

"BELA"

Whether or not she heard him run away, the song presently ceased, and troubled him no more that night. He returned to his blankets, but not to sleep again.

He built a fire and lay beside it smoking. He drove away the recollection of the disturbing loveliness he had seen by counting over his injuries at her hands, musing them and magnifying them in his mind until they filled it to the exclusion of everything else.

It became as dark as it would get. Midnight at that season is no more than an intensified twilight. By and by the moon arose far across the water, looking like an old-fashioned gas-globe, and set sail on her brief voyage low down in the sky from southeast to southwest.

Sam received the friend of lovers with a scowl. He had omitted her from his calculations. "The nights are short enough without that!" he thought.

Thinking of escape, a new idea caused him to sit up suddenly. "Why bother with a raft?" he thought. "She's got to sleep some time. If I could sneak around the beach and push the dugout in! No matter how quick she woke once I was afloat, Oh! It would do my heart good to float just out of her reach and tell her a few things. On a night like that, I could send her a message, I could send her a message, I could send her a message."

To think of it was to desire to put it into instant action. The moon, however, forbade. Sam cursed her again, and sat down to wait with what patience he could muster until it should slowly sink out of sight.

When the bright emerald sunk this I could paddle anywhere. She's behind Nine Mile Point he arose with a beating heart. Making his blankets into a bundle, he took his way once more around the strip of beach, his moccasined feet falling noiselessly on the sand.

It was about two o'clock, and the aftermath had moved around to the northeast. In an hour it would be light again. The island objects loomed twice their size in this dusk of dusk. Sam kept close under the willows to avoid making a silhouette against the sky. A she drew close to Bela's camp he saw that her fire was out, from which he argued that she had been asleep for some time.

Coming nearer still, he made out the form of the dugout against the pale sand. Bela had drawn it up higher, and had turned it over. Still hugging the willows, he paused, looking for her. He supposed she had made her bed under the willows behind her fire. He dared not approach to make sure. Likely she was a light sleeper.

Following man's first instinct, he bent double, and crept across the open sand to the dugout. It lay on its side, the bottom turned toward him.

His heart was beating like a steam hammer. If with one quick movement he could turn it over and rush it into the water, let her wake as quick as she chose. If she attempted to stop him she must take the consequences. When a man's liberty was at stake he could not be too nice with the sex. He took a long breath and turned the canoe over.

Bela was lying beneath it. "Sam!" she said softly.

The keyed-up Sam grunted at the suddenness of the shock and ran back for ten paces, gasping. Then he got command of himself, and came back ashamed and ragged.

Bela stood up. "What you want?" she asked mildly.

"I want to get away from here!" cried Sam, "and by George, I'm going, too. If you try to stop me your petticoats won't protect you. Get back!"

Rather to his surprise she fell back without a word. He glanced at her uncertainly. Putting his hands on the canoe he started to shove it toward the water.

"How you goin' mak' it go?" asked Bela, softly.

Sam came to a stop, swearing savagely. In his excitement he had neglected to think of paddles. They were not lying anywhere about.

"Where are the paddles?" he demanded.

"I hid 'em," she answered coolly. "Where are they?" he cried.

She was silent.

"Tell me where they are or take the consequences!" he cried, approaching her threateningly.

"I not tell you if you kill me," she replied, standing fast.

This was an out and out challenge to him to strike her. When it came to a choice, he could not do it, of course. He turned away, wild with impotent rage. Must she always get the best of him? If there had only been a man of her people there that he could take it out on! He broke into passionate denunciations of her. It was a weird enough scene, there on the shore in the dim dusk.

"What are you keeping me here for, an' way?" was the burden of his cry. "What do you expect to gain by it?"

"You safe here," Bela muttered. "If we go to the shore those men kill you, I think."

This did not help soothe him. "I'll take my chance of that!" he cried. "I know how to deal with men. I don't need a woman to look after me! Do you think you're going to keep me here all summer?"

"No," she returned. "The bishop and the police comin' pretty soon. Then you safe."

"It's all your fault anyhow!" cried Sam. "Why couldn't you let me alone in the first place? What's your game anyhow?"

Bela was silent.

"Give me a plain answer!" he cried. "What was your idea in carrying me off?" He blushed as he said it. "Oh Lord!" he added helplessly.

"I hear those men talk," Bela said sullenly. "Say they goin' kill you in the morning. I think if I tell you, you jus' might get away quiet."

"It had not the ring of truth," Rot! exclaimed Sam. "Why should they want to kill me?"

Having no answer ready, she remained silent.

"You're lying now!" cried Sam. "The truth is, you were sore because I wasn't after you like the rest. I know women!"

Bela made an angry movement.

"What's the matter wit' you?" she said defiantly. "You think you so big and clever! What you know about me? If you stop cursing me all the time maybe you see what I am! If you act good to me I good to you!"

"Do you expect me to take off my hat and thank you for the privilege of being tied up and carried off?" demanded Sam.

She hung her head. "I sorry for that," she muttered, sullenly.

"But! Sorry won't mend anything," said Sam.

"I want be friends," she murmured. "If you're honest, you'll get the paddles and put me ashore."

She shook her head. "Not let you go till you friends wit' me."

"Sam laughed harsh. "That's good!" You'll wait a long time. Hope you've got grub enough. Friendship! Rubbish! You let me go and we'll talk."

She stood in sullen silence. Sam abruptly picked up his blanket and turned to go.

At his move a different sound escaped her. Her hands went to her breast. "Sam—please—"

He paused. "What do you want?"

"Sam, I say I sorry. I say I fool."

"I say I fool," she repeated. "That not easy to say."

"Still he had no answer.

"Why you so hard to me?" she demanded, rebelliously. "Can't you see in my heart? There is nothing but good in there for you. I want you be good to me. I want you come wit' me so bad. So I act foolish."

Her simplicity surprised and suddenly softened him. Alone with her, and in the all-concealing dusk, his queasy pride was not obliged to take up arms. In return he was as simple and direct as she.

"Oh! I'm sorry, too," he said, in an uncertain voice—and regretfully. "If you're like that—if you're on the square. Something might have come of it. But you've spoiled it. You've put me on my guard against you forever. A man has his pride. A man has to choose. He can't submit to a woman. You wouldn't want a tame man. I'm sorry!"

They stood looking at each other with an odd wistfulness.

"Go back to your own fire," Bela said, in a muffled voice.

CHAPTER XII.

Sam was awakened by the rising sun. He arose sore in spirit and unrefreshed. It promised to be a brilliant day, with a gentle breeze from the west. Such a wind would blow him to the foot of the lake, the nearest shore, and, observing it, he immediately started to drag the logs he had collected down to the water's edge, careless now if Bela discovered what he was about. Let her try to stop him if she dared!

Building a raft promised to be no easy task. He was without hammer and nails and he had not been long enough in the country to learn how it might be done without. His only tool was a pocket knife.

After several fruitless experiments, he hit upon the scheme of lashing the logs together with withes of willow. It promised to be an all-day job, and a clumsy one at the best. Still, if the wind held fair and light, it might serve. Raising a mast presented another problem. He deferred consideration of that until he got the raft built.

After a while Bela appeared around the shore, bringing his breakfast. Sam essayed taking a leaf out of her book by making believe to be oblivious of her. She put the plate down and watched him for a while. Sam, under her gaze, became horribly conscious of the crudeness of his handiwork, but he worked ahead, whistling.

Finally she said scornfully: "You can't get to shore on that."

No answer from Sam.

"When you sit down, her bend in the middle. Water come over you. Raft got to be hard lak a floor."

Another silence.

"Wen wind blow she all bus' up."

No answer being forthcoming, Bela shrugged and sat down in the sand as if she meant to spend the morning there. She gazed across the lake. Sam scowled and fidgeted. Something told him that when it came to holding one's tongue, Bela could beat him hollow. He worked doggedly on, careful never to look in her direction.

After a while the astonishing girl rose and said calmly: "I take you to shore in my canoe now."

Sam dropped his willow strips and stared. "Eh?"

"I say I ready tak you to shore now," she repeated.

"What does this mean?" Sam demanded.

She shrugged slightly. "Ask no question. Come, if you want."

"To what shore?" he demanded.

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She disappeared around the shore, leaving him much perturbed in mind. In a minute or two he stole after to see if she were indeed getting ready. It was true. Watching from behind the willows, he saw her tie a poplar pole in the bow of the dugout and stay it with a rope.

Upon this rude mast she bound a yard, from which hung one of her blankets, with a rope tied at each of the lower corners. Afterward she stowed her baggage in the boat. She worked with a determined swiftness that suggested some particular urgency.

Finally she started back along the beach, whereupon Sam turned and, hastening ahead of her, resumed operations on the raft as if he had never dropped them.

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"I'm hanged if I do!" returned Sam.

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"Not if they don't find you here, too."

"They kill you!" she insisted. "Two days they are after us. All tam talk together what they goin' do when they catch us, and get more mad. If they find me gone away, they get more mad again. Wen they catch you, they get kill you for 'cause they say so many times. You are on this little island. Nobody know. Nobody see. They are safe to kill you. You don't go wit' me, you never leave here."

Sam, knowing the men, could not but be shaken by her words. He paled a little, but having announced his decision to her, pride would not allow him to take it back.

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A subtle smile appeared on her lips. She was silent.

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She looked at him with a strange, fiery intensity. "I not bluffin'," she replied quietly. "I do wit' I say. If I want say I put my hand in the fire, I hold it there till it burn off. You know that."

In his heart he did know it, however he might rage at being forced to do what she wanted him to do.

"I don't care!" he cried. "You can't lead me by the nose! I'm my own master! I didn't get you into this. You'll have to take your chance as I take mine."

Bela said nothing.

Out of sheer bravado Sam set to work again to bind his logs together. His hand shook. There was little likelihood now that he would need a raft.

The approaching boat had already covered half the distance to the island. They could now make out three figures in it, one steering, each of the other two welding an oar. The lake was glorious in the strong sunshine. All the little ripples to the east were tipped with gold.

Five minutes passed, while obstinacy contended silently with obstinacy. Bela sat looking at nothing with all the stolidism of her ancestors; Sam maintained his futile pretence of business. Occasionally he glanced at her full of uncertainty and unwilling admiration. Bela never looked at him.

At the end of that time the boat was less than a quarter of a mile off shore. They saw the steersman point, and the two oarsmen stop and look over their shoulders. Evidently they had discovered the two figures on the beach, and wondered at their supineness. They came on with increased energy. Bela held the best cards. Sam finally threw down his work with an oath.

"I can't stand it!" he cried, shakily. "I don't care about myself, but I can't see a woman sacrificed—even if it's your own foolishness! I don't care about you, either—but you're a woman. You needn't think you're getting the best of me. I'll have you for this—but I can't stand it!"

Bela sprang up swiftly and resolutely.

"Come!" she exclaimed. "I don't care what mak you come, if you come!"

She pointed to the longest way round the shore. "This way," she directed. "I want them follow this way, so I sail back 'er side."

As they ran around the beach, a faint shout reached them from the water. As soon as they had passed out of sight of the boat, Bela pulled Sam into the bushes, and they worked back under cover to a point whence they could watch their pursuers in comparative safety.

"Maybe they goin' land this side," she suggested. "If they land, run lak hell and jump in my boat."

Sam never thought of smiling.

Five minutes of breathless suspense succeeded. Suppose the men landed the beach, what would they do? However, it appeared that they intended to row around the island and, as they thought, cut off Bela's escape by water. But the watchers could not be sure of this until the boat was almost upon them. Finally Bela looked at Sam, and they dashed together for the dugout.

Sam was ready for the start, the boat pointing, bow first, into the lake. In the excitement of the last few minutes they had forgotten Sam's blankets. It was too late to think of them now.

Sam got in first and, obeying Bela's instructions, braced his feet against the bottom of the mast. She pushed off and paddled like a wild woman until she could weather the island under her square sail. They succeeded in making the point before the row-boat appeared from around the other side of the island. Finally the white blanket, with its wide black bars, caught the wind and Bela ceased paddling.

To Sam it seemed as if they stopped moving upon the stilling of that vigorous arm. He looked anxiously over his shoulder. She was watching their progress through the water with an experienced eye.

"Never catch us if the wind hold," she said, calmly. "Johnny Gagnon's boat ver' heavy boat."

They had a start of upward of a quarter of a mile when their perplexed pursuers, having almost completed a circuit of the island, finally caught sight of them sailing blithely down the lake. A great roar of anger came down the wind to them.

(To be continued.)

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MOTHERHOOD WOMAN'S JOY

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Among the virtues of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the ability to correct sterility in the cases of many women. This fact is well established as evidenced by the following letter and hundreds of others we have published in these columns.

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—Mrs. ALLIE B. TIMMONS, 216 Almond St., Poplar Bluff, Mo.

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Bela said nothing.

Out of sheer bravado Sam set to work again to bind his logs together. His hand shook. There was little likelihood now that he would need a raft.

The approaching boat had already covered half the distance to the island. They could now make out three figures in it, one steering, each of the other two welding an oar. The lake was glorious in the strong sunshine. All the little ripples to the east were tipped with gold.

Five minutes passed, while obstinacy contended silently with obstinacy. Bela sat looking at nothing with all the stolidism of her ancestors; Sam maintained his futile pretence of business. Occasionally he glanced at her full of uncertainty and unwilling admiration. Bela never looked at him.

At the end of that time the boat was less than a quarter of a mile off shore. They saw the steersman point, and the two oarsmen stop and look over their shoulders. Evidently they had discovered the two figures on the beach, and wondered at their supineness. They came on with increased energy. Bela held the best cards. Sam finally threw down his work with an oath.

"I can't stand it!" he cried, shakily. "I don't care about myself, but I can't see a woman sacrificed—even if it's your own foolishness! I don't care about you, either—but you're a woman. You needn't think you're getting the best of me. I'll have you for this—but I can't stand it!"

Bela sprang up swiftly and resolutely.

"Come!" she exclaimed. "I don't care what mak you come, if you come!"

She pointed to the longest way round the shore. "This way," she directed. "I want them follow this way, so I sail back 'er side."

As they ran around the beach, a faint shout reached them from the water. As soon as they had passed out of sight of the boat, Bela pulled Sam into the bushes, and they worked back under cover to a point whence they could watch their pursuers in comparative safety.

"Maybe they goin' land this side," she suggested. "If they land, run lak hell and jump in my boat."

Sam never thought of smiling.

Five minutes of breathless suspense succeeded. Suppose the men landed the beach, what would they do? However, it appeared that they intended to row around the island and, as they thought, cut off Bela's escape by water. But the watchers could not be sure of this until the boat was almost upon them. Finally Bela looked at Sam, and they dashed together for the dugout.

Sam was ready for the start, the boat pointing, bow first, into the lake. In the excitement of the last few minutes they had forgotten Sam's blankets. It was too late to think of them now.

Sam got in first and, obeying Bela's instructions, braced his feet against the bottom of the mast. She pushed off and paddled like a wild woman until she could weather the island under her square sail. They succeeded in making the point before the row-boat appeared from around the other side of the island. Finally the white blanket, with its wide black bars, caught the wind and Bela ceased paddling.

To Sam it seemed as if they stopped moving upon the stilling of that vigorous arm. He looked anxiously over his shoulder. She was watching their progress through the water with an experienced eye.

"Never catch us if the wind hold," she said, calmly. "Johnny Gagnon's boat ver' heavy boat."

They had a start of upward of a quarter of a mile when their perplexed pursuers, having almost completed a circuit of the island, finally caught sight of them sailing blithely down the lake. A great roar of anger came down the wind to them.

(To be continued.)

War Camel of Africa

"There are almost as many varieties of camels as horses," says a bulletin of the National Geographic Society. "The Arab name for camel is djemel. Those of Tunisia, Tripolitania and Algeria have one hump and are really dromedaries. Certain breeds of camel can withstand the great heat of the Sahara and others that of the zero weather of Tibet and China.

"It is amazing to see the rapidity with which a herd of 500 camels will eat to the ground a large pasture of prickly pear from eight to ten feet high. Leaves, stems, prickles and all disappear like magic.

"In many parts of Africa the natives keep all their date stones and give them to exhausted camels, weary from their long Sahara march. The camel resists at first, and the date stones moistened in a little water, are pushed forcibly by the handful down the camel's throat after it has been made to kneel and then securely fastened. In two or three days the camel learns to eat of them of its own accord. The natives say that these date stones make the hump of the camel strong and stiff.

"The camel in its long march across the Sahara frequently finds very little to eat and lives on the fat of its own hump. When this continues during a long time the hump becomes flabby and almost disappears.

"The usual weight of the burdens carried by a camel varies from 550 to 700 pounds for journeys from town to town or on the borders of the desert. Going across the desert the burden is less. When a camel is being laden it keeps up a continual snarling, and should it be overburdened it refuses to arise. Most camels are vicious, and their bite is very dangerous. Hardly a week passes at the large native hospital in Tunis but some unfortunate camel driver dies of blood poisoning caused by a camel's bite. The grinding motion of a camel's jaw crushes to pulp whatever it bites, so that the arm or leg has to be amputated, and blood-poisoning usually sets in before the patient can reach the hospital.

"In the interior of northern Africa is a superb race of camels, known as the meharra (singular, mehari), or racing camels. The meharra owe a great deal to the care taken in their breeding during the past 2,000 years. Ancient writers speak of camels used by the army of Xerxes, more than 2,000 years ago, that had the speed of the fastest horses. These were doubtless meharra.

"When a baby mehari is born it is swathed in bandages to prevent the stomach from getting too large and is taken into the family tent, where it is nursed and watched over with care and tenderness. When a year old it is sheared and is known from then on as a bou-keutas, which means 'the father of the shearing.'

"When it is two years old the mehari's training begins. A halter is placed around the head and a cord tied to one of the fore feet. It is kept quiet first, but should it make a step it is tied again. Finally it understands what is required, but the lessons are only terminated when it will stand in one place without moving for an entire day.

"To make the camel a fast runner the rider whips it on both flanks with a rhinoceros hide whip and cries out in Arabic to excite it. A young mehari is very fond of its own skin and the whipping truck starts on a gallop. The whip keeps up, and the camel tries to get away by running faster. The long legs seem like wings, and it flies past with the speed of an ostrich. It will stop instantly at a pull on the rein, no matter what speed it has been making.

"When the rider jumps off or should he happen to fall, a well trained mehari will stand quite still and wait while should the master happen to be injured the faithful beast will never leave him.

"A mehari is never used as a beast of burden. All it ever carries is a saddle (something like a Mexican saddle made of gazelle skin, dyed red, with a high pommel and a cross in front), two saddlebags and a rider. The rider is buckled into the saddle by two belts. His feet are crossed in front of the saddle and rest on the neck of the mehari. His slippers are usually slung across the pommel, and the mehari is guided by the wriggling of the rider's toes.

"An iron ring passes through one nostril of the animal, and a rein of camel's hair is attached.

"The mehari are used entirely by the Arabs when on the warpath, or

Supplisiously.

"Anywhere. Better go to little river. I guess. Wind blow us there to-day. Maybe blow here after."

"What are you up to now?" he muttered.

She had already turned up the beach. "I go get ready," she said over her shoulder. "Better come quick."

She disappeared around the shore, leaving him much perturbed in mind. In a minute or two he stole after to see if she were indeed getting ready. It was true. Watching from behind the willows, he saw her tie a poplar pole in the bow of the dugout and stay it with a rope.

Upon this rude mast she bound a yard, from which hung one of her blankets, with a rope tied at each of the lower corners. Afterward she stowed her baggage in the boat. She worked with a determined swiftness that suggested some particular urgency.

Finally she started back along the beach, whereupon Sam turned and, hastening ahead of her, resumed operations on the raft as if he had never dropped them.

"Now I guess you know why we goin' to the shore," she stated, abruptly.

"I'm hanged if I do!" returned Sam.

"You got strong eyes, and not see nothin'?" she asked, scornfully. "Look."

Following the direction of her pointing finger across the lake, he made out a black spot on the water, between them and the head of the river.

"Those men comin' here," she said. "I am think before maybe come to-day. Yesterday I guess they ride down the river and get Johnny Gagnon's boat."

When she pointed it out, the object was clear enough. The rise and fall of oars was suggested. Sam watched it doubtfully. He was ready to welcome relief in any form from his hateful situation, but was this relief?

"How do you expect to sail to the river when they're coming from there?" he asked.

"I wait till come close," she replied, eagerly. "Then go round 'er side of island. They never catch me wit' my sail. Johnny Gagnon's boat got no sail."

Her eagerness made him suspicious. What had she up her sleeve now? he wondered. While he could scarcely regard Jack, Shand and Joe in the light of deliverers, his galled pride forbade him to put himself in her hands again. He suddenly made up his mind.

"Go ahead!" he said, harshly. "Go anywhere you like! I stay here!"

Bela changed color, and a real fear showed in her eyes. She moved toward him involuntarily.

"They kill you if they find you here," she said.

"Not if they don't find you here, too."

"They kill you!" she insisted. "Two days they are after us. All tam talk together what they goin' do when they catch us, and get more mad. If they find me gone away, they get more mad again. Wen they catch you, they get kill you for 'cause they say so many

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