palm leaves and followed the tracks of the animals over the smouldering grass, fighting the flames which continually caught Alpha's gown.

They reached the stream almost overcome. But their trials were not ended, as the stream was filled with wild and terror-stricken beasts of prey and elephants.

They were therefore compelled to climb a tree, when they discovered stout vines reaching across the stream. Tve ventured across first, then Oliver and Alpha followed, swinging over to the vines with their blistered hands.

One day returning to the old camp, Oliver found himself in familiar grounds. With a cry of joy he rushed toward the hill of his old camp. When he reached the summit and saw the ruin and devastation that greeted him, he ran toward the frame of one of their old tents and threw up his hands in despair. Falling forward he was caught by Tve, who seated him gently upon the grass. Oliver remained sitting with his head in his hands for a whole day.

Finally recovering himself, he began to look around for some message from his wife. He remembered the hiding place of their strong box in which the private papers, the

nuggets, rings, writing material and an extra compass were kept. Digging into the ground he uncovered it and opened it and found within: "My dearest, if you should reach the camp before I find you, Yanga will tell you how long I waited and suffered before starting out to search for you.

"Lauretia is in safe hands with Yanga and Tobey. I would not take the risk of removing her from this safe retreat. I am taking the same route that you took. 'Au Revoir,' dearie, until we meet again shortly. Your wife."

Oliver broke down in a good cry for the first time during his troubles. Tve found two pair of Oliver's trousers, hidden away under an old bamboo bed. Oliver and he donned them in place of the tattered ones which they had been wearing. Taking the box along, Oliver left the camp to search for Eva and Lauretia.

Alpha was very curious to know what the box contained, and the first night they camped, he slid upon his stomach until he was within reach of the box, which sat near Oliver's head. Tve awoke just as he was about to seize it and wrenched it away.

One day Oliver discovered a large diamond, second in size only to the Cullingham, lying among some debris at the edge of a deserted mining pit. He examined the blue soil, and soon analyzed it to be rich in diamonds of fine quality. He sat down and with the aid of his compass drew a plot of the location.

He then held the stone in his hand and aloud, "Oh Eva, what a price I have paid for this bubble and mine! Too late, I fear, has the fickle god of fortune given me the key to wealth! Would that I had heeded old Malley and turned my footsteps homeward."

While he stood thus musing aloud, Alpha stood behind a clump of bushes at his back listening as his eyes glistened and watched the stone in rapacious capability. After securing the stone and the plot in the box, Oliver again continued the journey.

They reached a small half town, and Oliver traded a few of his leopard's claws for a canoe and food, after having discovered that the villagers could give no information about Eve and Lucretia.

When later finding that they would be unable to reach a native village by night, they chose a desirable camping spot and soon fell asleep, within the circle of fire which Alpha's tinder box always provided. Oliver removed the belt of pearls from around his waist and placed them upon his box. He was so fatigued that he soon fell fast asleep with one hand on his stomach.

Alpha drew a sharp dagger and held it in readiness to plunge into Oliver at the slightest movement as he crawled toward him on his knees.

Oliver's good angel guarded him and he never moved when Alpha lifted his hand and secured the box and pearls.

When Oliver and Twe awoke the next morning, they discovered that Alpha had not only stolen the box and pearls, but had cleaned the camp of everything and decamped in a canoe. With only the mats upon which they slept and their knives, which were secured around their waists, they set out upon the journey through the woods.

At night, discovering fire in the distance, they approached and saw Alpha asleep within the circle of fire and clasping a large white bundle to his breast.

"I go kill him while he is fast asleep, master," Twe whispered, as he drew forth his knife. Oliver caught his hand. "Put it back, Twe, we are not savages. I wish we had something to carry water in, we would have some fun taking away the package he embraces so fondly."

"See dem vine, master, hanging from dem tree? Dry get water, when we get lost and can't find water, we get dem vine and drink dem water," Twe replied.

They tipped to the vine and when Oliver tapped one, the milky water flowed freely.

"I guess you had better locate the canoe, while I extinguish the fire," Oliver said to Two, as he turned the water on the fire, using the vines as hose. Alpha was so sound asleep that he did not hear the snoring noise.

When Two returned and indicated the location of the canoe, Oliver had completed his task and Two crept to Alpha and pulled away the heavy bundle. Oliver and Two escaped to the canoe as Alpha ran around bewildered in the darkness, striking his fists in rage.

Oliver decided that it was better to cross the river, than to run the risk of meeting Alpha again, so they headed the canoe in a south-easterly direction. The river was over half a mile in width and they congratulated themselves when the canoe grounded upon a narrow landing, before they had paddled half as long as anticipated.

They scrambled to the shore and found a steep bank which they ascended with the greatest difficulty owing to the darkness and the burden of the heavy parcel.

As they reached the top Oliver's hand pulled down a shower of dry bones, which they thought were chips of wood. Reaching the summit, they were surprised to find it barren of shrubbery. They sat upon the ground and waited for morning, and when it grew light they saw a small island covered with skulls and other dry bones.

"Dis he dem island dey bury dem witch people, who die from sassawood," Two remarked as he shook in terror.

They proceeded toward the canoe, when they discovered that it had drifted away with the tide. They ran around the island, hunting in despair for some sign of their runaway craft, when several large alligators swimming close to the island warned them of the fruitlessness of attempting to swim the long distance to either of the opposite shores.

While Two watched for a canoe, Oliver untied the bundle taken from Alpha and gave a shirt to Two to use as a signal. He then unlocked his box and taking out the writing materials and compass, he emptied all of the

pearls and the diamonds into it. He scooped out the leopard claws and placed the plot of the mine in the open ends of two of them, placing them also in the box. After locking it, he dug a hole and buried it, after which he wrote an accurate description of its location on a small piece of paper, which he folded and hid within the largest of his four remaining claws. This claw he had always intended to save for Lucretia, as a souvenir of the escape of her father from the man-eating beast. He placed the claws and writing material in his leopard skin belt, and took turns with Two waving the signal.

After a long vigil spent during another night upon the gruesome island, they had fallen down from weakness and despair, giving up all hope. As the evening shades fell they heard the sound of approaching canoes.

CHAPTER XVIII

OLIVER'S IMPRISONMENT AND ESCAPE

With renewed hope they arose from their prostrate positions and walking to the bank, watched the canoes land. The men were chalked and tattooed, making a frightful appearance, with their masks and grass robes. They were the "Negroes," men who bury the witches. They were more surprised than Oliver, and it was only after much persuasion and the sight of Alpha's shirt that they consented to take back Oliver and Two.

They were conveyed to the shore for which they had first headed. Their reception was by no means a welcome one. They were not allowed to enter the town, but were held outside as prisoners, while the king sat in council upon their case. They were condemned as witches, and ordered to a deep pit, where they were to await the morning and be burned alive. They were placed in the pit with their hands tied behind them.

"Twe, can you manage to get my life out?" Oliver inquired. Twe managed to reach Oliver's side, and turning his back to the latter tried to extricate the knife in vain.

"Master, dis be Tobey. I ill for let down knife for you," Oliver heard a whisper from above, and soon caught a glimpse of the bright steel as it descended into the pit. After cutting loose the bindings from himself and Twe, he called up to Tobey and informed him.

"Me sende rope, you climb one one, no fear, me holdet strong."

Oliver caught the rope and ascended, after which Twe followed. Tobey led them quietly to the river bank, where they found a canoe which he had already prepared for their flight.

They had not gone very far before the alarm was given and warriors with their bows and arrows launched half a dozen canoes in pursuit. The three fugitives made their paddles fly, and their small craft fairly glided over the water, but the warriors coming within a close range showered poisonous arrows after them, but by some miracle, the arrows passed over their heads and missed them.

The chase continued under a shower of arrows, flying wide of the mark. The pursuers had gained rapidly, and were just about to close in upon them, when Tobey steered the canoe into the rapids which led to a steep waterfall.

With victorious shouts, the party gave up the chase, and returned rejoicing over the certain death of their escaped victims.

Tobey understood the channel of the rapids well, and had more than once used it upon his flight from pursuers. He soon turned into a well known current, and emerged from their dangerous situation.

Several years had passed in an unsuccessful search for tidings of his wife and daughter. Oliver, Tobey and Twe were walking on the bank of a narrow stream, which

rushed over large stones in a swift current to a deep, perpendicular waterfall.

"Lookie, fool man come in canoe?" Tobey called out as he pointed up the stream. Oliver looked back and saw a white turbaned and robed figure holding on to the sides of a canoe as it was tossed helter skelter among the rocks.

"Say, Tobey, won't you swing from the limb of that tree and hold on to my feet, and I will try to rescue the poor fellow, when he reaches the open current," Oliver said as he indicated the thick limb of a large tree stretching across the stream about fifteen feet from the waterfall.

"Uhm! me no fitee," Tobey granted, "all two we fall in water."

"Oh, master, don't worry, dat be ole Alpha. I so glad he go die soon," Twee announced.

"Shut up, Twee! don't forget that Alpha saved my life once and I owe him his pearls also," Oliver said in an irritated tone.

Just then some fishermen came along, bearing a heavy seine of stout raffia and grass ropes.

Oliver ran to meet them and before they understood what he was about, he had them following him up the tree bearing the seine. He called out to Tobey to assist and they just had time to drop the seine and hold on to one end as it swung across the stream, when Alpha's canoe entered the swift current and was soon within reach.

Alpha lost no time, but caught hold of the ropes, reaching the tree limb in safety. He joined the trio upon their journey, as if they had parted in the most friendly manner. But both Twee and Tobey detected him scowling at Oliver whenever he thought himself unobserved.

During the night as they camped in the woods, Tobey surprised Alpha as he crept toward Oliver with a sharp dagger in his hand. Alpha leaped into the woods and fled when Tobey rushed toward him.

"Ain't so I tell master let that bad man drown. We

no see much trouble since we got loose from him," Two remarked to Tobey after Alpha's flight.

One evening at early dusk, the three wanderers reached a native village, and found most of the villagers marching toward a high hill, in the side of which was an excavation about four feet in diameter, through which flames of fire were seen coming from the interior, situated about two hundred feet from the village. Oliver thought at first that it was a volcano, but noticed that no smoke or lava ascended from the top.

He watched the procession as it halted within one hundred feet of the hill, and deposited large bowls upon the ground.

They then knelt down in rows, bending upon each elbow alternately, as they repeated strange sounds. Oliver learned afterward that this was the abode of the spirits of their dead ancestors, and that the bowls contained food for the spirits, and that every evening the empty bowls were found, after having been left the previous morning.

Oliver presented the king one of his last four leopard claws, and won great favor although he could gather no information concerning his guest.

Alpha had shadowed the party, and remained hidden until he saw Tobey accompany a fishing party one morning. He appeared before the king, and said, "Oh king, the spirit of the great Sargos came to me three times in one night and urged me to warn you against the man with the white skin. That he must be burned before the abode of your departed ancestors this evening before the sun goes down. If you fail to heed my words, a curse will be upon this town and you and all the people will be destroyed by war and famine."

The King was very sad at the tidings, but gave the order for Oliver's destruction.

Alpha immediately had Oliver secured and guarded as

he supervised the erection of the altar upon which to burn his victims.

Twe ran to summon Tobey as soon as he heard the news.

Oliver was wrapped in cords and laid face upwards upon the brush piled upon the stone altar.

The King and crowd of villagers had assembled to witness the ceremony. Alpha approached with glittering eyes as he lighted the torch with which he was to light the kindling.

"Where be you hidee pearls?" he hissed as he approached.

Oliver turned to his old ventriloquist trick and barked loudly. Alpha looked around in fright, when Oliver emitted loud hissing growls.

The whole party disappeared in terror. Alpha dropped the torch near the altar as he sought safety.

Twe and Tobey rushed from the woods just in time to rescue Oliver from the flames, which caught the altar's brushwood.

They ran to the other side of the hill and discovered a hole in the ground partly covered with bushes.

In their desperate plight they did not hesitate to descend. Oliver discovered a dark tunnel which they penetrated. They found themselves suddenly entering a large cave, in which were busy workmen mining, and skilled gold smelters who kept a blazing fire burning night and day.

As soon as the bewildered party entered, Oliver was given another surprise when the familiar voice of Fahn, in his same hair cut, greeted him in sincere joy.

Oliver was given a royal welcome in the home of the mysterious spirits, who planned to demand more food from the worshipping villagers.

CHAPTER XIX

OLIVER'S OLD ENEMY KIDNAPS LUCRETIA

When Alpha found that Oliver had escaped alive, he suspected that it was through trickery. He therefore started the villagers upon a search while he wandered on visiting other towns in search of his escaped victim. He finally arrived at the village of the Yahwah Mountain during the evening of the full moon.

He found the King and courtiers robed in white and mounted upon horseback, while the villagers in white also followed in the rear on foot as they made a circle around the town three times.

Marching to the foot of the mountain the King and courtiers descended from their mounts, and slaves removed their sandals, after which they climbed the steep ascent in single file. Alpha joined in the procession with the villagers.

When the King reached the gate at the summit he was met by slaves bearing a wooden trough of water. After washing and drying his feet, the King proceeded upon mats spread upon the ground as his followers washed their feet before entering.

The King entered the moon temple and bowed before the idol as he lay his offering before its feet. After the offerings were over, Eva led a procession of twelve young girls, robed in long white gowns fastened around the waist with golden belts, gold half moon crowns upon their heads and each holding a string of fragrant coffee blossoms which they held in both hands, as Lucretia, now eleven years old, led the dance to the tune of "Ta ra ra bum deah" which Eva had taught them.

Alpha suspected Eva and Lucretia to be the lost wife and daughter of Oliver and he glinned in contemplated revenge.

As soon as the ceremony had ended, Alpha inquired of

the villagers the history of the two white people. He was soon satisfied that his first guess was correct.

He then set about to make plans to carry out his scheme of revenge. Creeping along the barricade, he watched until he saw Lucretia returning from the temple, strolling down near the gateway with Zina. He opened the gate softly and leaped upon them before they were aware of his presence. Stifling Lucretia's cries with a piece of cloth he ran toward a back trail which he had recently cut.

At the foot of the mountain he placed Lucretia upon a horse which he had tied to a tree, and mounted it. Holding her in one arm he rode away at a fast pace up the river bank until he reached two canoes. Embarking in one with Lucretia, he sent the other adrift and empty down the stream as he paddled up the river.

When Zina gave the alarm Eva ran wildly down to the village and informed the villagers of the kidnapping. They set about immediately to scout the mountain and back trail as another party set out in a number of canoes.

Eva joined the hunt and was informed by the canoe party that the search was in vain, because Lucretia had been seized by the crocodile men and dispatched to the other world; and that the empty canoe had been seen drifting down the stream.

The villagers ceased the hunt and tried to console Eva, who, followed by Zina, ran madly from the town.

When Yanga had returned to the deserted village and found Lucretia gone, she ran about calling and searching for her charge. She finally reached a village where the young daughter of one of the king's wives was very ill, and she administered herbs which cured her.

She then became a great favorite and remained, while she questioned all travelers as to news of her charge and parents.

One day in the early morning she was in a fishing party standing in a creek when she saw a white robed figure

padding toward them. As the canoe came nearer she caught a glimpse of the white face of a child in the bottom of the canoe. She hurriedly informed the women that the white robed man was the party who stole her charge and they should assist her to recover her.

CHAPTER XX

LUCRETIA'S RESCUE

ALPHA was very fatigued, as he had paddled all night, and had just left safe to land. As soon as he drew near the landing and lifted Lucretia in his arms, Yanga and the women leaped upon him with loud screams. The women scratched and pommelled him while Yanga secured Lucretia and fled into the village. The fisherwomen threw their nets over his head, ducked him into the water and had the time of their lives, laughing at the half drowned figure with the mud bespattered gown clinging to his body.

Yanga sought the protection of the king's favorite wife whose good will she enjoyed.

Alpha soon decided that the town was too hot for his presence and resumed his journey on foot.

Eva and Zina wandered in their fruitless search until Eva was almost compelled to believe that Lucretia had really been sacrificed, still her mother's heart held hope and she continued her search.

They reached a village whose people received them kindly and she decided to rest a few days. In the meantime Alpha arrived at the same town on the next day. As soon as he heard of the white woman stranger in the town, he determined not to be foiled in his revenge.

So approaching the King, he said: "I was sent from a far country by the spirit of great Pomopora (one of the great war ancestors) to bring to you the tidings that a

woman of white skin, red hair, and eyes like the sky, would be sent to you to receive a message for him; that when she bears the message he will aid you in carrying war against your old enemy and make you victorious."

"You speak the truth, oh messenger of Poroopora. A woman as you described arrived at this town," was the reply.

Alpha left and saw that Eva was secured while he caught Zina and sold her to a passing caravan.

In a dark forest a dozen men squatted around a fire over which was a large earthen pot.

Two men standing were garbed in leopard hides, with wooden shoes upon their feet made in the shape of the leopard's claw.

In the right hand they held pronged knives in claw shape.

"We will have a new kind of messenger to-night. I wonder if this white skin woman can take the message to Poroopora in our language," one of the men said aloud in their tongue.

"Oh, don't bother about that; the priest says she must be the messenger."

"When the moon has gone we must be at the road to the spring," one of the leopard robed men replied.

Varnae happened to be passing through the woods when he saw the fire and men. He recognized he had come upon a meeting of the leopard branch of the Boseform society. He was so overcome with fright that he stood hidden behind a tree afraid to move.

He overheard the conversation referring to their prospective victim. He decided that it was Eva to whom they referred, so he made a quick retreat and ran to secure her rescue.

The leopard men paid no heed to the running footsteps, because they thought it was only a frightened antelope.

At midnight Eva was bound hand and foot and carried

to the outskirts of the town and laid upon the ground at the beginning of the narrow pathway leading to the spring.

A priest marked a heart enclosed in a circle upon her forehead with a piece of charcoal. After a few veiled antics and dancing the procession retired.

The two leopard men approached with loud growls after the party had disappeared. One of the men was leaping toward Eva with the raised leopard knife, when Varnes sent a bullet to his heart. As soon as the report sounded the other leopard man took to his heels, leaving his companion.

Varnes quickly cut away the cords from Eva. Lifting her up in his arms he said: "This be Varnes, no fear, try be strong head, me go save you."

He reached a place in the woods where he had secured two large ostriches. He seated Eva upon the soft saddle and placed her feet in the stirrups he had hastily constructed and which nearly caused a fatal delay.

He instructed her how to hold on to a rope which he bound around his waist as he quickly seated himself upon the foremost bird and began their almost winged flight just as the inhabitants became aware of the escape.

The caravan which was purchased by Zina made an average of forty miles per day for fifteen days over a track traversed route leading S.S.W.

They finally reached the frontier of the Ashanti country after travelling a little over seven hundred miles.

CHAPTER XXI

OLIVER MEETS REV. JONES

REV. JONES, an American missionary from Baltimore, met the caravan as he was returning from the mission plantation.

He was tall, erect and clean shaven, dark complexion, more from tan, light brown hair and hazel eyes.

His quick and sprightly movements were typical of his great ready resourcefulness, while his face inspired instant confidence.

As soon as Zina saw the white man she jerked loose from the man who was holding her hand and ran toward Rev. Jones.

"Oh, Mister, please save me," she cried, in an almost perfect accent.

Rev. Jones was very much astonished and, taking her hand, inquired where she learned to speak English.

He soon obtained sufficient information from her excited story to arouse his interest, and after offering redemption money to Zina's owner, he left for the mission, taking Zina along, followed by her late owner.

The mission station consisted of a corrugated iron story and one-half bungalow, having a veranda surrounding it. It was situated upon a small hill and had at its side and back a small iron cottage and mud huts.

The stairway consisted of long wooden steps leading from the ground up to the side veranda.

When Rev. Jones reached the mission he was greeted by a short burton lady of about forty, whose good nature showed in her smiling and sympathetic face.

Rev. Jones soon told her Zina's story. As they both cross-questioned her he said to his wife: "I would stake my last dollar that the woman and girl she speaks of are the wife and daughter of that unfortunate family the newspapers made such a stir about when the expedition traced them as far as Musadu and travelled to Timbuctoo in a fruitless search. The man's name was Mont something and he was the brother of Lord Dabloy. Don't you remember? It must be nearly five years since the expedition returned in failure.

"I am going to set out to-morrow with one of the caravan party as a guide and take this child along with me."

Rev. Jones lost no time after coming to this conclusion.

He persuaded one of the men to act as guide and with the Madam's prompt assistance his preparations were completed and he started early the next morning.

After the surprise of the gold workers was over, Oliver was compelled to smile in spite of his melancholy state, when he thought of the clever trick these craftsmen had played so successfully for years upon credulous villagers.

He presented the old priest, Dubpella, who was the head of the establishment, with one of his remaining claws.

He had the large claw containing the plot of his hidden treasure set in gold. The sharp end was enclosed in a gold tip with two narrow bars passing up to the wide ornamental cap which fitted tightly over the open end. The slender bars then clasped across the top, ending in a small loop.

Thus the cap was securely fastened to the claw. One of the workmen presented him with a slender platinum neck chain which was passed through the gold loop and fastened with a stout and intricate catch.

The other claw he had only a gold cap attached.

Dubpella presented him with a wide hollow gold band bracelet, that opened with a spring and revealed a cavity used for securing small articles of value, as poison stuff and other things so prized by the African.

Oliver enclosed the two leopard claws and the location and plan of the mine within the cavity and placed the bracelet upon his left arm. He left the cave dwellers with valuable gifts of nuggets, and proceeded on his errand.

Just as he neared the entrance to a town called Seehoker, he saw a white man coming toward him. Rev. Jones soon decided that the bearded white man in frayed trousers was no other than Oliver.

They soon shook hands in greeting and began explanations as they entered Seehoker.

Oliver was almost wild with grief and rage when he heard Eira's account of Lucretia's abduction.

"Had I only taken Twe's advice and permitted this scamp to drown, I should have been spared this terrible knowledge," Oliver repeated, as he attempted to go in instant pursuit.

"Be calm, my friend. You have suffered the most heart-rending misfortunes a man can have, but you have managed to live through them all for five years. You must now trust Providence, who has protected you during all of your adventures. Remember that the same Guardian who made the wild elephant pick up Lucretia in friendliness and provided a protectress in the old orang outang will surely deliver her from the hands of the kidnapping Arch. We must rest to-night in this village and proceed upon our search to-morrow," Rev. Jones said to Oliver in a sympathetic but firm manner.

When the report of Varnee's revolver reached the village, it caused quite a commotion. Even Alpha was puzzled as to the source, because he was sure that Oliver had had to abandon his revolver on account of its uselessness. He was the first, however, to recover composure, and he finally persuaded a small number of men to accompany him with torches.

When he saw the dead leopard man and the ropes which had bound Eira, cut into small pieces and lying where Eira had lain, he informed the men that an enemy had rescued their sacrifice, but the sight of the dead leopard man had caused such a panic that they all ran away as he spoke.

King Kype was very much wrought up over the report, and accused Alpha of being a false messenger, who had caused the lightning God to kill one of the Boriform priests.

He commanded the men to return with Alpha, so that the chase which coincidentally started after the bird fugitives was really after Alpha. As soon as the men left,

Alpha decided to flee from the scene. He finally reached the village where he was badly used by the fisher women.

He decided to keep out of Yanga's sight and to lose no time in carrying out his revenge. He entered the village at night and immediately sought a private audience with the king. Old King Dofella was squatting upon a mat in his private hut before a fire. He was seventy years old and very homely.

Alpha presented him with some kola nuts and said: "Oh mighty and great king Dofella! I congratulate you upon your fortunate and happy position. You have had the beautiful young white maiden sent to you for wife. Blessed man to have been honored above all other kings."

Dofella did not understand at first what Alpha meant. "Where is the maiden?" he asked.

"She has lived in your presence for the last two months. She with the fair skin, deep blue eyes and sandy hair. 'Is she to whom I refer?' Alpha replied.

"But she is a child of the moon god, and cannot marry mortals," Dofella said.

"She is but the daughter of a man like you, only his skin is white. They came from a far country to our country to steal our wealth, so the gods have decided that we should wed them, and you are chosen to be the first and to wed the fair young maid."

"But she is too young, oh priest of the great gods," Dofella feebly protested.

"Haven't you got the devil bush for preparing young girls for witchhood? Two years in it will be sufficient to make her eligible for your wife. Do not find excuses, oh fortunate man lest the gods think you unworthy of their choice," Alpha replied. This last argument settled the qualms of conscience which Dofella had felt before.

The next morning he presented himself before Yanga's hut, bearing gifts of kola nuts, fowls and a slave as the first dowry to his prospective bride. A close review of Lucretia incited him to act immediately.

As he presented the gifts to Yanga, he informed her that the Zoa, the head of the devil bush, would call at midnight for his bride. Yanga managed to keep her feelings under control, in the hope that she might be able to rescue her charge from the horrible fate he had announced.

Shortly after the king's visit, Ledla, the patroness of Yanga and the favorite royal wife, called upon Yanga in a very bad temper.

"Is this the way you repay my kindness, begging me to protect you from the white gown priest and then joining him in secret, to marry your white skin girl to the king?" she addressed Yanga upon entering.

As soon as Yanga heard of Alpha's connection with the proposition, she understood the scheme at once, and soon convinced her friend of her desire to rescue Lucretia from the same.

"Two slaves have just come from the town of my father and brought the news that two men of the same skin of your girl were entering the town as they left last night.

"If you really wish to run away with her, I will make plans for your escape to-night to join the white men. But tell them not to remain at my father's town, because Dofella will send a war upon my father when he learns of your refuge," the wife pronounced in restored good spirits.

Alpha had now to contend with a very sharp-witted antagonist. Ledla instructed her brother to engage Alpha in the game of Mo, a game very absorbing to people of the orient; and arranged her plans unobserved by the alert Arab.

After the king had paid his respects to Yanga and presented another dash, Yanga slipped out with Lucretia, and they disappeared from the rear of the hut into the woods. They were assisted to mount a fine horse by two silent men, who then mounted two other horses, placed

Yanga's mount in the center and began a fast gallop to freedom.

At the same time three young men mounted the fastest ostriches and started in another direction, while two boys paddled away in the swiftest canoe of the village.

At midnight the horns were blowing and bells ringing announcing the approach of the Zoa. The news soon reached Dofella of the flight of the two. He was in a towering rage and ordered his fastest horses when he then discovered that the best horse, ostriches and canoe were missing. Being puzzled over the exact direction of the flight, he ordered his warriors to follow the water and every likely land route.

Oliver and Rev. Jones were on the same road to Dofella's town, when they met the fugitives. Although Oliver was wearing a long beard, Lucretia was not long in recognizing her father. Oliver mounted the foremost horse with Lucretia, Zina was placed upon the horse with Yanga and Rev. Jones mounted the rear horse, while Tobey and the Mission boys followed on foot. They lost no time, but hastened toward the mission town, through a long and tedious brush route.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VALLEY OF ALLAH

One day about three weeks afterward, the party descended from a steep and thickly-wooded hill on foot. They were very much surprised at the sight of a beautiful valley covered with velvety green lawn grass, lying almost on a perfect level before them. In the center was a small pond covered with water lilies upon which stood tall white herons and jacanas perched upon one leg and doing in the sunshine.

The diameter of the pond was about twenty feet, and a mixed variety of lilies bordered its banks. On the

lawn were tropical fruit and ornamental trees of every description, while orchids, cape jessamines, wild roses, ferns and flowers in a large variety bloomed in luxuriant and lovely disorder.

In the branches of the trees, the loud notes of the turacos mingled with the merry whistle of the grey parrots, while the beautiful plumaged birds of variegated colors chirped and hopped about, undisturbed by the recent arrivals.

An antelope scampered away at first, but it soon returned with several others and walked about the lawn in restored confidence.

"Where do you think we are, Montcrief?" Rev. Jones asked in real surprise.

"We have been following the S.S.W. course as you directed," Oliver replied.

"Hush! listen to the murmur behind that traveller tree. Look! Those are the mission boys repeating something from the Koran, and here comes old Sampson, who lives near the mission plantation. Will wonders never cease?"

"Hello, Sampson! Where are we and whose park is this?" Rev. Jones remarked as he hailed old Sampson.

The old African was almost toothless, and bent upon a cane as he walked. "You li! be close de mission, and dis be Allah valley," he replied.

"The vale of Allah," Oliver repeated, "old Mulley's prophecy has come too true." He then related the said reading at Muzada and Mulley's warning.

"That reminds me," he continued, as he opened the spring of his bracelet and extracted the leopard's claw and chain, "come, Lucretia, I hope that the leopard claw will reunite us with your mother, as he also prophesied," he repeated as he secured the chain around her neck and cautioned her never to part from the claw.

"What are the mission boys doing kneeling behind those trees, Sampson?" Rev. Jones asked.

"Dry ill for pray Allah for good luck Mass Jones," he replied.

Lucretia wandered around and picked a large orchid. Old Sampson, observing her, smiled and said. "Pickse flower Allah valley findse plenty good luck in same valley bye and bye," he repeated as he arose to proceed on his way, after having directed the party to the nearest route. He went in the direction of the hill which they had just descended.

The party ascended the opposite hill, which was steep and wooded, and descended into a valley, when they soon perceived the beacon light of the mission house shining down upon them from a near hill.

Arriving at the mission, Lucretia was taken to the warm and motherly breast of Mrs. Jones. She quickly changed the raiment of the young girl and fitted her with mission clothes from the stock.

"Oliver was very impatient to begin the search for Eva, and on the next morning said to Rev. Jones, "When do you think you can supply me with an outfit for my return journey, by to-morrow? I should be glad if you will keep Lucretia here until our return."

"I have been thinking over the subject, Montcrief, and I want to suggest that you take Lucretia home and leave her in your brother's care, and entrust me with the mission of finding your lost wife.

"If she still lives you may be sure that I will find her or die in the attempt.

"You have been through so many adventures, and your brother has also suffered from the suspense. You owe this to your daughter, who must be twelve or thirteen years of age."

"Eleven," Oliver corrected.

"She is large for her age," the Rev. continued, "as even at that age she needs to receive the education as culture suitable to her station."

"All of that is true, Rev., but I can send a cablegram

to the coast for Harold, who will arrange to have Lucretia taken home in case I fail to return in six months.

"I cannot bear to think what might happen to Eva should Alpha find her whereabouts, while I am resting safely within the mission.

"I do not fear the natives so much since Lucretia related the kind treatment and respect which they received upon the Yahweh mountain."

"Master I see Alpha hid for hide around the mission. He dare follow we here," Twe announced, as he hastily approached the two men upon the front veranda.

"That decides the matter according to your suggestion, Rev.," Oliver continued as he nodded to Twe and turned toward Rev. Jones.

"The scamp is following me, and if I should return into the interior, he would very likely come across Eva before I should and revenge himself upon her just as his wicked and cunning brain directs.

"If he follows me to Freetown, I shall take care of him, for with your Winchester and Lucretia as my charge, I will not take the chances I so unwisely took in the woods.

"I shall place Lucretia with the Catholic sisters and instruct Harold by letter as to her future. Of course I shall cable him as soon as I reach the coast.

"I shall soon secure an outfit and an escort for an expedition party.

"I hope, however, that you will have succeeded in locating Eva, and that I shall find her awaiting me here when I return. You may be sure that I shall not be gone two months."

Mrs. Jones completed a wardrobe for the girls in a very short time, and Oliver, looking almost the same as when he first started, except for the tan upon his hands and forehead, and the sad wistful look and ill-fitting clothes, started from the mission, one week after his arrival, taking with him Lucretia, Zina, Tobey, Twe and

the mission carriers. Yanga remained to assist in the search for her mistress.

Rev. Jones accompanied the party on the canoe trip as far Bamba.

"You will soon reach Axim on the gold coast. It was there that the natives sunk the famous chair of gold in the 80's when they heard that some foreigners were about to visit the country. The chair was of solid gold and of fine workmanship. You have seen a sample of the African gold craftsmanship, so you can appreciate the worth of the chair."

"Togoland is their next neighbor; we are near Oyofo, the country made historic in the early 90's, when King Jaja, the king of an independent kingdom, was exiled to the West Indies.

"I am sure that you know of Sir Harry Johnston, he was your accredited consul at King Jaja's court at the time of his exile," Rev. Jones remarked just before their parting.

At Axim Oliver called to Lord Dudley:

St. Stephen's Club, Westminster.

The Earl of Dudley.

Harold: Am embarking for Freetown with Lucretia, and returning to search for Eva, who is lost in the jungles. Letter follows. Love from your brother,

Oliver.

On landing at Freetown, Oliver received the following cablegram:

Oliver Montcriel, c/o F. Z. & Co.

Await my arrival. Am sailing to-night by chartered boat, will reach Freetown in eight days. Love to both. Your brother,

Harold,

Dudley Castle, Worcestershire.

CHAPTER XXIII

OLIVER AND LUCRETIA ARRIVE AT FREETOWN

"Harold will be here to-morrow," Oliver repeated as he read the cablegram, "that old cargo boat of ours stopped at every port on the coast so that we have just managed to arrive a day ahead of him."

He lost no time in placing Lucretia and Zina at the Catholic convent in the care of the good sisters.

He found that Mr. Solomon filled his former post of manager for the firm.

He engaged a suite for Lord Dubley and himself and took up quarters at the hotel.

After the happy reunion of the brothers, they sat conversing upon past events. Lord Dubley handed Oliver the letter which the old earl had penned to him just before his death.

Oliver held his hands before his face, crying and shaking with emotion.

"Eva will prize this letter more than the news of the wealth he has bestowed upon us. She has suffered much because we left without his blessing. I do believe she blames herself as the cause of father denouncing me.

"If I had only taken her advice, and written at the time she obtained my promise to do so, all of this unhappiness would have been avoided," Oliver said as he arose and, excusing himself, retired to his bed room.

He turned up his sleeve and cuff, and opening the spring of the bracelet, removed the leopard claw. He unrolled and folded the small letter carefully, and enlarging the cavity of the claw with his pen knife, placed the smallest end of the note in the claw and fitted the other end into the wide gold cap which now fitted firmly. He replaced the claw within his bracelet and closed the spring.

He could not bear to have even his brother see the

bracelet and claw, because they looked so much like a fetish, when in fact that was the safest manner in which to preserve the papers and other small valuables which were liable to be ruined by rain and water accidents incidental to jungle travel.

Upon the eve of Oliver's departure for the interior, the Earl of Dabley sat in Oliver's room as they talked business arrangements.

"Oliver," Lord Dabley suddenly said, "I cannot permit you to return alone, I shall accompany you also."

"Why, Harold, that is impossible. You have a wife and daughter to consider; they must come before your brother.

"The danger would be much greater to you than to me, as you have never lived in the tropics. I am depending on you to act as a father to my Lucretia during my absence. You will do me a much greater service by performing that sacred pledge, than by unnecessarily sharing my dangers," Oliver replied.

"I have never approved of your idea of leaving Lucretia in Freetown, Oliver. She is nearly twelve years of age and has never seen her ancestral home. I think it is a great pity to have the child remain in Africa so long. She would be such a great comfort to me also," Lord Dabley remarked.

"Georgiana must be in her eighteenth year, and of course is quite an educated and cultured young lady. I believe you informed me that Lady Dabley is planning to have her introduced at court some time this coming season.

"She will soon be marrying, and Lucretia will not suffer so much from the embarrassment she would naturally feel under the present circumstances.

"To place her in a boarding school at home would be equally an embarrassing at present. The sisters are very kind and Lucretia is very staid. She will be prepared in a few years' time to be removed from the convent, in

the event that we are still absent. If such be the case, Harold, I am sure that you will take her to your heart and protect her as you would your own daughter," Oliver concluded.

After Lord Dabley retired, Oliver remained up very late drawing a map of his proposed journey.

The next morning, while seated in the drawing room, Oliver handed his brother the two plots he had made of the situation of the gold mine, mission and station and instructed him to keep them.

"I am sorry I had to postpone the drawing of this rough plot, and had no time to make a duplicate, but the mission plan which lies here upon the map," Oliver said, as he traced his finger upon the drawing lying upon a table, "is very carefully drawn, also the case of the gold diggers, which is located at this cross. To Yalweh mountain and other places are guess work, although I think I am very nearly correct in my calculations," Oliver ventured as he still pointed out and explained the route he intended travelling.

Neither noticed a clean faced brown skin figure with black silky hair parted on one side, and eyes glistening, as he heard the word gold and saw the papers which Oliver was discussing.

Oliver would have had to look closely to recognize his jungle enemy in the metamorphosized, civilized Arabian hotel guest.

Oliver retired to his room to pack a few things into a hand grip. He removed the map from his pocket and was just about to drop it into the bag when he was called away. He dropped it hurriedly, leaving the bag unlocked.

As soon as the door had closed behind him, Alpha, who had been peeping through the key hole of the other door opening into a private bedroom, slipped in and hurriedly snatched the map from the bag. Glancing at it he

thought he had secured the plot to the location of the hidden wealth.

Just as he was folding it and about to place it in his pocket as he walked toward the door, Twe entered and, seeing the paper, gave instant pursuit.

Oliver had received a message from the Governor. Accompanied by his brother he left immediately for the mansion house.

The Governor informed Oliver that he had received the information that Eva was dead, and appealed to Lord Dudley to prevent Oliver from making a useless trip.

But when the Governor named Alpha as the bearer of the tidings, Oliver denounced it as a fake and refused to be persuaded to abandon the expedition.

CHAPTER XXIV

OLIVER FALLS ON SEARCH EXPEDITION FOR EVA

He lost no time in taking his departure. Even the absence of Twe did not delay him, as he hoped to meet Tobey, who was visiting his home at Cape Coast Castle and was to meet him at Axim.

After the brothers had parted and the steamer had disappeared in the southwestern horizon, the Earl of Dudley, who was now the Governor's guest, inquired of the Governor if he were convinced of the authenticity of the sad tidings.

"Unfortunately it is true beyond a doubt. I could not relate the horrible circumstances because he has suffered too greatly already. He will be safe with a military escort, which he will receive at the frontier.

"The longing to see his daughter will soon convince him of the fruitlessness of his errand.

"These Arabian priests travel all over the continent either as fanatic teachers or cunning trickers, who profit

by the credulity of the African and secure the natural wealth of the country in exchange for charms and trinkets."

"Their adaptability to every environment and their gift of learning languages and dialects aid them in their successful enterprise.

"This priest saved Oliver's life from the Bareform society and travelled as his companion," the Governor concluded.

"Yes, Oliver told me of him, but it seems as if he afterward tried to take Oliver's life and kidnaped Lucretia, so I can understand why Oliver doubts him," Lord Dudley replied.

"The man's story was too true, I examined him closely. He says that he entered a town just as the leopard society sacrificed a white woman. We have that state of affairs and trouble in the southern part of Sierra Leone Protectorate, so that I can readily believe his statement.

"Bareform, the nurse of the mother society, means to dispatch from the earth. They believe that the victims are receiving an honor when they send them to take messages for and attend as servants or companions to some big chief or warrior.

"I am really glad that I am spared the unpleasant task of informing my old friend of this last tragedy. This morning's mail brought the news of the death of the old squire.

"But be not too despondent, my lord, Eva was very much adored by me also. The poor child is out of her troubles; we must now protect her motherless little girl.

"She will be my constant care. You may have no reliance upon her account," the Governor concluded in an emotional tone as he held out his hand and hurriedly left.

When Tve followed Alpha from the bottom he had no time to call the assistance of the police, because the

wily Arabian left the hotel immediately and preceded him in a merry chase around the town.

Two finally caught a glimpse of him as he slipped within a bamboo hut on the Khey road.

Two hid until he saw Alpha finally leave the rear exit in his old costume of white turban and gown and a bundle under his arm.

Two trailed him unobserved to the railway office, where he purchased a ticket and Two secured one also and boarded a compartment near his wary antagonist.

Two shadowed him through the interior, constantly seeking an opportunity to recover the paper as Alpha slumbered, but he was foiled every time, and one night came very near paying his life for his daring, when Alpha awoke just as he was searching Alpha's breast pocket for the paper.

One day they were walking through a palm grove. Alpha was a good distance ahead as usual.

Two saw a large pile of picked and choice palm nuts under a tree which Alpha was hastily approaching.

Two smiled and sat down. He knew the penalty the unsuspecting victim pays who dares disturb those tempting piles of palm nuts seemingly abandoned.

Alpha sat beside the pulpy nuts and ate as many as he could, after which he unlaced a part of his turban, tied up a large quantity, when he arose to resume his journey.

"Uhi Uhi Uhi Uhi!" reached the ears of both Alpha and Two at the same time. Looking around they saw a large gorilla bounding after Alpha.

Alpha's white gown flapped in the wind like a sail, while the gorilla followed closely behind, and Two brought up the rear as he shook with mirth.

Alpha threw the palm nuts away and halted his pursuer for a moment. The chase was soon resumed when the chimpanzee caught the end of the shirt, but Alpha wiggled out.

The monkey threw the gown down in a rage and con-

tinued his pursuit. Two picked up the gun and searched for the map, which he found secured in an inside pocket.

He then looked to see how the race had ended, when he saw the gorilla dragging Alpha by one leg to the woods.

Shrugging his shoulders Two folded up the gun and calmly walked away.

CHAPTER XXV

OLIVER IS SHIPWRECKED

THE steamer was struck amidship and Oliver's cabin was near the scene of the disaster. Oliver had been on sea about four days when the steamer attempted to enter a non port of entry off the Grain Coast in north latitude 4 degrees 16 minutes, and west longitude 8 degrees 13 minutes at night in order to arrange contraband goods to the natives.

The captain was not very familiar with the dangerous harbor, and wrecked the ship upon one of the many rocks submerged beneath the water and hardly visible except at the closest distance in low tide.

The ship was sinking rapidly and the boats lowered and ordered to the open sea. All of the passengers and crew were rescued except Oliver.

He was asleep when the accident first occurred, but the noise and confusion soon awakened him, and he just had time to don his clothes and secure his life buoy around himself, when he saw the water rushing into his cabin.

He made his way to the deck with the greatest difficulty amid the dark and watery surroundings.

When he reached the deck the ship was deserted and sinking rapidly. He caught the glimpse of flames coming from the fore-castle, and leaped overboard just as an explosion from the hatch hole, where the cargo of petroleum oil was stored, set the whole ship afire.

A piece of the wreck struck him on the head and knocked him senseless.

A number of African wreckers were holding torches and gathering the cargo the captain had ordered to be thrown overboard.

In an effort to lighten the ship before he was aware of the hopelessness of their task to save the ship, much cargo had been sacrificed in this way and at much useless labor.

Oliver drifted toward the beach and would have been dashed against the rocks had it not happened that his bracelet upon the left arm was exposed, and two of the men who were about to seize after a floating case caught the gleam of the gold and dragged him ashore.

One of them held a torch while the other tried to remove the bracelet. He accidentally touched the spring and revealed the leopard claw. At the same time Oliver opened his eyes and looked upon the open bracelet also.

He regained, it seemed, temporary consciousness, and immediately closed the springs to the great amazement of the already astonished natives, who kept repeating: "Sh, sh," as they stood aghast.

A white man who wore a hidden leopard claw and who was aroused from the dead and who closed it from view, was a strange, miraculous being.

The leopard claw, then believed surely to have been a powerful charm, caused them to leave him upon the beach un molested as they finished their wrecking and reported the strange find to the others.

Some of the men had travelled as stowaways upon European steamers and spoke several languages. So that when Oliver recovered sufficiently to stand up alone, after a long illness in one of the ship boy's huts and walked around, they were more mystified when he did not speak a word or seem to realize his condition. Since the dumb are always protected among all Africans and

supposed to bring good luck to their patrons, everybody was anxious to contribute to Oliver's comfort.

Of course the word was passed that the less known about the wrecked boat the better off would be the villagers, who might be held accountable for the cargo recovered by the wreckers.

They were therefore much relieved when a caravan starting for the interior asked for his companionship as an omen of a lucky and successful trip, and Oliver was sent into the interior with a blank memory and unable to speak, while no word of his rescue reached the civilized world.

Four years had passed since the wreck. Lady Georgiana, the Earl of Dudley's daughter, had married an old but very wealthy French count and was now the Comtesse de la Foye, and lived in Southern France.

Lord Dudley had long before missed the companionship of his young daughter, who at a very early age disappointed him by her designing and too ambitious disposition, which was but the result of her mother's training.

Georgiana's marriage, although a disappointment, was a relief to the Earl, who often thought of and read the reports of his innocent and orphaned niece. Her letters and photographs were his greatest pleasure, which he enjoyed in secret.

This morning he sat in the old library where his father always sat and read Sister Theresa's report concerning Loretta.

It read in part, "You will be astonished at the progress the dear girl has made. She has a talent for music which she has also greatly improved.

"She has cultivated a kind of dignified reserve which makes her appear older than her age and inspires the respect and admiration of all of her acquaintances.

"We hate to part with the dear child, but since you ask if we think she is sufficiently trained to leave the convent I must be frank and do justice to our charge.

"She will need no further tuition for the position she will occupy in life. I am sure she will continue her studies and wide reading, so that unless she intended to specialize in music or train to earn her living, you may be at rest concerning her education."

Lord Dubley called immediately to Sister Theresa his intention of leaving for Freetown for Lucretia.

Lady Dubley did not spare his Lordship the pain of the knowledge of her disapproval of receiving Lucretia as their ward. But to her great surprise, Lord Dubley paid no heed to her objections and left immediately for Freetown.

When Sister Theresa presented the tall and graceful young lady to Lord Dubley, he could hardly believe that it was the shy girl that he had parted from a few years previously.

But as soon as they were left to themselves, he found that the reserved Lucretia was also a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, who responded to his fatherly greeting and lavished the love which she had so long nursed for her supposedly dead parents, upon her lonely uncle.

"You are sixteen now, I believe," Lord Dubley inquired.

"Next September coming, four months hence, uncle dear," she replied.

"You looked like a grown up lady when you were first announced, but on closer inspection, I see that you are still the open-hearted young girl I have always imagined you to be. With your old uncle you will always be yourself and reserve the other pose for strangers," Lord Dubley playfully remarked.

Lucretia and Zina soon bade goodby to their kind friends. Zina, although years younger, was a strong girl and looked to be sixteen or possibly eighteen years of age. She accompanied her young friend and mistress as lady's maid, having been trained to the position.

Aboard the ship they were met by Mr. Solomon, who

presented Lucretia with a young monkey which she immediately christened Nogi II in memory of their protectress.

Lucretia was happy in her chummy relations with her uncle, who was her ideal of what she had always imagined her father to be. She anticipated her pleasure in wandering through the old castle, and visiting her grandfather's and daddy's apartments.

She imagined Lady Dubley to be just such a motherly person as Mrs. Jones of the mission, Sister Theresa, or the ideal of her mother, by which she judged all good women. No dark forebodings or doubts marred her happiness in the anticipation of the welcome which she would receive at her ancestral home.

And so it was a light-hearted and happy girl who watched the old castle as they approached in an open machine, while Lord Dubley pointed out the different works and scenes of interest. She was disappointed when they were greeted by the formal footman and prim Scottish maid, instead of her aunt, as she had expected.

Lord Dubley left her in the maid's care, who led her to her own apartments, while he sought his wife to arrange a meeting.

"Please send Zina to me," Lucretia said to the maid, after having admired her private boudoir, dairy bed and dressing rooms.

Somehow there seemed to be a loneliness and disappointment which her handsome apartment could not relieve.

When Zina arrived, she also had felt the chill, and both wished the same unspoken thought that they were back at the happy convent.

Lucretia had just changed her travelling clothes and donned a simple white dress when Minnie, a maid, announced that his lordship awaited Miss Montcrief in the hall to conduct her to Lady Dubley.

Lucretia entered the sumptuous apartment of Lady

Dubley and was ushered into the boudoir on the arm of her uncle.

Lady Dubley was reclining upon a couch and arose at their entrance. She coldly extended her hand, and turned her cheek to be kissed. After a polite inquiry as to the voyage and as to the satisfaction of Lucretia's apartment, she apologized as she complained of a severe headache, and informed Lucretia that she would have to take her breakfast alone or with the Earl, because she always dined alone in the mornings.

Lucretia was very anxious to do something to relieve Lady Dubley, but her offers were met with a polite refusal.

After Lucretia had retired, Lady Dubley turned to her husband and remarked: "Missie informed me that Lucretia brought along a heathen maid and a monkey. I wish you would give her to understand that they are undesirable, and must be dispersed with.

"You would also do me a favor by placing her in a young lady's boarding school where she could be made a polished English lady."

Lord Dubley exerted his authority in a most surprising manner and refused to separate Lucretia from her maid and pet, or to take her to a school.

"Lucretia will grace any drawing room in her present state, but I shall have companions for her next fall who will assist her in the modern languages and music, after which I shall have Lady Endicourt, her mother's widowed aunt, chaperon her upon a continental tour," Lord Dubley remarked as he arose to retire.

Lucretia felt the coldness of Lady Dubley very keenly, and somehow believed that it was due to some fault of hers.

In her anxiety to please her aunt, she continually sought her company, offering to do little personal services, and was always reminded that maids were employed to

contributes to the comfort of her ladyship, after which she would leave, feeling very much humiliated.

Her uncle presented her with one of his pedigreed horses, and they both took early morning rides over the beautiful green plains and through the wooded parks. These rides and their occasional chats in the library were Lucretia's happiest hours.

One afternoon in the early fall, Lucretia was in her boudoir seated on a Roman stool before the open fire, leaning her chin upon the open palm of her left hand as the elbow rested on her knee, playing with the leopard claw around her neck as she gazed into the fire in a very thoughtful mood. Zina squatted Turkish fashion upon an oriental rug as she petted Nogi II.

Lady Dubley entered unannounced, and stood looking upon the scene.

"How dare you perform a heathenish rite in this castle?" she demanded in a rage.

Before Lucretia understood the question had been addressed to her, Lady Dubley ordered Zina and Nogi from the room and forbade their return, then turning to Lucretia she said, "Don't you know that white people do not wear fetiches and worship idols? I thought you had left these ceremonies on the mountains in Africa. Throw that claw into the fire at once."

Lucretia was indignant at the accusation, and informed Lady Dubley politely that she would never part from the claw because her "dead" father had fastened it around her neck, and had instructed her never to part from it.

Lady Dubley sought the Earl in the library and accused Lucretia of fetish and idol-worship, and insisted that Zina and Nogi leave the castle immediately, and that Lucretia remove the claw from her neck.

Lord Dubley was very sad over his wife's decision, but made no comments until he had spoken with Lucretia.

He did not believe the charges, but asked his niece if

she would not wear a chain and locket with her initial in brilliants instead.

But when Lucretia explained the circumstances of her father's gift of the claw and his warning, her uncle gave her the privilege of wearing it unaltered.

He then arranged with an old nurse of his who lived in a cottage in the Petting Hill, to lodge Zina and Nagi, and permitted Lucretia to visit them.

Lord Dudley had gone to London for a few days, and one sharp morning Lucretia refused to allow the groom to accompany her on her ride.

As they were driving through the country, Nagi leaped from her arms upon the horse's neck and pulled its ear.

The horse became frightened and galloped madly away beyond Lucretia's control.

The Earl of Winslow, whose estate adjoined the Dudley estate, was riding a sprightly chestnut horse through a meadow when the frightened horse bounded madly over a board fence coming in his direction as Lucretia clung to its neck.

Lord Reginald Winslow was a young man about twenty-two, of a dark complexion, and wore a becoming, slight moustache of a dark brown color. He was about five feet eight inches, and his erect, correct and sprightly bearing gave one the impression that he was of the military profession. But they were only typical of his character, and represented a young aristocrat who recognized the responsibility of his position and always tried to live up to his social demands. His sprightly energy exerted itself as soon as he saw the runaway horse.

After an exciting chase, his self-possession almost deserted him as he caught a glimpse of Lucretia's frightened but calm white face, while Nagi clung to her right shoulder and a braid of her hair, which it had unloosed in its fright, when he finally succeeded in checking the frightened horse.

Raising his riding cap of the same pattern of the plaid

riding suit he wore, "You had better take my mount," he said, after being assured that she was unharmed.

"Thank you so much, sir, but Billy is all right now; Nogi will not be naughty any more, will you, Nogi?" she concluded as she patted the monkey. Lord Winslow held out his arm to Nogi and to the surprise of its mistress it leaped from her to the Earl and cuddled in his arms as if they were old friends.

Thus the first bond of friendship was firmly established and Lord Winslow bearing Nogi accompanied her to the village as she innocently chatted of her pet and African maid. After Nogi was restored to its keeper and Lucretia had promised to visit him in her future rides, Lord Winslow took his departure.

On the next morning Lucretia rode along and they were both surprised when their morning rides happened to bring them together. Lord Winslow, of course, was naturally anxious about the result of the runaway ride, but his sense of propriety and strict conventional training prompted him to enquire if there were no mutual acquaintances who could give a formal introduction.

When Lucretia informed him that she lived at Dubble Castle and was the daughter of the late Oliver Montcrief, Lord Winslow immediately recalled the history of the unfortunate family. "I am well acquainted with the Earl and Lady Dubble. I shall call on him to-morrow and obtain a formal introduction, until then an revoir," he concluded as he tipped his cap and rode away.

Lucretia had met no eligible young men; in fact, besides her father and uncle, Reverend Jones, Governor Row, the priest and Mr. Solomon, her acquaintance with the male sex had ended, and her father and uncle had occupied the star places in her mind.

But now her hero and ideal that she had read of and sometimes in her innocent day dreams had pictured, had come in real life.

Her natural reserve protected her secret so that she

but inspired a greater passion in her devoted adviser.

Lord Winslow was well acquainted with Lady Dubley's habits because a few years previously he had been a constant visitor at the castle when he was the accepted suitor of Lady Georgiana, the Earl's daughter.

He therefore called at 11 a.m. just after she had partaken of her breakfast and occupied her morning *soi parlor*.

Lady Dubley received his card with a smile of pleasurable surprise. She had secretly regretted that Georgiana had not waited a little longer before breaking her engagement with the then titleless heir of a rich uncle, who then bade fair to a good old age, for the old Count de la Fosse, who jealously guarded his young wife and refused to take her into society as she naturally desired.

Lady Dubley did not admit her regrets even to her husband and suffered the more keenly, especially since her selfish daughter did not spare her feelings in her reproachful letters.

It was really a great pleasure to her ladyship when Lord Winslow was announced. She held out her hand and greeted him in a very friendly manner.

After an exchange of polite compliments, Lord Winslow mentioned the object of his visit.

"Do I understand you to say that Lord Dubley's niece was riding with that African *blo*?"

Lord Winslow then explained the accident again.

"I am sorry not to be able to comply with your request, Lord Winslow, but Miss Moncrief is not old enough or prepared to enter society. She will be sent to school and taught to outgrow her African habits before she makes her debut into society. I shall have to ask you to wait until that time, my friend," Lady Dubley replied to his repeated request.

Lady Dubley prohibited the next morning's ride, and when the Earl returned that afternoon, Lady Dubley informed him of the meeting with Lord Winslow.

"Just think of your niece riding through the country unattended, with a monkey, which frightens the horse when it sees a handsome young man approaching, who of course rescues the faltering maiden. Oh, it is disgraceful! These innocent girls are very clever after all," Lady Dubley remarked in a temper.

"She must be sent away to school, because I will not tolerate her presence here any longer, under the circumstances," Lady Dubley concluded, when the Earl failed to reply to her first statements.

Lucretia explained the occurrence to her uncle but suggested that perhaps the school would be better since her ladyship desired it.

It was finally agreed that Lucretia be sent to a fashionable boarding school.

Lord Winslow had always been the choice of the Earl, who tried to influence his daughter to be guided by her true feelings rather than make a needless sacrifice for wealth and title.

The Earl of Dubley therefore listened to Lord Winslow's proposal for Lucretia's hand with favor.

"Does Lucretia reciprocate your feelings, Reginald?" he asked, after Lord Winslow had paused.

"I have not dared express my sentiments to your niece without your approval, Lord Dubley," he replied.

"Lucretia is but sixteen years of age and has had no experience of the world. She received only the training her mother could give her in the jungles until placed in the convent, so you must understand that she will have to be sympathetically understood by you before it would be advisable to contemplate an early marriage," Lord Dubley remarked.

Lord Winslow soon convinced the Earl of Dubley that his feelings were no passing fancy.

Summoning a page Lord Dubley sent for Lucretia.

Lucretia was packing her little treasured mementoes over which she was shedding tears when the page was

admitted and delivered his lordship's message.

When Lucretia entered the library the Earl of Dubley retired and left the couple alone.

Lucretia was very surprised when she saw Lord Winslow in her uncle's library, but half an hour afterward the spirit of her old grandfather, who had often smiled upon her baby and childhood photographs, must surely have smiled upon his happy grand-daughter, who plighted her maiden heart to the keeping of such a true and handsome knight.

Lord Dubley returned an hour later to find the couple in such a happy mood that the first glance told its own story. Lord Winslow led Lucretia to her uncle and received his blessings.

Lord Dubley first objected to the early marriage Lord Winslow proposed, but the memory of Lucretia's unpleasant position at the castle and his desire to see her happy finally over-ruled his first objections and he consented.

Lady Dubley was very much chagrined over the news of the engagement, but decided to act the part Lucretia's position demanded.

She, however, would not consent to the marriage until a formal luncheon was given at which Lucretia's debut and engagement were made simultaneously.

On the eve of the marriage, Lady Dubley visited Lucretia's room at midnight. She kissed her niece very affectionately and, sitting beside the bed as she held her hand, she began:

"My dear little girl, you have always misunderstood my motive when I suggested things for your good and future happiness.

"I know that you are an innocent girl who knows nothing of the wickedness and machinations of this our world.

"You precipitated this engagement without consulting me, who, after all, you will find to be your best friend.

"Lord Winslow is the fited suitor of Georgiana, my

daughter, the Countess de la Fere. He still loves Georgiana and is only marrying you because he has foolishly got the impression that he would be spiting me since he accuses me of being responsible for Georgiana's choice.

"Had I believed he wanted to meet you from a sincere motive of friendship, I should not have hesitated, although you are not old enough to receive young gentleman callers. But how could I believe he was sincere when he continuously upbraided me for ruining his happiness? I would have spared you a loveless marriage, but there will come a time when you will recall this interview and wish you had heeded my advice."

CHAPTER XXVI

MARRIAGE AND HONEYMOON

Lucretia lay awake long after Lady Dubbley had retired, thinking over the statements she had just heard.

"How could it be possible for such honest eyes as Reggie's, to look into my face and declare his love and devotion, when he knew he loved another?" she thought.

"Oh, this is too cruel. There must be some mistake, for what have I done to be deceived and treated so cruelly? Reggie could not be guilty of such an unsteady act.

"But suppose he proposed out of pity for me when he learned that I was to be sent away because of the accident?"

"I cannot think well to-night. Oh, how my head throbs!

"Lady Dubbley after all must be kind. I am sure she would not misrepresent things to me. Georgiana is already happily married, and there is nothing to gain by causing me unhappiness, and she could have warned me sooner if she wished to prevent the marriage because of personal feelings.

"No, I cannot believe that she would be inflicting a needless misery upon me. She only wishes to prepare me not to expect too much happiness.

"Oh, mother dear! would that you were here to advise your poor unhappy child! Ah! Sister Julie often warned us at the convent of the deceit and cruelty of men. But Reg—Raggle, Oh Ragland! how can I believe that you are deceiving me?"

Thus the poor girl raved all night, sobbing and praying for some way out of her unhappy state.

The next morning was dark and a misty snowstorm raged outside.

Lord Winslow and the few family guests arrived, just as the pale and trembling bride was having the finishing touches arranged to her toilet.

The ceremony was performed in the castle drawing room.

At the wedding breakfast Lord Winslow and the guests noticed the pale and pathetic look upon the face of the young bride, but thought that the excitement and natural bashfulness were responsible.

They entered a limousine and drove away amid the usual rice and shoe showers. Arriving at the station they were joined by Zina and Nogi and they took the noon express for Portsmouth, where they embarked in Lord Winslow's yacht and crossed the Solent channel for his island castle, near St. Catherine's Point upon the south-western part of the Isle of Wight.

The large old Norman castle stood with its facades and massive towers ranging one above the other and situated upon a promontory that overlooked some ragged cliffs upon which the waves of the channel constantly broke into leathery spray as the sound of their noisome breakers was wafted up to the castle.

Lucretia was delighted with her surroundings but the seed Lady Dubley had sown continued to crop up no matter how hard she tried to forget.

The fact that the Countess was never referred to seemed to indicate that Lord Winslow either regarded the subject too sacred to be discussed or wished to spare her feelings.

The first open little cloud started when Lucretia was dressing for a ball given in their honor. Lord Winslow was about to clasp a diamond necklace about her neck and noticed that she had not removed the chain and claw.

"Why do you continually wear that charm around your neck my dear? You are no longer a child and it is very unbecoming," Lord Winslow remarked as he attempted to unclasp it.

"Do not unloosen the chain, Reginald, I must never remove it from my person," Lucretia replied.

Lord Winslow recalled the charges Lady Dabley had made when she referred to the African idol. For a moment a frown fitted across his forehead as he wondered if his wife believed in fetich and charms. But his great love and confidence soon dispelled the doubts and he inquired the reason she prized the trinket.

After she related the circumstances of her father's escape and wound made by the claw, and his warning to be clasped it upon her neck, Lord Winslow was satisfied that it was merely a sentiment and desire to respect her father's wishes that prompted her to object to its removal.

"But, my dear, you cannot appear in an evening gown wearing the claw, so give it to me; I shall keep it in one of my inside pockets so that it will still be with you," he playfully ended.

Lucretia began to wonder why her father had placed such an objectionable article around her neck which caused everybody to regard her as a fetich worshipper. Her loyalty to her father, however, influenced her to wear it, and her husband's happy solution was met with tears of gratitude.

Lord Winslow's objection to Lucretia visiting among the peasants caused quite a bit of friction.

One day he happened to be riding through his estate and saw Lucretia holding a sick baby, outside of a small cottage, while a little ragged urchin of four held on to her skirts and seemed quite familiar with her.

Lord Winslow was very much annoyed. As he rode near, she called out to him before he could speak.

"Oh, Reggie, this poor baby was smothering to death inside with a fever and I brought him out for a breath of air."

"Fever?" Lord Winslow asked, what are you thinking of, exposing yourself among such unsanitary surroundings? Give the child to its mother and return with me to the castle. You must have these clothes burned and never act a nurse again. I am glad you are interested in the poor people but you may send them money, food, and hire a nurse, but do not expose yourself among them."

"I am very sorry I cannot obey your commands at present, because the poor mother has gone to secure some medicine and groceries and I am keeping house. Send Zina down, please."

Lord Winslow was constantly provoked at Lucretia's democratic habits, as he could not convince his young wife that ladies of her position should not mingle among their unfortunate sisters.

She religiously performed her many social duties, at which times he prompted and tried to have her act so perfectly correct that the poor child had begun to lose her natural grace and ensheathed herself in a shy reserve that was mistaken among their friends for pride and unfriendliness.

Lady Dabley's words constantly returned to Lucretia, and at each misunderstanding, she became more unhappy and believed he was comparing her faults to Georgiana's virtues.

Spring arrived, and Lord and Lady Dabley came in

the early part to remain with the couple and join the yachting party that Lord Winslow was planning to sail during the first of May.

Lucretia improved considerably with her uncle's companionship. She suspected that Lord Winslow had tired of her company and had therefore invited the older people to come so early.

Lady Dudley soon read the telltale lines of Lucretia's face. As they sat alone one afternoon, she remarked:

"My poor child, how I pity you. It's really cruel of Reginald not to have given you a pleasant honeymoon, at the least. But I knew his pride would soon overcome his desire for revenge and that he would regret having married a wife who had once been an African priestess. Oh, it stung him when he heard of it, but of course, my dear, you were not to blame," she ended as she noticed with alarm the dead pallor which overspread Lucretia's face.

"Georgiana writes that the old Count has been poorly. The dear child is so anxious about him that she will not leave his side," she concluded after Lucretia did not faint or become hysterical.

"Aunt Georgiana," Lucretia remarked, "please do not misjudge Reginald. He has treated me very kindly, and if I look unhappy it is because I am not very well. You must remember that this was my first winter and I am acclimating. Don't mention anything to uncle, please, about what you have said to me," Lucretia said as she arose.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARRIVAL OF THE COUNTERS

One sunny afternoon Lord Dudley escorted Lucretia upon a ramble by the seashore. When they returned about six o'clock Lucretia was laughing and looking more

like herself than she had for the last four months. When they reached the castle they were greeted upon entering the hall by a tall blonde in a soft clinging mourning gown.

Lord Dubley introduced the stranger to Lucretia as her cousin Georgiana.

The countess was a very handsome woman and wore her very tasteful and expensive clothes with a graceful and well studied poise. Her charm of manner and ready smile soon won for her the center of attraction wherever she held her court.

"You see, my dear, the Count died last week and I thought that there would be no need of distressing mother or disturbing this quiet family circle, so that I decided I should come and visit you two turtle doves in your quiet island home while I am mourning and retired from society," Georgiana repeated as she smiled into Lucretia's face.

Lucretia welcomed her handsome cousin and could not help but fall under her charm as she pitied her husband for his hasty marriage.

The Countess had not lost her art of coquetry during her long exile from the society world she so dearly loved. She resented the conventionalism which demanded that she should retire for a mourning period from the gay social life, and the promptings of her old feelings for Lord Winslow and a desire to test her old influence and compare her charms with the inexperienced girl wife, offered a pleasant diversion. She decided that it would be best to come unannounced, because her parents would have given up the idea of the proposed yachting trip and returned with her to Mestroy Castle or some quiet country seat.

Once at the Winslow castle she soon over-ruled her mother's objections and began her flirting campaign against her young hostess.

Lord Winslow was very surprised when he received the Countess as a guest.

He had outgrown the boyish passion and understood the selfish and heartless nature of the beautiful widow as no one except her parents could suspect.

But he would not permit his personal feelings to cause him to forget the duties of host to a young widowed cousin. And he had to admit that the countess had lived up and that the countess was a rare and charming conversationalist.

She spared no pains to please Lord Winslow and knowing his favorite themes she exerted herself to intelligently discuss them; sometimes Lord Winslow thought that the discipline of the old Count had broadened her ideas and changed her for the better.

But she kept him attending her constantly so much so that some of the friends who called at the castle remarked about the flirtation and expressed their disapproval.

Lucretia pined and became more reserved, always endeavoring to hide the terrible secret with a smile.

But Lord Winslow misunderstood her aloofness and thought that she preferred the companionship of her uncle and that he was doing her a favor to relieve her of the society of the Countess, who was becoming rather burdensome.

He often compared his innocent young wife with the worldly woman and thanked his kind fate that had directed his final choice.

The Earl of Dubley watched the drama and understood his selfish daughter's plans. He therefore spent less time with Lucretia and endeavored to make a third party to their chain.

Zina had also noticed the change and grieved in her helplessness to aid her silent mistress. One day Lucretia wandered down to the beach and Zina followed and, approaching, said: "My lady, it breaks my heart to see you so sad. Why don't you send that woman away?"

"Hush, Zina, do not say anything against the Countess.

It was all my fault, I was too young to marry. Oh mother," she sobbed as she opened her heart to her beloved maid.

"I want to go back to Africa. If we could only get to Rev. Jones; but I am afraid we could not locate him. I should be afraid to go to the convent because Sister Theresa would send me back. I could bear it if I alone were unhappy, but just think how poor Reginald must suffer when he looks at me and regrets that we married so early," Lucretia confided to Zina.

"Why not return to Freetown and have old Sally George, our landlady, to find a quiet place for us to live?" Zina suggested.

"But who knows where Sally lives? She thought a great deal of me, but everybody did that in Africa. Oh, if we could find Yanga! I wonder if she might not have returned to Freetown," Lucretia replied.

"I have visited Sally's house; it is on the Fura Bay Road and I could easily find it again," Zina added.

A few days after the conversation, Zina was walking up the southeast coast, where she frequently visited in the hope of arranging for their flight. As she walked along the seashore, she noticed the body of a drowned young woman washed upon the shore. The light brown curls and face somehow reminded her of Lucretia. As she stood looking upon it she saw old Lowe approaching. He was a dumb fisherman who lived in a cabin behind the cliffs near which the body was lying.

She motioned him to assist her in carrying it to the cabin. After paying and cautioning him to secrecy she hastened towards the castle.

She met Lucretia walking out alone and told her of her discovery and plans.

"Oh, but Zina, that would be too horrible! I would like them to believe me to be dead, but I could not exchange clothes with a dead woman and deceive them so cruelly," Lucretia exclaimed in an expression of horror.

"I don't want you to wear her clothes, but to exchange your clothes for a boy's suit I have at the cabin, and try to take a ship for France disguised as a young man and wire me where to meet you later. You don't have to see the woman unless you want to. If we leave together as we first planned, they will soon find us and you will have to explain your reasons for leaving to your husband and uncle," Zina replied to Lucretia's objections.

"But I have not over ten sovereigns in my purse. I should have to return to the castle and it would be too late before I could come out again," Lucretia remarked.

"You may take my purse. I have £120 (or \$507) in it I have saved from your generous presents. Don't lose time, it is 1.30 p.m. now, and it will take an hour to reach the cabin," Zina urged.

"No, Zina, I cannot imagine poor uncle mourning over another person and thinking it was his unhappy niece. And for poor Reginald and Georgiana, it would be most unpleasant. Oh, no, suppose they think that I committed suicide. Your plan is impossible," she sobbed.

"You are committing slow suicide already and cannot live much longer at this rate. You will cause me to murder that red-haired, snake-eyed woman," Zina said in a towering passion.

Lucretia was really frightened as she had never seen Zina in such a temper, and she read the pent-up fury which had reached its limit of endurance.

Zina had completely forgotten her position and looked upon Lucretia as her childhood friend who was being slowly murdered.

"Let us go, Zina; I shall do as you say, but you must promise me upon your oath that you will not harm the Countess or any one else for my sake," Lucretia replied, as she walked towards the southeast.

"The fisherman will rent his boat, which we will capsize so as to have them think that the drowning was accidental," Zina assured Lucretia in her natural voice.

When they reached the shark, Lucretia refused to look upon the corpse but entered an adjoining room and donned the ill-fitting suit Zina had secured.

Zina hesitated and tried to think of a way to avoid cutting the heavy locks of hair. Lucretia decided that the sacrifice would be the only thing to do under the circumstances, so that Zina braided the hair in two long thick braids and dipped them closely. When she covered with a cap which partly hid the poorly barbered hair.

Lucretia placed the two locks in her bosom and Zina recalled the leopard's claw.

"Do not forget the claw."

"His lordship would look for that the first thing," Zina repeated.

"I cannot part with it, Zina, but what you say is quite true. Oh, what shall I do? Mother dear, do guide your poor unhappy child," Lucretia sobbingly cried.

Zina patted and soothed her as if she were a child.

"My dear father will forgive me for trying to make dear Reggie happy. Unloosen it, Zina, and let me go away from here," she cried almost hysterically.

Pulling the chain from her neck she dropped it into Zina's hand and ran away from the cabin.

Keeping in an easterly direction she almost ran into Mr. Wilson, a Chicago millionaire aviator, who was walking impatiently up and down the beach a few paces from his biplane, which was out of its hangar.

He was dressed in his flying outfit, and was about to make an angry remark, when Lucretia meekly apologized and asked if he were about to fly to France.

"Yes, I should have started ten minutes ago if my companion had any idea of time," he impatiently replied.

"Will you take me along? I must reach France this evening," she asked.

"Yes, jump in; I won't wait another second for Har-

ria. He will have to take a boat," Mr. Wilson replied in his usual impetuous manner.

They flew over the Channel and landed at Boulogne near the Central Station. It was then four o'clock, but the late spring afternoon was bright and balmy.

After the machine had landed and Mr. Wilson assisted his passenger from the machine he noticed the very poor hair cut and the ill-fitting clothes on the girlish form. His impatience to reach the continent in the time he had planned, and the delay caused by his tudy friend had so absorbed his mind that he had paid no attention to the young lad whose thin voice was so very effeminate.

He thought perhaps he was a young French student who was attending school in England and wanted to spend the week with his parents. But when he noticed Lucretia closely, he concluded that he had assisted in an elopement.

"Are you expecting a friend to meet you, little one," he asked very kindly.

"No, I am going on to Paris," Lucretia replied.

Mr. Wilson accompanied her to a waiting room at the station.

"Is this an elopement, Kid? Let me into the secret, since I have assisted Cupid," he said to Lucretia as he seated her and stood before her.

"An elopement?" she asked in genuine alarm and surprise.

Mr. Wilson was convinced of his mistake and became alarmed at what might happen to the unprotected girl masquerading in a boy's clothes in the city of Paris.

"Have you relatives or close friends in Paris?" he asked.

"No, this is my first visit," Lucretia truthfully replied.

"Great Scott! What have I done. Boy, little girl, you must tell me why you are masquerading in boys' clothes and going to Paris."

"I cannot tell you any more than I have and must

beg you please accept my thanks for crossing me in your machine. I must be securing my ticket and therefore bid you adieu," Lucretia replied as she arose.

She was surprised that her secret was detected and anxious to make her escape from her inquisitive companion.

"Wait a minute; I will secure tickets for both of us. Will you tell me your name? I am Wilson, of Chicago," Mr. Wilson stated in the hope that he would be able to communicate with her parents.

"Monocrief is my name," Lucretia replied, as she held out her hand boyishly.

When Mr. Wilson left for the ticket office, Lucretia looked around for means of escape because she suspected that he would recognize the name and try to communicate with her uncle.

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN THE HANDS OF THE WHITE SLAVER

Upon leaving the waiting room Lucretia noticed a middle-aged gentleman who had been watching her slowly following. He wore a military mustache, was of medium height, blonde complexion.

In her effort to keep on the alert for a sight of Mr. Wilson and elude the obnoxious stranger, she unconsciously walked towards a group of women who were awaiting their trains in a room near the ticket office.

The stranger still followed and winked his eye, as Lucretia thought, at her. True to her feminine instinct she crossed from her seat and sat near a well dressed and bejewelled middle-aged blonde, whose face and hair bore the traces of expensive cosmetics and blonde dye. Madam Mian had been smiling at Lucretia and therefore addressed her in French as soon as she came in: "He

is a detective who is following you because of your masquerade, but I shall speak to him and tell him that you are under my protection. Where are you going? To Paris? Ah, that is fortunate. Have you relatives who are expecting you? No? Well, you must surely come along with me. Where is your ticket? Wait a minute, while I speak with the detective."

She crossed over to the gentleman and engaged in an animated conversation.

Returning with her face radiant with smiles, she said to Lucretia:

"Come, my little friend, the gentleman will not annoy you any longer. I shall arrange for your ticket and we must take the 5:15 train for Paris."

Just as Lucretia passed from the ladies' waiting room, she caught a glimpse of Mr. Wilson, who was searching for her.

She gripped the arm of her protectress, who hurriedly hastened her away, supposing that Lucretia had recognized a relative.

On entering the first class carriage of the train Lucretia recognized the military gentleman, who travelled as their only companion. At the station the gentleman hailed a taxicab and politely assisted Madam Mass into the same.

Lucretia did not see him follow in another cab, but weary with her exciting experiences, she partly leaned against Madame as they drove away.

The taxi drove down the Boulevard d'Italie and stopped before an imposing stone front residence about 10 p.m.

Madam Mass ushered Lucretia into a gorgeously furnished three-story residence, and conducted her personally to a very handsomely furnished bedroom upon the second floor.

She spoke very kindly and administered to Lucretia's comfort before leaving the room.

Lucretia soon fell into an uneasy slumber, during which she sighed in her sleep, although unconscious of the two conspirators in another room who discussed and planned her fate.

Early the next morning Lucretia found a beautifully embroidered Japanese kimono in the place of her suit of clothes.

Madame soon appeared wreathed in smiles and remained chatting as she coaxed Lucretia to eat the dairy breakfast a chic French maid brought upon a tray.

"Will you be so kind as to send out and order for me a street costume? I must not remain longer upon your kind hospitality. I want to secure a quiet and moderately priced room and send a telegram for my African maid. I thank you so much, my kind friend and hostess, but you will do me a greater kindness by assisting me in this matter," Lucretia remarked.

"My dear little friend, you pain me greatly when you express a desire to leave me so early. It is impossible for you to go out with your hair cut like this. Did you bring the braids along? Ah, how fortunate; oh, what beautiful and heavy braids. I shall have *ma petite* a very lovely wig made that will have you soon looking again like your own beautiful self. Give me the name of the African maid and the address. I shall send the telegram immediately.

"*Ils ma chère petite any money? Shall I put this away for you, ma chère? Au revoir,*" Madame Mass ended as she kissed Lucretia upon the cheeks before retiring.

Madame went into her apartments upon the first floor. After closing her *boudoir* door she counted the money and examined the hair again. "What wonderful hair!" she exclaimed aloud. "Let me think, Madame Rene would pay 50 louis for these two braids. I might get more from Monsieur Jacques, perhaps 100 louis. But le Comte D'Alton is very particular and says I must have the

best wig made to match her hair that money can buy. Ah, those rich men are so unreasonable! If I should sell this hair and buy a real hair wig like he says, it will cost more than the profit I should make from this. So I must have this made up. Ah, yes! No one thinks of the poor. I must be satisfied with the 125 louis in her purse. Le Comte must know nothing of these braids, however, and I must have Jacques send a bill for 200 louis." Madame spoke aloud as she finally decided how she would dispose of the wig problem, shaking her head with an injured look.

Lucretia was sitting in her bedroom dressed in the kimono and looking anxiously and expectantly towards the door. This was the third day after her interview with the madame and she had had no word from Zina nor had she been able to secure the outdoor clothes.

The door was suddenly opened and to her surprise and fright, the military looking stranger of the train walked in unannounced.

Lucretia jumped up and tried to run by him and escape through the door as she called for the madame. Le Comte D'Attene firmly but smilingly caught her, drew her within his arms and tried to kiss and caress her.

Lucretia showed surprising strength as she fought and screamed for help.

The resistance only excited her assailant to more desire and, losing his former persuasive manner, he almost roughly pinned her arms to her sides and was about to overcome her now feeble resistance when the door was suddenly opened and a young brunette of about twenty whose enraged and angry features failed to disguise her natural beauty, walked into the room and demanded the meaning of the scene before her.

Her presence acted strangely upon the Comte. Turning loose the almost fainting victim he fairly kissed, "Ehaine, what are you spying upon me for? Go away!

You have no claim upon me. You are not my wife, do you understand?"

Elsie turned from Lucretia, whom she had gently placed upon the bed, and turned a face full of outraged dignity as she said, "Ah, Monsieur le Comte D'Attans, we will settle that point very shortly between ourselves, but you will not succeed in your plans with this innocent child."

Le Comte covered before her almost too calm deliberation and slipped out of the room. After locking the door she turned her attention to Lucretia, and succeeded in calming the hysterical state in which she was. She obtained an account of the flight and kidnapping by the polite and generous stranger.

"So that you have only the kinora that you have on, and no money or means of communicating with your friends? Poor little innocent, you should never have run away from your parents to a strange and large city like Paris alone. Did you say that the aviator was an American? What, Wilson from Chicago? You did wrong to run away from him. I know of him, and I am sure that he could be trusted.

"I am a Chicago girl myself, and you may trust me implicitly. I will remove you from here, have no fear. Give me the maid's name and address. You can bet your last cent that Madame what's her name never sent that telegram. I would take you with me now, kid, if I had to fight my way through this whole outfit, but you see it would be impossible to take you out in that rig. Don't worry about that man, I shall attend to him. Look for me soon, au revoir, be good."

Elsie unlocked the door and left her little charge in a quiet and reassured state of mind.

Her influence upon the Comte and her assuring manner of speaking inspired complete confidence in Lucretia, who felt for the first time since her flight that she had found a sincere friend.

Madame Maza had quite a time persuading Lucretia to unlock the door and admit her into the room.

"Why do you lock yourself in and refuse to admit your friend, *ma chère*?" Madame asked in an assumed surprise.

Lucretia related the assault and rescue by the beautiful American. But some instinct prevented her from discussing the conversation between them, although the madame used all of her arts and tricks to surprise Lucretia into confiding the same to her.

"Ah, the wretch! to come to my house when I was absent and try to take away my guest because of a little masquerade. To kiss you, did you say? Oh, the dog! I shall have him arrested.

"Where does the beautiful American live? She must be my witness. What a pity she did not tell you, but I will be protected.

"It is fortunate, my friend, that the wig will be finished tomorrow and your maid will be over on the day after," Madame Maza announced as she gaskingly tried to regain Lucretia's lost confidence.

The next afternoon Madame's private telephone rang.

"Ah! *Monsieur le Comte*, you were too impatient. Why didn't you wait a week as I warned you? *Le petite* has no confidence in me now, she locks herself in the room. *La American beauty*? I don't know where she lives but I am afraid she will bring trouble upon poor me. Ah yes, so we poor people must suffer for your pleasure.

"Oh! you have arranged for my protection. How cavalier, *mon cher le Comte*! Yes, the lovely wig is finished and cost me a fortune. But you can afford to pay the small sum of 200 louis for such a lovely creature. Bring her over? When? At 4.00 p.m. to the Chateau? Yes, that will be better for me also. *Au revoir* till then, *mon cher*," Madame repeated over the phone in response to a message from *le Comte*.

"*Ma petite* looks too charming in the beautiful wig.

How lucky it was that you saved the hair. No one could ever tell that it was cut off. But you need a little rouge to brighten up those pale cheeks. Now? What harm is it to use a little? All of the lovely ladies use it. Yes, you must have just a little. Now that is perfect. Your costume fits you perfectly. Now we will go and select the rooms you are to move into to-morrow when your maid arrives," Madame said to Lucretia as she arranged her toilet at 1.30 p.m.

After placing a very chic and becoming hat upon Lucretia's head she pulled a thick veil over her face and led her to the sidewalk, where they both entered a taxicab and drove away after Madame directed the chauffeur.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RESCUE

ELaine was standing across the street with a parcel under her arm watching the house when the couple came out. She crossed in the middle of the block hurriedly and arrived just in time to catch a glimpse of Lucretia through the glass of the cab. She could not recognize the beautiful young lady as the hysterical girl of the previous day, but some instinct and the large pathetic eyes which she saw in that fleeting glimpse, convinced her that Lucretia was being removed by the landlady, whom she easily recognized from Lucretia's description.

A gentleman was just about to enter a seven-passenger car near the curb where she stood. She recognized him as a compatriot and addressing him in English in her American vernacular, she begged to be taken in his machine and to have the taxi kept in sight.

Mr. Wilson did not hesitate to grant the rather strange request.

"Oh, thank you so much for your confidence. This

is a matter more serious than death," she exclaimed almost excitedly after the car started in pursuit of the taxi.

"Just keep them in sight, don't let them imagine we are following," she added.

She then explained the errand to her companion, of whose identity she was still unaware.

"Did you say her hair was badly cut and she came over in an alpship dressed in boy's clothes?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, you must know her. Oh, I might have known at first that you are Mr. Wilson had I not been so excited," Elaine replied, very much relieved at her discovery.

"Yes, you are correct as to my identity. Do you know I have had not a moment's rest since I lost sight of that child in Boulogne. I forget the name she gave me and I have been searching Boulogne and Paris ever since trying to find her. I am so glad that she found such a providential friend as you. Now we both will be her guardians," Mr. Wilson said as he gave his companion an admiring and grateful look.

They drove into the aristocratic Faubourg on the road to Rambouillet, when the taxi stopped before a large brick chateau in the center of beautiful grounds, of trees and flowers.

The pair were within the chateau before the automobile was near enough to be sure of the identity and interfere.

"I shall follow them into the Chateau. Do you know the name of the owner," Mr. Wilson inquired of his companion.

"This is the Chateau Luxemburg and belongs to le Comte D'Arnone," she replied.

"I have heard of him. He is very rich and unscrupulous," Mr. Wilson answered as he left the machine for the Chateau.

He returned shortly in a temper. "That slick scoun-

deal of a footman refused to admit me, saying that the Comtesse is abroad and no visitors are received at the Chateau. I felt like wringing his blooming neck for him," Mr. Wilson repeated angrily.

"I expected something like that. You did not mention your errand, did you?" Elaine asked anxiously.

"No, I thought I would consult you first," he replied.

"Very well, let us pretend to drive away."

"Let us get out now and have the machine await us here," Elaine instructed, after they were out of sight of the Chateau.

They walked by and entered the grounds, where they wandered impatiently until dusk. "I pray that we are not too late. Come, Mr. Wilson, we must hasten now."

She led him to the side garden near the right side of the Chateau. Walking to an innocent-looking sandial, she felt along the sides and pressed a button, when the square platform of grass upon which they stood slowly descended into the earth like an automatic elevator.

They found themselves in a dark tunnel, when Elaine pressed another button and the grass plot returned to its position.

"I wish I had brought my electric pocket light," Mr. Wilson said, as he struck a match.

"Never mind a light, hold my hand and follow," Elaine said, as she led the way.

She reached a door and Mr. Wilson struck a match as she felt for the secret button. The door opened and they passed on until they reached another, into which Elaine forced a key. They found a pair of narrow stairways, leading up to the first floor, and another leading to the second. As they neared the top, they heard loud voices talking in the hall near them when they stopped and overheard the Comtesse say in angry tones in French, "Confound the little tigress! She has ruined my face."

"Why didn't you trim those sharp claws, Marie? See how she has scratched me up. She has been to Africa.

M'cier le Comte. They don't have tigers there. What do they call those African cats, *Leopards*? Ah, that is the name, she is surely a wild one. I am afraid of her. Well, I must leave you with your beautiful wild cat. But you are an excellent tuner—nothing beats the jail cure, loneliness and a little quivering you will soon mold her into a little dove. *An revoir, mon cher*, don't forget to send her back to me when you tire of your new toy," Madame Maxa repeated as she departed.

As soon as she had gone down the front stairs, the hidden couple hurried into the hall and were met by le Comte who was returning towards his victim's room. They could hear Lucretia beating against the door and screaming so that Mr. Wilson started in the direction of the sounds, while Elaine held a loaded revolver before le Comte, daring him to move. Mr. Wilson easily located the sounds and found the key in the outside of the door. He soon entered and brought Lucretia, who had fainted in his arms as soon as she recognized him. He passed the couple in the hall and carried his charge down the broad stairway. He met no resistance from the servants as they were used to seeing strange things within the Chateau and the footman did not recognize the late visitor that he had refused to admit in the early evening. Mr. Wilson dispatched a page for his automobile and carried Lucretia in his arms to the machine.

Elaine in the meantime awaited until she thought Lucretia was out of the Chateau then ordered her enraged but cowed victim into the room where Lucretia was recently confined. She locked the door and kept the key as she calmly left the Chateau by the front exit, also without interference and entered the waiting automobile.

They drove away as she gave directions to the chauffeur. They arrived at a modest brown stone residence on the Rue d'Anger, when Mr. Wilson again lifted Lucretia, who was now really ill and unable to walk, and carried her into the house, where she was met by Zina.

Elaine and Zina soon put Lucretia to bed and administered cold applications to her fevered brow while Mr. Wilson summoned a doctor.

CHAPTER XXX

ELAINE'S HISTORY

One day during Lucretia's illness she had entered a quiet sleep for the first time since the night of the rescue. Mr. Wilson, who was a constant visitor, sat in the next room with Elaine and remarked, "Do you think that the Reginald she frequently calls and begs to forgive her is her fiance with whom she quarrelled, or a husband? It sounds so pathetic to hear her repeat in her delirium that she ran away because she loves him and wants him to be happy with Georgiana, and that uncle she continually calls. Oh, it is too sad! Can't you get any information from the African maid? I wonder if I could not bribe her to talk? I would give anything to straighten this tangle and see the poor child happy."

Elaine sighed, "Poor little thing, I don't know when I have taken a liking for any one in my life as I have for this poor child. Her parents are dead and the uncle must have treated her very kindly. But the 'Reginald' is a puzzle; she looks too young to be married. If she were an American I would think it likely, but from an aristocratic English family, as she evidently is, seems incredible. In some of her rambles she spoke of the Castle, Lady somebody, and a Countess. The African maid is like an oyster and a bribe won't work with her. Sometimes I regret that we did not have her along. Le Comte called Lucretia a tigress, he would have called the maid a lioness. She would have fought both he and Madame, and, I bet, come out winner. Lucretia is safe in her case, you bet. But we must persuade the

little girl to return to her uncle and Reginald. We must act as Cupid when she is better," ended Elaine with a smile.

"Yes, we will be Cupid for our little friend, but what about ourselves also, Elaine? You must by now know that I love you. Won't you permit our friend to act as Cupid for us, and bring me happiness also?" Mr. Wilson asked as he drew near and caught Elaine's hand. To his surprise she burst into tears.

"No, no, dear friend, you have been too trustful. You know nothing about my history. I have waited for you to ask some explanation of my knowledge of the Chateau and first meeting with Lucretia, but you have never referred to the subject other than if it were a natural and clear feat. You must listen to my history first and if you still think me worthy of your great love, then I can listen to your wooing.

"My name is Elaine Morrison, the Chicago heiress whom you must have read of three years ago, who eloped with a foreign nobleman. *Le Comte d'Attone* posed as an unmarried man and persuaded me to marry him secretly and retire with him to his country seat in Lavidia, near Kichinoff, Russia. We lived together very happily for about two years and a half, when he received a letter one morning and left the villa hastily upon what he termed a short business trip to England.

He wrote regularly for six weeks and ceased. Two months after his departure, I was surprised by a pale, aristocratic lady visitor, who announced herself as *le Comtesse d'Attone* and accused me of most horrible things. When I finally convinced my visitor that I was married by producing my certificate, she soon changed her tone and informed me that I was the victim of a fraud and that the certificate was a fake. She told me awful tales of *le Comte's* infidelity and immoral escapades. I was ill for a month after her visit. I wrote to the Comte and received no reply.

As soon as I became fit to travel I began a search for him. Oh, the feelings of love and passion! I was nearly crazy with grief and doubt.

One day I followed him to the Chateau and tried to enter, but was refused admittance. I used to hide within the grounds and watch for any opportunity to enter. One evening I saw a veiled woman go to the sandal and let herself down the secret entrance. I followed and searched until I found the spring and let myself down also. I opened the secret spring door, but could go no farther when I reached the locked door. I recalled, however, a piece of gun, the Chicago habit still clings to me, that I had in my bag, so that I obtained the impression of the keyhole.

When I tried to return I could not find the spring to open the other door and was obliged to remain in the dark and chilly tunnel until after midnight, when the woman returned without a light and I hid behind the door as she opened it and followed safely out.

"Before I could get an opportunity to use the tunnel entrance, I followed him to the house on the Boulevard d'Italie, when I rescued Lucretia and met him face to face for the first time since his desertion. In his passionate anger at the interrupted scene he informed me that I was not his wife and have no claims upon him.

"I despised him then too much to feel the sting of his cruel revelation, and was too interested in the unfortunate child to think of personal revenge.

"I wired Xira as soon as I left Madame Mann's and tried to obtain police assistance; but it seemed as if I were the culprit by the manner in which my information was received. So, I hastened to place my maid on watch, keeping le Corste shuttowed.

"I was watching for an opportunity to enter the house as some other visitor was admitted when I met you," she ended.

"Have you taken steps to obtain a divorce on the ground of bigamy?" Mr. Wilson asked.

"No, because I sent a copy of my certificate to my Chicago lawyer and had him go to South Bend, Indiana, and investigate. There was no record on the register and the minister was unknown, in fact, the whole ceremony was a mere play enacted by tools of *d'Attene* in order to deceive me. The certificate, which is not worth the paper upon which it is written, is the only proof that will anyway show that I was an innocent party to a fraud.

"I really believed myself his legal wife and trusted him so implicitly that I respected his desire to avoid publicity in the States. But we travelled always as husband and wife, I using the title of 'la Comtesse,'" Elaine replied.

"My poor little girl. You need to be pitied as much as our little friend. Did you think that that would cause me to change my mind, dear? That only shows that you need me more. Only tell me, dear, that you will trust me and try to let me win your love in time, and I shall be happy," Mr. Wilson said as he caught her hand.

"You will not have to win my love, dear; it has been yours ever——"

The other part of the sentence was lost in Mr. Wilson's shower of kisses.

"We must marry quietly as soon as our friend is better, and leave for Italy as soon as she is safely with her relatives. The Comte *d'Attene* had better not cross my path in the meantime, because I have two big scores against him now and I am sorry that I permitted you to dissuade me from following my impulse that day and had given the scoundrel the good thrashing I was about to give him," Mr. Wilson repeated during a temporary cessation of the caresses.

When Lucretia was strong enough to bear the excitement of the news, Elaine informed her and added, "My dear Lucretia, you must give us a wedding present, the

opportunity of reuniting you with your Reginald and uncle. You are making a great mistake, child, to remain away from your loved ones.

"I don't want to pry into your confidence, but my woman's intuition tells me that you are laboring under a great mistake, at the bottom of which is groundless jealousy. Listen to your friend, little one, your Reginald is suffering and heart-broken as well as yourself."

"Do you think he cares?" Laetitia so far forgot herself to ask.

"Of course he cares and suffers. Men have feelings as well as women and suffer more keenly than they bear their grief silently. And your uncle, child! Think of him also," Elaine replied.

"As soon as you are married, dear, I shall leave for my home immediately and you must promise that you will spend the greater part of your honeymoon with us. Oh, if I had only had such true friends as you and Mr. Wilson a month ago, I should have been a happy wi—person to-day," Laetitia exclaimed, as she threw her arms about Elaine's neck and almost betrayed her secret.

The next day Mr. Wilson and Elaine took Laetitia out on a shopping tour and a ride through the city.

As the party drove down fate played a cruel trick. Had they been three minutes earlier they would have seen Lord Winslow as he was about to enter a hotel, meet the Countess de la Ferre coming out and about to enter a waiting limousine when she recognized and halted him, or had they been two minutes later they would have seen the Earl when he tipped his hat and walked back to the hotel as the machine drove away. But fate would have it that they arrived just as Lord Winslow was assisting the Countess into a car. Laetitia uttered a little sigh and fainted before the surprised couple, who had paid no heed to the little drama, could imagine the cause.

"The shopping was too much for her. But she seemed

to have enjoyed it. We must take her back home at once," Mr. Wilson said in a pained tone.

"I think that couple in front of the hotel were responsible for the attack, because I noticed how strangely she acted when she first saw them, but I was so interested in Lucretia that I paid no attention to the couple," Elaine replied.

"I wish I had suspected that. I am sure I have met that military looking gentleman, and perhaps the lady," Mr. Wilson added regretfully.

When Lucretia was revived, she surprised her friends by announcing that she could not follow their plans, because it was impossible to return to her home. But if they would assist her to reach Sierra Leone, West Africa, she would be very grateful for their kindness.

"You are our daughter now, Lucretia, and you will accompany us upon our honeymoon and return with us to the States if you refuse to return to your relatives. So now say no more about Africa, or we will be angry," Mr. Wilson playfully remarked.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE HONEYMOON TOUR

Mr. Wilson and Elaine were quietly married at the office of the American Embassy on the following afternoon.

That evening they took a train with Lucretia, Zina, and Elaine's Russian maid and passed through and over Jura and the Jura Mountains into Switzerland and stopped at Zurich, where they spent a short while enjoying the sights of the quaint medieval-looking prosperous city.

From there they travelled by train to Trieste and remained at the important Austria-Hungarian seaport town, with its Italian-speaking population. They remained

these until near the middle of summer, when Lucretia's cheeks had begun to regain their naturally rosy complexion, when they crossed the Gulf of Venice and landed at Venice.

From thence they took a train to Rome. As the summer had now advanced, Mr. Wilson decided they would entrain for Genoa and spend the rest of the summer, when they would embark from that city for America on the first of September.

On the afternoon of their last day in Rome, they visited the *Saint Maria della Pace*, and were seeking their favorite paintings, when she recognized Lord Winslow standing in a very pensive mood looking upon one of Raphael's paintings with his hands crossed behind his back. He looked so sad and altered that she forgot all of her past doubts and jealousies and wanted to take him in her arms and mother him as if he were a little child. She left her companions abruptly and hastened towards him. But as fate would have it, the Countess was also among the visitors inspecting the paintings, and she saw Lord Winslow at the same time Lucretia did. Since she was nearer she reached his side and familiarly took his arm before Lucretia could reach or attract his attention.

Elaine was searching for Lucretia and just reached her side in time to save her from falling.

Lucretia naturally supposed that they were travelling together and believed that Lord Winslow had really forgotten the "dead" young bride.

When they reached Genoa, Lucretia said to Elaine as they were alone in the latter's dressing room, "Elaine, dear, do you know that I have had a peculiar dream about my mother. I dreamed three times last night that my mother, who is supposed to be dead in Africa, met me at Rev. Jones' Mission, where she is awaiting my father's return.

"My life has been such a strange one of circumstance and almost miraculous escapes from dangers that I am

almost persuaded to believe like Zina and the Africans, that my dream is true and that my mother is alive. I can never understand what because of a servant of my father's named 'Twa,' who disappeared on the eve of father's fatal fall. The boy was loyalty itself, but has never been heard of. And my old nurse Yanga, who was left to search for my mother has never been heard of either.

"Now, darling, don't think me ungrateful of your and Mr. Wilson's great kindness, but don't you see that under the circumstances you would do me a greater kindness if you will permit me to visit Freetown and inquire after Rev. Jones. I will promise faithfully not to go into the interior unless I am sure that my mother is alive and I have the proper protection, and I shall keep in touch with you always. Do, dear, persuade Mr. Wilson to consent.

"Some day I shall be in a position to repay the confidence you have placed in me without knowing my identity. But this much I can tell you now, I shall be seventeen this coming September and am a wife who is dead to her husband and relatives. Now, Elaine, you can see I am not the child you thought I was. It is too late to restore my happiness as a wife, but you may assist me to find the mother I have needed so much."

After this confidential outburst of Lucretia, Elaine persuaded Mr. Wilson to consent to Lucretia visiting Freetown, with the understanding that she would finally live with them in Chicago. Mr. Wilson and Elaine accompanied Lucretia as far as Tenacillo, where the party remained together in a mountain cottage for a fortnight.

Mr. Wilson gave Lucretia a very generous cash check upon the British West African Bank at Freetown and his Chicago Club address, where she could always reach them. They then parted from Lucretia upon the leeward-bound West African steamer and embarked in a northwest-bound steamer for their old home in the new world, which held

out to Elaine a new and rosy future and a patriotic love she had never before experienced.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE TIDINGS OF LUCRETIA'S DEATH REACH LORD WINSLOW

AFTER Lucretia left the cabin, Zina and the deaf fisherman changed the drowned woman's clothing, placed the chain and claw around her neck and returned her where she was formerly. They capsized his boat in the surf and Zina ran to bear the news to the castle.

Lord Winslow and the Earl of Dubley reached the scene together upon horseback. Zina explained that Lucretia and she had tried to row out in the surf when the boat capsized, and Lucretia drowned before she could be saved.

Lord Winslow examined the body and surprised Lord Dubley when he calmly announced that the body was not that of Lucretia. He removed the leopard's claw, however, and seemed almost to doubt his own mind.

"But the claw," he said, holding it in his hand, she would not have parted from this under any circumstances. Strange, I don't understand it," he spoke aloud as he shook his head.

Lord Dubley and several friends, who were among the curious crowd surrounding the body, patted him upon the shoulders pityingly and drew him away. No one else had the least doubt as to the real identity.

Lord Winslow kept the claw continually in his possession, but showed very little interest in the preparation of the funeral.

He accompanied the body to Worcestershire and attended the interment in an almost dazed condition. As soon as he could leave England he crossed over to Paris with an impression that he would find his wife alive.

His friends began to believe that he had lost his mind and always shook their heads pityingly whenever he would leave the club or their society.

The Countess was very disappointed at the turn of things, and lost no opportunity of following him upon the continent, against her parents' advice and wishes. At the meeting in Rome Lord Winslow thought that he had recognized Lucretia and was much chagrined when the Countess caused him to lose sight of her.

He left the Countess standing in surprise while he looked around for his wife and, failing to find her, almost believed that he had seen a phantom. He sailed from Rome that night for Freetown, West Africa, and inquired of the surprised sailors and old acquaintances for news of Zina.

He left the very morning that Lucretia entered the Freetown port, and they would have recognized each other as the ships passed by had Lucretia arrived upon the deck in time.

After Reverend Jones had parted from Oliver, he was not unskillful of his promise and prepared for the expedition, which was delayed by the heavy rains.

He finally started with a large number of Mission boys, carrying necessities and Yanga. When he reached the regions of the Kang Mountains, where Oliver was so long wandering about, he found that King Dofella was still waging war and ravaging the neighboring towns.

As luck would have it they came across Yarras one day as he gathered wild fruit in the woods. He soon recognized Yanga and told them the story of the escape from the leopard rite and the refuge in a neighboring town where Eva had won the gratitude and loyalty of the king's old mother by her kindness to her favorite granddaughter, who was the object of abuse by the king's favorite.

That Dofella's war had reached the town two days previously, and that Eva had escaped with the old woman

and child and lived in a cave upon the fruit and food Varnee supplied.

Varnee led the party to the hiding place and Eva was ensconced in the arms of her devoted maid. But the party had not progressed far when they discovered that they were pursued by a war party. Determined to remain together they took to the woods, when they met Twe coming in their direction.

They had eluded their pursuers temporarily and halted for a rest. Twe produced the map and told of his pursuit of Alpha and the latter's final end.

Rev. Jones examined the map and made a rough estimate of their present location. "We should be near the gold diggers," he said to Twe.

They heard the sound of their pursuers drawing near and resumed their flight.

Twe called out to Reverend Jones and pointing towards a hill exclaimed, "That is the cave where the gold-diggers live. Varnee, take up Miss Monteciel and run with us. Quick, quick, before they see us. Stoop down and here is the hole."

The last of the party had just disappeared into the hole after abandoning most of the supplies in the woods when the war party came into view. Fahn recognized Eva, Yanga, Varnee and Twe. And the other workers recognized Twe and mistook at first Reverend Jones for Oliver.

The party received a protection and were compelled to remain the guests of the hospitable gold workers for over a year before the war and heavy rains permitted their return.

When they reached the mission and found no news of Oliver they concluded that he had taken the interior route and was searching for Eva or lost again in the Kong Mountains. Reverend Jones had set out upon false reports several times and spent considerable time following misleading trails. While Eva, now garbed in

suitable clothes and having the companionship of a woman of her own race, spent the time hoping and waiting for Oliver's return.

One evening just after Reverend Jones returned from a long and unsuccessful expedition which nearly cost his life, Eva remarked, as they sat at the supper table: "Reverend Jones, it is unwise for you to continue to follow the reports of the natives as you have been doing for the last three or four years unsuccessfully. There is something strange about the actions of the folk at home. Oliver surely must have left your address with the Earl of Dabley, as Twe tells us they were together. I cannot think why neither he nor Governor Row writes nor sends an expedition to see what becomes of us. Twe says Oliver left upon the same day he followed Alpha, and I am sure Oliver lost no time in returning. We must send Twe to Sierra Leone to obtain some information concerning Lucretia and to notify Lord Dabley of his brother's loss in the jungles. I shall continue to remain here because something tells me Oliver is alive and will meet me here."

Reverend Jones agreed with her decision and sent Twe in care of a caravan to the coast bearing letters from Eva to her relatives.

Zina located Sally George's cabin as she promised, and Lucretia remained with Sally until a nice cottage could be fitted up for their dwelling. Thanks to Mr. Wilson's generosity Lucretia was soon settled in very comfortable quarters with Zina and Sally's devoted attention. She was not very long in her new quarters, however, before a new event happened in her life, in the advent of a son and heir. "Oh, Zina, see what I have done to my innocent baby; oh, mother, won't you come to your poor silly daughter," Lucretia sobbed to Zina, when she looked upon her son.

"Zina, I am going to take little Reggie to his father as soon as I am strong enough. I have no right to deprive

my child of his name and inheritance," she repeated in a new tone of matured responsibility.

"Why don't you write him and Lord Dudley and explain it to them first," Zina replied.

"No; no one will know or see little Reggie until he has pleaded for me with his father."

"You do not realize the enormity of the crime we have committed, Zina. No letter could explain and put things right. My only hope now is my son. If Lord Winslow refuses to forgive me, he must receive his innocent son and give him his rights."

After arriving at this decision Loretta improved in health and quickly recovered her good spirits in the joy of her new responsibility and anticipation of the reunion and forgiveness.

As soon as young Reginald was two months old Loretta embarked with her son and Zina in the late fall for England. They parted from old Sally, who stood upon the wharf shaking her short, fat, black body as she sobbed and watched the steamer heave anchor and disappear from view.

One afternoon the steamer was off Cape Blanco and Loretta reclined in a deck chair as she lazily watched the Portuguese fishermen bawling with the ship's crew and trying to sell their large red snappers.

"Don't stand too near the rail, Zina," she called out, as Zina walked near the rails in order to watch the scene, holding young Reginald in her arms.

After Zina returned to her seat, Loretta looked around with a sigh of satisfaction and picked up an old copy of the London Times one of the passengers had left upon a Madeira chair near by her.

She had been out of touch with the English news so long that the old paper was as eagerly read as a late edition would have been. In reading over the society columns she read: "Lord Reginald Winslow and his bride sailed for Japan on the 10th inst."

Lucretia's heartrending sigh attracted the attention of several of the passengers, who ran to her as Zina screamed out as she fainted. When they reached the Canaries, Lucretia informed Zina that they would get off at Las Palmas.

"I shall return to Freetown and write Elaine for advice," she remarked to Zina as they were being towed to the shore. Just as they landed Twee ran toward them.

"I was just going to take that steamer you just came from aboard, to go to England in search of you all," he remarked after Lucretia had recognized him in his new European outfit.

The party drove to a hotel when Twee informed Lucretia of her mother's safety and gave her the letter she had sent.

"I lost the others in the water and just saved yours because I held it between my teeth as I swam. I was obliged to work aboard the ship as steward boy and had no chance to stop at Freetown, as this was the first port it entered. I found work in a hotel and made enough to buy this suit of clothes. I was going to work my way to England and go to your uncle's place to look for you," he explained. After Lucretia read her mother's letter she brightened up and announced her intention to go directly on to the mission. "But I hate to think of taking Reggie into the interior with no prospects of a future," Lucretia remarked aloud in soliloquy.

"Don't worry about money, morn, the gold-diggers gave your ma plenty of gold and when they hear of the baby, you will have more than you will need. Your father buried plenty of pearls and a big diamond somewhere. I thought it was on the paper that Alpha had, but Reverend Jones says that it was only a map of the country," Twee remarked, as he thought she referred to the lack of money.

Twee suggested the necessary things that would be needed at the mission to make them comfortable, while

Lucretia selected her mother a nice supply of clothes and toilet articles. She was determined they would enjoy as much of the luxuries of civilisation in their voluntary exile as possible, because she felt somehow that it would only be temporary and that her mother or Elaine would think of a way to set matters right.

She intended that her son should be trained in proper etiquette although they lived in Africa. Mr. Wilson's liberal check enabled her to secure the things which she desired and to return with a large stock of provisions, hardware and large sylvan stores so pleasing to the female sex.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MEETING OF MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

WHEN Lucretia landed at Axim with her large cargo, she called at the Government House and asked for assistance and protection of the Colonial officials. She was given an order to the District Commission of the frontier, enabling her to secure a sufficient number of carriers under military escort as she left the railway terminus. Arriving safely at the mission at early dusk she surprised them all as she fairly flew into the arms of her astonished mother. Eva did not recognise at first the fashionably dressed young woman.

"Whose baby is that?" she asked, as soon as she had recovered from the first surprise.

Lucretia then fell upon her neck and sobbed out the sad story. Mrs. Jones held the baby as she listened to the revelation.

"My poor little girl," Eva cried as she joined in the weeping. "You needed your mother's care and advice. Oh, you poor unfortunate child! Oliver, oh Oliver——!"

Mrs. Jones handed the baby to Yanga and crossed over to the two sobbing women.

"This won't do, Eva. Shame, oh shame on you! You are worse than Lucretia and do you forget that you have not seen your grand-child? There now, that is better. Yanga, give him to her." After she succeeded in quieting Eva and interesting her in the baby, Mrs. Jones took Lucretia upon her lap as she would a child and stroked her hair as she obtained an accurate account of the situation.

"Too bad indeed, but I think you should inform your uncle of the whole circumstance, although it is a hard thing to do since your husband has married his daughter, but you have your son to consider now and you must secure his rights. Since they have gone to Japan, you will have time to think it over calmly and decide what is best to do," Mrs. Jones advised.

Reverend Jones approved of Lucretia's plan to live at the Mission and advised them to leave the matter in the hands of Providence, who would settle and straighten the tangle because he understood what an embarrassing position Lord Winslow and the Earl of Dabney would be placed in if conditions were as Lucretia had represented. He built a corrugated bungalow upon the hill overlooking the Valley of Allah for the family, and assisted Lucretia in beautifying the grounds and comfortable surroundings.

Lord Winslow was in Magdeburg when he met an old schoolmate of his, Baron Steinhauser, in a hotel one day. "I am preparing to join a hunting party of Americans who are taking moving picture machines and photographers along for big game hunting in East Africa. Why don't you join us, my lord?" the Baron remarked.

"I should be glad to do so providing you promise to cross the continent and return by the way of the west coast. I was planning to visit the district of the Kong Mountains the coming winter so as to travel in the dry season, but I have been thinking that an alship of the Zeppelin type would be just the thing to take along so

as to facilitate travel. What do you think of that idea, Baron?"

"As to your transcontinental suggestion, that meets our plans. We will start from Eastern Sudan and travel south and then north-westerly. But we had never thought of the airship and I am afraid that, while it would enable us to do a great deal of exploring and assist us to avoid the difficulties of the jungle travel, the cost would be too great considering our present outlay," the Baron replied.

"The cost is of minor consideration, my dear Baron, but the difficulty lies in securing such a one as I desire, since your Government is so strict about these machines, they might suspect that I was securing it for military purposes. I had decided to take a Reed-Curtis flying-boat with me, but it would not be able to answer the purpose of a large party. If we could secure one of the Zeppelin airships and hydroseseroplanes with about two small turbine motor engines of 50 horse power and a compartment capable of accommodating your party and a large supply of gasoline secured in safety iron vessels, we could easily overcome the danger of the African interior travels and explore about the Kilima Njora Mountains and unknown parts of Central Africa. The Zeppelin airship of the latest type, I am informed, is able to sustain several tons with ease at a high altitude," Lord Winslow replied as he watched the Baron's expression.

Baron Steinhansen was a man about 28 years, medium height, wearing a full military moustache and goatee and very slow and precise in his manner. He sat passing his hand over his goatee as he listened, and seemed to be in a thoughtful mood.

"What you said about the airship is correct. But I think I can manage to secure such a machine as you described. I am a friend of Count Zeppelin and can say for him that he is very interested in and devoted to science. This is a scientific as well as a hunting expedi-

tion. Herr Baer's and my collection will be contributed to our National Museum. Herr Baer, a member of the expedition party, is a botanist and also an authority on natural history, so that his trip is purely scientific. The six Americans are three moving picture men, one doctor, and two scientists, who are also keen sportsmen. We may class ourselves as explorers. There you have it. We will call it a scientific expedition. The Court will appreciate the advantages to be obtained from an accurate plan of the country taken from the air. I will manage to secure it for you. You will need an expert from the works to manage the machine. We will be ready to start next month. That will land us in Dongala, the Egyptian Sudan on the Red Sea, in July, and we will cross the Nubian Desert in a southwesterly direction by rail to Khartoum. From there we can travel southward on the Nile by steambot or the airship to British East Africa.

"The Americans have secured a permit for our party to hunt big game in that territory and we plan to hunt in the region of the Victoria Nyanza and the Kilimanjaro Mountains. We also plan to spend at least four months in East Africa and take a westerly course through Belgian and French Congo, then travel N.N.W. through Kamerun, Nigeria and Dahomey to Togoland, where we have an invitation from the Governor to hunt elephants and leopards in the northern regions. That should suit your plans excellently, because Togoland is near Ashanti and the Kong Mountains are in the neighborhood of Ashanti," the Baron explained as he traced the course upon a map, of the proposed expedition.

The party, consisting of Baron Steinhansen, Herr Baer, Lord Winslow, Messrs. Wolfe and MacCormick, the two American middle-aged scientists and sportsmen, Dr. Rosman, Messrs. Williams, Hansen and Billings, the three young moving picture men, and Herrs. Wagner and Reinitz, the two machinists from the Zeppelin works, with five

vaiets of the five first mentioned gentlemen, embarked upon the *Lucretia*, Lord Winslow's yacht, at Hamburg and sailed for East Africa the middle of July, 1912.

The yacht sailed through Suez Canal, down the Red Sea, and landed at Dongola near the middle of August.

They spent the months of October, November, December, January and February hunting lions, giraffes, elephants, rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses, of which they succeeded in killing large and select specimens after exciting hunting experiences.

The moving picture men were fortunate in obtaining not only the hunting scenes, but arranged their machines at night so as to obtain radiograph views of the smaller animals in their natural haunts by means of Röntgen rays, while the botanists and natural history scientists kept busy overseeing the African hunters in preserving the specimens for shipment.

When the time expired in the East African territory, the party carried the natural history collection to Uganda and shipped them on to Europe.

Leaving Uganda, they flew westward into Belgian Congo and followed their original plans until they reached Togoland the latter part of June, 1914. There they received their mail and the information that the "*Lucretia*" was in the Axim harbor awaiting them. But they did not intend to sail before the beginning of winter as the heavy rains handicapped their successful hunting. So they camped for a long season in North Togoland.

CHAPTER XXXIV

OLIVER'S RESCUE

On the morning of the 14th of August, 1914, some of the guides reported that some man-eating leopards had seized human prey and were lurking in a neighborhood

not far from the camp. The mid dries had set in and the day was very bright and tempting.

Lord Winslow, the three moving picture men, Dr. Rosman, the two German machinists and Lord Winslow's valet made up a hunting party and left on foot, leaving the others in the camp. The hunting party killed a few antelopes and small game on the march and were reminded that the African's notion of time and distance is very vague and uncertain. In the late afternoon they came upon a small town of savages. They decided to remain for the evening and managed to obtain two small bamboo huts for their accommodation.

Lord Winslow and Dr. Rosman, a tall, thin, clean-shaven man, happened to have taken two grass hammocks along so they had them tied across the hut side by side from the poles of the roof.

The three moving picture men occupied the same hut also and were obliged to secure grass and leaves and whatever they could to make a pallet upon the dirt floor.

A number of the villagers stood looking on and watching the preparations. One stalwart young black giant wearing only a loin cloth stood within the hut which Lord Winslow and the others occupied, and soon became a nuisance, as they wished to retire. Lord Winslow motioned for him to leave them, placed his right hand upon his right cheek and bent his neck as he tried to express in the African pantomime language that he was sleepy and wished to be alone. The young man misunderstood him, rushed from the hut to his brothers and relatives and stated that a white man in the hut had threatened to cut his throat.

Quite a commotion was started and a number of Africans rushed in and seized the surprised white men and held them as they waited to be shown the offender. Lord Winslow was pointed out and was carried as far as the door when a wild looking bearded white man of giant

strength, wearing a gold hand bracelet upon his left arm, knocked the black men down and rescued Lord Winslow.

He seemed to have a strange influence upon the men, who stole away sheepishly as he glowered in speechless rage upon them.

The other men of the party were in arms and outside just in time to see them steal away.

A few minutes afterwards the chief sent a goat and white chicken as a peace offering to Lord Winslow, and the matter was explained. But the identity of the bearded white man was a puzzle they could not solve. The interpreters could only obtain from the villagers that he had come with a caravan a few weeks previously, and was considered and worshiped as a kind of fetish because of his infirmity.

They tried to obtain information by signs from the stranger, but he seemed to have been like a child and remembered nothing.

The next morning Lord Winslow added the stranger to their party and both seemed to have developed a strong attachment for each other.

"After he is hardened and clothed in a decent outfit, I'll bet he will hardly appear to be over thirty-five. The outdoor life certainly has developed his muscles and improved his health. Poor fellow, I would give anything to know his history. Some poor family in Europe mourns his loss today," Lord Winslow remarked to Dr. Rosman, who was thoughtfully regarding the subject of discussion.

Walking over and examining the man's head, he replied, "This fellow is suffering from the effects of an accident, either a blow upon the head or a fall. An operation will restore his memory and speech. Perhaps a shock may have the same result."

"Well, you can rest assured that he will be placed in the hands of the most skilled surgeons of Europe. I will leave no stone unturned to restore him to his former state," Lord Winslow replied.

As they neared the camp in the early morning of the 17th inst., Lord Winslow was surprised when Jack, the colored valet of Mr. MacCormick, slipped a note to him as he passed on without an explanation and joined the merry group of huntsmen in the rear.

Opening the note he read, "Suggest to the party that we fly over to Ashanti and send away the films and specimens. Be diplomatic and see me privately on arrival. Steinhausen, Baer and camp hands are gone. A great war is raging in Europe. The German machinists must suspect nothing. Wolfe will explain to them Steinhausen and the others' absence satisfactorily. MacCormick."

Lord Winslow's brow contracted and he looked around to see if the party had suspicions of anything unusual, but to the satisfaction he noted that Jack was acting the part of a well trained and diplomatic servant. He was telling of a hunting party which had visited the camp and persuaded Baron Steinhausen and Herr Baer to accompany them over into Dahomey.

Messes. MacCormick and Wolfe had drilled Jack well in his part, so expressions of regret at not having been present to join the party came from all sides.

Lord Winslow took advantage of the moment and proposed the trip to Ashanti. This was greeted with loud cheers of approval and he lost no time in urging an immediate departure, since the weather and air were both favorable.

When they reached the camp, Lord Winslow turned his charge over to his valet while he sought an interview with Mr. MacCormick, a sprightly, middle-aged man with a mustache and about 180 pounds in weight.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE FLIGHT

"It was a fortunate chance that sent you upon the leopard hunt," Mr. MacCormick said to Lord Winslow as they exchanged greetings.

"Shortly after you left, messengers arrived from the Governor ordering Steinhauser and the party to report immediately at Lome. Steinhauser did not tell me the full contents of the message but said, 'Germany and Austria-Hungary are at war with Serbia, Russia and France. England has not declared war as yet. Of course there is no likelihood of America being drawn into this war so that I would hardly compel the two subjects of a great neutral power to accompany me to headquarters. And it is impossible to escort my friend Lord Winslow back when he has taken a trip by air into Ashanti and will probably remain.

"Of course I may be mistaken about the airship, but the two German subjects are away and I have not looked into the hangar. If you will recollect I was away hunting with Herr Baer when the party left. If you happen to join Lord Winslow, Mr. MacCormick, I hope you and Mr. Wolfe will remember to have Lord Winslow land the two machilists safely in German territory. I am sure I can trust my friends and pleasant companions to see that they reach the Fatherland. Remember me to Lord Winslow. I am very sorry I part so abruptly, but I may be back in a few days and see if the party has safely returned. *Auf wiedersehen, mein friend!*" he ended as he shook hands and hurried the party away.

"I am almost sure England has joined the war and Baron Steinhauser has done you a great favor, my lord. We must lose no time, because they will be anxious to obtain your airship and will leave no stone unturned to overtake us."

"That was indeed a great favor Steinhausen has shown to us all. Our moving picture films would have had to have been left behind and nearly all of our supplies, because every one of the boys have deserted except the three you had in your party. We must hasten before they get on to the truth and cause the Germans to strike or betray us," Mr. MacCormick remarked as they both arose.

Mr. Wolfe, who was a short, medium-sized, clean faced man, had employed the time well and they were soon ready for flight.

Lord Winslow hardly recognized his protegee, whose clean shaven face, well cut hair and manicured nails, with a suit of Lord Winslow's, had so altered his appearance that his youthful appearance exceeded Lord Winslow's prediction. The beard had saved his face from the sun so that he was only slightly tanned about the forehead and neck and with the exception of a few gray hairs at the temples he could easily have passed for thirty-five.

He expressed the delight of a child as he saw the great airship removed from its hangar and made ready for flight about one o'clock p.m.

He clapped his hands delightedly as the great monster rose from the earth and ascended skyward. Just about six o'clock p.m. they passed over into Ashanti and were trying to locate a suitable place for landing, when they were mistaken for a hostile airship and fired upon by the British garrison.

"Great Scott!" Mr. MacCormick exclaimed. "They have mistaken us for the Germans. We must leave this territory and try the Kong Mountain district."

The Americans were all into the secret, but the two Germans could not understand the hostile reception.

Mr. MacCormick, who was ready for any emergency, explained to them that the natives were frightened at the apparition and were responsible for the attack. They flew at a high altitude and landed on the Komea River

about midnight and camped upon the river bank. They resumed their flight in a westerly direction.

About two o'clock in the afternoon they were flying at a low altitude over the river, when Lord Winslow leaned over the side of the car and toyed with the leopard's claw. "What a dreary looking island we are approaching, no vegetation whatever upon it. Say——" Lord Winslow was suddenly interrupted in his speech by an attack from his protégé. In his surprise he dropped the chain and claw outside of the car.

As soon as the stranger saw what had happened he suddenly burst into tears and tried to leap overboard. Lord Winslow was very angry, but when he saw how strangely the poor fellow acted, he softened towards him. But he ordered the skiff to be lowered into the river and taken back to the strange island where he was sure the claw had fallen.

When they reached the island and the skulls and dry bones were discovered no one offered to assist Lord Winslow but the stranger, who could not be restrained. After a long and careful search Lord Winslow discovered the trinket lying broken upon the ground.

He picked it up with a cry of dismay at his discovery and saw a piece of paper projecting from the hollow end of the claw. He pulled it out and read it. "Why, this must be the very island referred to, because we are in the same latitude and longitude," he remarked, as he went to the end of the island designated in the plot. He soon discovered without digging the box referred to, protruding from the soft earth. Oliver had had no means of burying it deeply and the heavy rains had washed away the earth. But it would have been safe lying exposed any spot upon the dreaded island.

Lord Winslow found the key attached to the box and opened and examined the contents.

"Here are two other claws. What is this? A plot to a diamond field! Poor unfortunate family."

Just then the strange man had given up his diligent search upon the other end and noticed Lord Winslow stooping down over the box. He started towards them with a quick bound and expectant look.

Lord Winslow just had time to lock the box when the man reached and grabbed it from him.

"How queerly he acts," Lord Winslow remarked, as he made no effort to recover it but motioned to his companion to follow him to the landing.

"We will have to fly around and select some place to land because it is four p.m. and too late to continue our journey. Say, Kolowitz, you had better try over this way because it is less hilly," Mr. MacCormick said as he pointed in a south-westerly direction, after Lord Winslow and his companion had returned to the airship.

The stranger hugged the box in his arms and refused to part from it. Lord Winslow related to the party his discovery and the manner in which it affected his companion.

"So that trinket you dropped was the means of recovering your late father-in-law's hidden fortune? Was it not a strange coincidence and fate which led us over the island? Will you permit me to examine the claw?" Mr. MacCormick asked as he held out his hand for the leopard's claw.

"That certainly was a great idea of his to place his secret within this claw," he remarked as he returned it.

"I have been thinking over this matter and I am almost tempted to believe that that man is either my father-in-law or was present when the treasure was buried. But he looks too young to be Mr. Montcrief and it would be almost impossible for him to have escaped drowning when his ship was wrecked off the Grain Coast and to have wandered so far into the interior without the news reaching us somehow," Lord Winslow repeated half musily.

"Do you remember your father-in-law's features, Lord Winslow?" Dr. Roaman asked.

"I do not remember him personally, but since you have spoken, I must say this young man reminds me a great deal of Mr. Montcrief's photograph taken when he was twenty-five. That firm set of his mouth and chin particularly recalls his features.

"I really cannot understand it. The more I think of the matter the more I am convinced that he is Mr. Montcrief," Oliver replied.

"Stranger things than that have happened, and you may be correct in your surmise. One thing I am sure of and that is if he is not Mr. Montcrief of the wreck, your other theory is correct, he was a member of his party and is familiar with the secret," Dr. Roaman remarked.

"There are houses upon that hill over there," Mr. Reinitz called out as he looked through a small telescope and pointed southwardly.

"What a beautiful park this is below us," Mr. Wolfe called out almost simultaneously with Mr. Reinitz.

The party leaned over the sides of the car and looked upon the beautiful scenery below them.

"This park must belong to some rich planter who lives in the bungalow over on the hill."

"It is an ideal place to land and we will risk trespassing upon his grounds because it is after five and too late to continue. Let us hope we will not be received with a volley of shot. In what neighborhood are we, Reinitz?" Mr. Mac Cormick asked.

"We are about fifty odd miles North-west of the Ashanti frontier in the South-west part of the region of the Kong Mountains," Mr. Reinitz replied. As they scanned the ground the stranger, whom they had been discussing, jumped overboard as held the box before he could be stopped.

"The poor fellow must be killed. I wonder why he jumped out?" they all repeated almost in a chorus.

As soon as they landed Dr. Roseman, Lord Winslow, and the others hurried to his side.

"This fellow has a remarkably strong constitution. I can find nothing more serious than a cut back of the head. Don't worry he will be conscious soon. I shall be better able to find out if he sustained internal injuries when we get him to bed," Dr. Roseman stated in answer to the query.

Lord Winslow removed the box from the arms of the now unconscious form.

"I shall walk up to the house and obtain permission to have him taken in and put to bed at once. By the way, there comes someone upon horse back, it appears to be a woman in white." Lord Winslow announced as he hurried towards the approaching figure upon horse back.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE REUNION

Much change had taken place upon the mission settlement in the past two years, since Lucretia's arrival.

Mr. Wilson's check had enabled Lucretia to present the mission a steam launch to navigate travel on the river. And the gold-digger's liberal offerings to the young heir had aided in making better roads upon which new Spring wagons and horses now traveled. Thus the difficulties of transporting the mail and Mission stores were overcome and a regular three weeks mail service between the Arim Post-Office to the Mission Sub-station at the railway terminus.

"The Wilson Hill," as Lucretia had christened their new home, contained, besides a large story and a half iron bungalow, newly painted in a modest coat of gray and green shingles, a small white and green frame cottage, with three large and neat square mud houses in their rear.

Eva's early training and Oliver's great devotion had so moulded her life to one of dependency and weakness, which even her great sorrow had developed the firm and determined character inherited from her father and the old Earl. But as she grew more thoughtful, a softened look overspread her features which gave it a melancholy charm that reminded one of the madonna.

She had converted the interior of the bungalow into a well regulated small summer home of an English aristocratic family.

Her small music room contained a piano, victrola and the latest records, a violin and guitar, both of which last named instruments Eva was expert in playing. So that Reverend and Mrs. Jones spent many delightful evenings at the bungalow listening to Lucretia accompanying Eva upon the piano, and their favorite opera stars entertaining them from the hornless machine.

Lucretia had trained Mary and Nora her two maids from the Mission, to dress in uniforms and act in Yanga's and Zina's places as ladies' maids.

Zina and Twe were married and lived in the neighboring cottage, and they were now the proud parents of a young son and heir. Yanga and Varnes had also married, but refused to give up their old duties. They therefore lived at the bungalow, Yanga acting in her envied position of the undisciplined nurse of young Reginald.

Varnes continued to act as butler and steward boy around the house, while old Tobey was settled in the three mud houses with his three respective wives and small family. He continued to prepare appetizing meals in his stoical manner, and twelve-yard piece of figured cotton cloth draped across his shoulders, just as he used to at the Sierra Leone home.

Lame, a ten-year-old young African boy, who wore the dress of a page with buttons, was the last addition to the house domestics.

Lucretia had to give up the idea of having Yanga,

Vancee and Tobey dress in the style she wished. So she had to accustom herself to seeing Yanga's loose-fitting cotton gown and Vancee's white shirt and bloomers around the house.

This afternoon Eva and Lucretia sat in two Madeira arm chairs under some fruit trees in the back yard reading the newly-arrived mail.

Eva's appearance told very little of the great suffering and trials she had endured, and but for a few gray hairs which her abundant supply of brown curls hid from view, and a sad and expectant look a close observer would detect about her eyes, one would take her to be a young woman about 28 or 30 who was enjoying a summer tour and the elder sister of her companion.

Eva held an open copy of a Chicago daily upon her lap as she scanned its pages. Lucretia read a letter which seemed to contain important news, by the expression of her face. They both wore white afternoon dresses and were bareheaded.

In front of one of Tobey's houses a strong and heavily built, young, black, barefoot girl of fifteen, wearing a short calico dress, and a black youth of sixteen dressed in cotton jeans, stood before a large round wooden mortar holding two heavy wooden pestles of about five feet each, which they grasped by the center, and pounded alternately in rhythmic and merry unison upon a sticky white mass of cassava dough within the mortar. They dipped their pestles occasionally into a nearby bucket of water when loud reports as the sound of pistol shots would come forth from the mortar, announcing to the waiting native diners that the favorite African dish "dumbay" was nearly prepared for consumption.

A short distance from the couple standing under a tree was the two-year-old son of Lucretia. Nora, the brown-skinned maid, wearing her complete uniform of white, stood near him as he tried to hug a small monkey in his arms and divide his attention alternately between a

young fawn, standing as high as himself, and a litter of guinea pigs, which he stooped and petted.

Jacko stood the slight as long as possible and, his jealousy finally overcoming him, he escaped from Reginald's arms and jumped upon Eva's lap, interrupting her reading.

"Mother, I am so glad that I wrote to Elaine and confided in them. Listen to what she says:

Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois,
July 21st, '14.

"My Dearest Lucretia:

"We could only forgive you for deserting and treating us as you did, because it enabled you to find your dear mother. We rejoice with you and only regret that we did not share your secret earlier.

"You gave us a great scare, darling, when we could find no trace of you at Froctown, but we won't scold you now. ('So like the dear girl she is,' Lucretia interjected.)

"Bobbie, Mr. Wilson and myself read your letter together and we decided to take the matter into our own hands and act in the interest of our godson (just think of it, a young lord is my godson). Bob is a friend of your uncle and was a guest of his seven years ago at the Montroy Castle in Scotland. He is acquainted with your husband also. So he has decided to go to England in two weeks' time and explain the circumstances to both of them in person.

"You can depend upon my Bob to put things right. So leave the matter with him and rest easy until you hear from him. He says you may expect a cablegram about the 25th or 27th of next month. I would accompany him also, but the stork visited us two weeks ago and left a wee bald-headed toothless miss with me. Only the love for and great interest we have in you and yours influenced Bobbie

to decide to desert the court of the autocratic and tyrannical ruler, in the person of her royal highness Miss Lucretia Montefiel Wilson, of Chicago.

"Bobbie will accompany your husband or the Earl of Dabley to Wilson Hill so as to be present at the reunion and bring you back to stand godmother for your namselon. Bobbie joins in love to you and mother (you will have to divide her with me because I have no mother of my own). Kiss mother and our godson many times for me. Bobbie and Lucretia join me in sending baskets of love and kisses,

Your friend and sister,

Elaine.

"P.S. I am sending you a copy of the Chicago Tribune. Read the society page."

"The dear child! Of course I will take her to my heart and love her as a daughter," Eva remarked as Lucretia ended the letter.

"We must send Tim to Axim to-morrow, because this is the crux and—let me see, it will take, say, give him eight days to cross over and attend to his business, four going to Worcestershire. Yes, he has seen them by now," Lucretia repeated as she unconsciously drifted into a soliloquy.

"But mother, do you know that Elaine's news about my namselon has caused me to think of a new probable problem. Suppose that Georgiana has a child also. Oh, mother, see what try lolly may cause."

"Hush, Lucretia, you have no right to imagine such things and cross bridges before you reach them. Here is the newspaper Elaine referred to."

"Is this the kind of alrhip you flew away with Mr. Wilson in?" Eva said, trying to change the subject, as she held before her the front page of the Chicago Tribune and pointed toward a cartoon of a large phantom-Zeppe-

an airship flying over the silhouette of a city, throwing out searchlights into the air.

Lucretia looked at the airship and replied, "No, mother, Mr. Wilson's machine was a biplane, similar to that toy aeroplane that was on Reginald's Christmas tree. There are different kinds and makes. The machine you are looking at is a kind of balloon and modern aircraft combined," Lucretia replied.

"Well, I feel like old Rip Van Winkle, I have been in this wilderness for nearly fourteen years. So many new things have taken place during that time that I shall feel out of place at home," Eva repeated musingly.

"You will find Old London as you left it except for the new king's highway and a few building improvements, there has been little change. The wireless telegraphy and aeroplanes are the most important inventions since your exile. Don't worry, mother, we have been keeping up with the styles and latest music, which are after all about all the ladies of your world care about," Lucretia replied.

"That is true, Lucretia, I am afraid that we have gone to the extreme in the matter of dress. It seems comical to me sometimes when we are donning these late fashionable dinner gowns and dining in state with Reverend Jones and the madame dressed in their comfortable clothing. I really believe our Sunday evenings and holiday dinners are becoming more and more a nuisance to the couple, but of course I know that you want to keep up the customs of your husband's well-regulated establishment. It seems so strange that a young couple would have had time to think of so much so soon after marriage. Dear me, how old are you, Lucretia?"

"Nineteen this September, mother."

"Think of it. I have been separated from Oliver nearly fourteen years. Say, Lucretia, to-morrow is the anniversary of Oliver's forty-first birthday. Do you know I do not believe that he is dead, something tells me that he is still alive and wandering through the interior search-

ing for me. That is why I have been so content to remain here, and I hate to think of going away for fear he may come," Eva remarked.

"Somehow I feel that way also, mother, and especially so in the last few days. I feel as if something startling is going to happen. You remember how strongly the impression that you were alive influenced me."

"But we will turn the bungalow and things over to Yanga and Zina, so that with Two and Varnae going about in the interior and the women always about the place, we may rest assured father would soon be in touch with us. And don't forget Dr. Jones and the madame. They are so wedded to the Mission work that they may be considered as permanent fixtures. I think Tobey will take his family back to Cape Coast Castle," Lucretia replied.

"Lucretia, do you know, sometimes I believe that if Lord Winslow had not been too punctilious in his habits and devoted his time to winning your confidence, you two would have been as happy as Oliver and myself used to be. Oliver thought that everything I wore was perfectly lovely. All of my actions were perfectly grand, so you see, my dear, we had no time to find out each other's faults."

"Excuse me, mother, but I must be going for my afternoon ride," Lucretia repeated, as she interrupted her mother's reminiscences and walked towards the back porch entrance.

"Lame, go and tell Two to saddle my horse and have it ready for my ride," she instructed the page when she entered the back door.

Lucretia did not like to have her mother discuss her husband's exacting ways. She had often reflected upon their short married life and had thrashed out all of their mistakes.

"Oh, Reginald, why didn't I confide to you the terrible secret that buried within my breast because of Lady

Dubley's statement made to me on the eve of our marriage? Yes, I should have confessed and heard your side of the story that morning before the ceremony. If I had even tried to understand him, things might have been different. How I used to hate to conform to the narrow routine of dress and customs! Now, oh, now, how I love them! Yes, too late. Oh, if I had only married with this wisdom! I see that now as I think of it. Poor Reginald must have had an embarrassing and lonely time with his poor half-frightened and reserved girl-wife. No wonder the poor boy welcomed my lively cousin. Why, the castle was as dull as a prison and when Georgiana brought in the sunshine, we needed but to exchange dress and I would have made a model widow."

"Reverend Jones thinks that it would be right to give Reginald a divorce in order that he may re-marry Georgiana and avoid scandal. I am sure that is the right thing to do, but oh, when I think of the possibility of losing my little Reggie also, I am almost tempted to forget his future. But I must be brave and pay the penalty of my rash folly, although it breaks my heart." Loretta suddenly aroused herself from her meditative monologue and changed into a white duck riding habit.

"She ran down the steps of the back porch bare-headed because it was after five p.m. and the afternoon was cool and pleasant. She kissed Eva and walked over to young Reginald, who was still busy with the guinea pig pets. Stooping down she lifted and kissed him as he threw his arms around her neck.

Then after saying something to Nora concerning Reginald, she started towards the front of the house carrying a rattan riding whip in her hands.

"Don't ride too far, Loretta, it is getting late and time you should be returning," Eva called out to her.

"Yes, mother dear, have no fear; I shall be back in time to dress for supper," she replied as she tripped away.

As soon as Loretta emerged from the shades of the

thick trees which screened the bungalow, she saw the airship in the valley, but could not decide for certain what it really was because of the distance.

"Two, what is that large white thing in the valley that looks like a balloon or airship? I see men moving. I wish I had my glasses. Let us hurry and find out if they are white men."

"Why, yes, they are; there comes one towards us."

Lord Winslow identified Lucretia about the same time she recognized his familiar figure.

"Lucretia, oh Lucretia!" he cried as he rushed towards her.

"Reginald! Reg——"

Two was just in time to catch his fainting mistress. Lord Winslow was at her side in a second and almost roughly pushed Two away as he took the unconscious form from the saddle.

He gently placed her upon the lawn as he knelt over her, rubbing her hands and calling her name.

She opened her eyes and pushing him away said, "Go away and leave me, please. I—I did not know that it was you at first."

Lord Winslow felt the sting of the words very keenly. Having suffered so long from the cruel deception the mystery of which he could not solve, he drew away and stood before her.

"Permit me to assist you to rise. Ah, this is better. Before I leave you, I think you owe me an explanation for the cruel and heartless treatment I have received at your hands.

"Why did you pretend to love me and even plighted your faith in the holy matrimonial vows, when you knew that my person was so obnoxious to you that you preferred to relinquish your family ties and large inheritance and banish yourself in the interior of Africa among savages?"

"I left you because I wished you to be happy," Lucretia replied.

"Happy? Oh, the mockery of the word! Your idea of happiness is rather strange and peculiar. Is that the reason you parted with the leopard claw that your father instructed you never to part with? Did you know the secret of its contents?" he asked as he pulled out the claw.

"I knew that it held some secret which a letter that uncle has would reveal when I was twenty-one. But believe me, I really wanted you to be happy," she replied.

"What, did you imagine that the wealth of all of Africa would repay me for all I have suffered? Here is your treasure of pearls and diamonds and the plot to a diamond mine. I hope they will bring you the happiness you wished for me," Lord Winslow replied. And he pointed to the box and raised his cap as he started to walk away.

"Reginald, I—I didn't mean the treasure—I—I meant that you might be happy with your wife," she appealingly called out to him.

"My wife? What are you talking of? You are my wife."

"I meant Georgiana, whom you married so soon after you thought I was dead," she replied.

"My poor child, who has put such silly ideas into your head," he replied as he drew nearer.

"I saw you two in Paris before the Hotel de Ville and in Rome at the *St. Maria Della Pace*, and——"

"I was standing before the four Sibyls of Raphael, when Georgiana came between us and I lost sight of you? After searching over the church for you, I gave you up and thought that I had only seen a vision.

"My trip to Freetown, where I tried to find Zina, was equally as fruitless. So I finally began to believe that you were really dead, since I had seen your apparition in the church," Lord Winslow interrupted, as he seized her hands and looked into her face.

"But what about the announcement of your honeymoon trip to Japan that I saw in the London Times?"

I was on my way to beg your forgiveness when I read it off Cape Blanco," she inquired.

"My poor little girl! You have also suffered under a cruel mistake. That was Lord Roland Onslow, my cousin, who had recently married. The papers are always confusing our names. No, darling, you are my wife. The boyish passion for Georgiana died long ago. Couldn't you see, sweetheart, that it was you that I loved all of the time?"

Lord Winslow folded Lucretia into his arms. And they joyed in the newly found happiness of a complete understanding and restored confidence.

Twe had left the couple as soon as Lucretia recovered consciousness and he ran towards the airship. As soon as he drew near the crowd, he recognized Oliver, who had recovered consciousness and was looking around for the box.

"Master!"

"Twe!" Twe and Oliver exclaimed almost at the same time.

"Come on, master. Miss Lucretia is over there," repeated Twe, pointing to the couple.

Oliver started to run. Dr. Rasmus called after him: "Stop there, man! You had better be careful; you will start that wound to bleeding afresh."

Oliver paid no heed to the warning, but continued to run, while the astonished crowd followed. He was obliged to interrupt the beautiful love scene by halting Lucretia before his approach was noticed by the couple.

"Father! Oh father! Oh, here is my lost daddy," she cried as she flew into his arms.

"Father, this is Reginald, my husband," she said as soon as she was calmed. And the two men grasped each other's hand.

"Father, the jump was a very fortunate thing for you, because it has restored your memory and speech at the

same time. But how is the wound?" Lord Winslow anxiously inquired.

"Oh, it is all right. But you are mistaken when you say that the fall restored my memory. It was the sight of you, holding Lucretia's leopard claw neck charm, that restored the memory. The fall, however, restored the speech, for which I am indeed thankful. By the way, you have dropped the claw again," Oliver repeated. And he stooped and picked up the forgotten charm, which had fallen unheeded as they embraced.

"You will unite this unhappy family, through the leopard claw, in the Valley of Allah." Old Mulley's prophecy has come to pass. Where is Eva, Lucretia?" Oliver asked, after repeating the quotation from the prediction of the old Islamic priest of Musada.

"Can you two stand any more surprises and happiness to-day?" teasingly asked Lucretia.

"Hurry up, Lucretia, and take me to Eva. You will see then that true happiness possesses a healing charm," Oliver replied.

Lucretia caught hold of one of the hands of her husband and father and ran between them, pulling them as they ran along like children. They had forgotten all about the treasure-box and left it standing upon the ground. But Tom picked up the box and explained the circumstances of the reunion of the lost family to the astonished hunting party. And they followed the happy trio.

Lucretia made a lovely picture of happy and careless girlhood, while Lord Winslow had lost his precise manner and chatted boyishly, like a romping schoolboy.

When they reached the foot of the hill, Eva was standing midway of the hill, bending over little Reginald as she soled and adjusted the bow at the front of his white sailor blouse, which the pacified Jacko had unloosened while Reginald hugged it in his arms.

Eva had changed into a dinner dress and combed her

hair in the style that Oliver used to admire. And she reminded Oliver at this time of the days when Lucretia used to toddle at her side like the little stranger. But Oliver spent no time in reminiscences. He bounded up the hill, calling to his Eva. She looked up and recognized him instantly.

"Oliver, my own lost Oliver," she cried, as she was enveloped in his embrace.

Lord Winslow was puzzled at first at the sight of the young stranger, but Lucretia pointed towards them and exclaimed: "Look at mother and our son Reginald."

"Our son," he replied. He let go Lucretia's hand and bounded after Oliver. And he almost reached his astonished son at the same time that Oliver embraced Eva. Lucretia arrived soon afterwards, almost out of breath. Lord Winslow embraced her with one arm as he held his son and heir in the other.

Jacks had leaped from Reginald's arms in the excitement, and he stood off watching the two happy scenes in an attitude of perplexity.

Little Reginald whispered it all to Jacks that night just before he was sent to bed. And he made it plain to Jacks that he had much to be thankful for that he was merely an observer of the reunion, because finding one's dad and grand-dad was not so pleasant after all, since it meant the smothering of a little fellow in their strong arms. And it reminded one of the great hug of the teddy bears, which, mammy says, hug naughty little boys until they promise to be good.

F I N I S

