

sang-froid of gamins from the purlieus of Saint-Antoine.

ON THE MARCH.

After a march of a mile through the tall grass of the open, we gained the glades between the jungles. Unsuccessful here, after ever so much prying into fine hiding-places and lurking corners, I struck a trail well traversed by small antelope and hartebeest, which we followed. It led me into a jungle, and down a water-course bisecting it; but, after following it for an hour, I lost it, and, in endeavouring to retrace it, lost my way. However, my pocket-compass stood me in good stead; and by it I steered for the open plain, in the centre of which stood the camp. But it was terribly hard work—this of plunging through an African jungle, ruinous to clothes, and trying to the cuticle. In order to travel quickly, I had donned a pair of flannel pyjamas, and my feet were encased in canvas shoes. As might be expected, before I had gone a few paces a branch of the *acacia horrida*—only one of a hundred such annoyances—caught the right leg of my pyjamas at the knee, and ripped it almost clean off; succeeding which a stumpy kolquall caught me by the shoulder, and another rip was the inevitable consequence. A few yards farther on, a prickly aloëtic plant disfigured by a wide tear the other leg of my pyjamas, and almost immediately I tripped against a convolvulus strong as ratline, and was made to measure my length on a bed of thorns. It was on all fours, like a hound on a scent, that I was compelled to travel; my solar topee getting the worse for wear every minute; my skin getting more and more wounded; my clothes at each step becoming more and more tattered. Besides these discomforts, there was a pungent, acrid plant, which, apart from its strong odorous emissions struck me smartly on the face, leaving a burning effect similar to cayenne; and the atmosphere, pent in by the density of the jungle, was hot and stifling, and the perspiration transuded through every pore, making my flannel tatters feel as if I had been through a shower. When I had finally regained the plain and could breathe free, I mentally vowed that the penetralia of an African jungle should not be visited by me again, save under most urgent necessity.

Notwithstanding the ruthless rents in my clothes and my epidermal wounds, as I looked

over the grandly undulating plain, lovely with its coat of green verdure, with its boundaries of noble woods, heavy with vernal leafage, and regarded the pretty bosky islets amid its wide expanse, I could not but award it its meed of high praise. Daily the country advanced in my estimation, for hitherto I felt that I was but obeying orders; and sickly as it might be, I was in duty bound to go on; but, for fear of the terrible fever, made more terrible by the feverish perspective created in my imagination by the embitterment of Capt. Burton's book, I vowed I would not step one foot out of my way. Shall I inform you, reader, what "The Lake Regions of Central Africa," and subsequently the reports of European merchants of Zanzibar, caused me to imagine the interior was like? It was that of an immense swamp, curtained round about with the fever—"a species of Yellow Jack," which was sure, if it did not kill me outright, so to weaken body and brain as to render me for the future a helpless imbecile. In this swamp, which extended over two hundred miles into the interior, sported an immense number of hippopotami, crocodiles, alligators, lizards, tortoises, and toads; and the miasma rising from this vast cataclysm of mud, corruption, and putrescence, was as thick and sorely depressing as the gloomy and suicidal fog of London. Ever in my mind in the foreground of this bitter picture were the figures of poor Burton and Speke, "the former a confirmed invalid, and the other permanently affected" in the brain by this fever. The wormwood and fever tone of Capt. Burton's book I regarded as the result of African disease. But ever since my arrival on the mainland, day by day the pall-like curtain had been clearing away, and the cheerless perspective was brightening. We had been now two months on the East African soil, and not one of my men had been sick. The Europeans had gained in flesh, and their appetites were always in prime order.

The second and third days passed without any news of Maganga. Accordingly, Shaw and Bombay were sent to hurry him up by all means. On the fourth morning Shaw and Bombay returned, followed by the procrastinating Maganga and his laggard people. Questions only elicited an excuse that his men had been too sick, and he had feared to tax their strength