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CENTRAL SHOW ROOM CENTRAL SHOW ROOM

"Love in the Wilds"

—OR—
The Romance of a South African Trading Station.

CHAPTER XXX
"JUST LIKE A GIRL."

Pains of love be sweeter far than all other pleasure are.—DRYDEN.

It is refreshing to turn from the gilded saloons of fashionable London, from the unrelaxing, vice, manifold plotting, cant, hypocrisy, and all uncharitableness of the hydra-headed society to the lone hut in the wilds of Africa.

We left Laurence and Cecil in the position of wounded man and nurse, and we return to find them in the same position.

Two days have passed and the stalwart form of the cattle-runner is still stretched upon the bed of dead leaves, notwithstanding his assurance that he should be in the saddle and home before the first day's sun had set.

The panther had not only scratched deeply but had let enough blood to bring about a low fever, and the second night had been spent by Cecil in watching the pain-knit brow of his companion and listening with tender interest to the half-delirious mumbings of his parched lips.

Cecil's courage came by fits and starts. Just now it was in full vigor. The pale, girlish face was set with hard determination and there was a valorous expression shining through the pitying one of the dark, deep, beautiful eyes.

All night he watched, sleepless and vigilant, never leaving the wounded Laury for a moment, save to replenish the fire burning outside the hut door or to dampen the cloth with which he cooled the hot, feverish forehead.

In the morning the delirium ceased and Laurence opened his eyes to fix them with a questioning, puzzling gaze upon the gentle ones above him.

"Cecil," he muttered, "you here?"

"And—oh, I remember! Lad, you should be at the farm. Why did you not go when I told you? You are not well—too weak to be here away from the house."

"I'm better than you, at any rate," retorted the youth, with assumed

sharpness. "You ought to be home and in the hay-loft. But as you're not, you must make the best of it. Pray how do you feel this morning?"

"Shaky and weak," said Laury, with an annoyed smile. "That beast cut deeper than I thought, lad. But we'll be home to-day, please Heaven."

And he raised himself on one elbow, only, however, to fall again with a groan of pain.

"Lay quiet," said Cecil, anxiously. "Pray lay quiet; there's a good Laury!" he entreated, throwing the skin over him again and smoothing it down. "You have been so ill, so very ill, in the night," he continued; "and you will be worse if you do not keep quite still. Oh, Laury, I do so grieve to see you in pain!"

And the lad's face flushed.

"Nonsense, lad!" said Laury, with a smile. "'Tis nothing! The nuisance of lying here and keeping you is worse than the twitching of the scratches. Will you not ride home? Come, lad, do as you are told, and return to the farm."

"Not if you threatened to whip me all the way," replied Cecil, decisively. "Don't waste breath in asking, Laury; but tell me where I shall find the cup for making some coffee—for I discovered a bag full of it in the corner last night."

And with a cheerful face he ran down to the stream, returned with some water and set it to boil on the little stove.

Then forcing himself to sing the rag-end of one of Mr. Stewart's songs, hustled about, though noiselessly, and tidied up the hut.

Then, while the coffee was brewing, he made some antelope soup for Laury's dinner.

All these little ministrings he did with the deftness and lightness of touch of a woman; then, as the sun's morning beams pierced through the crevices of the hut, he set himself down beside the invalid and held the cup of coffee ready for him.

Laurence, who had watched him in silence, raised himself very gently—Cecil propped him up with the saddle—and, with a grateful look in his eyes, took the refreshing beverage.

"Cecil," he said, "you're a good lad—ay, more than that, a gentle-hearted fellow. Who taught you to play nurse so admirably?"

"My un— No one; it came by instinct," replied the youth. "How do you like the coffee? Nice? Well, I'm glad of it. But I wish I knew whether it was good for you; perhaps it's the worst thing you could have."

And he looked troubled.

"Not it," replied Laurence, carelessly. "It is delicious. No one makes coffee as well as you, Cecil. I think you do everything better than any one else."

The youth flushed with pleasure. "You are full of compliments this morning," he replied. "There; lie down again," and he gently helped him down upon the bed. "But you haven't drunk all the coffee."

"I couldn't drink any more," said Laury. "And now I am going to watch you, lad. Come, you must cook a steak and get some fresh coffee, or I'll get up and do it for you."

"Indeed you won't," said Cecil.

Alarmed at Laury's resolute tone, he put a steak upon the embers and sat down again.

"And now the coffee," said Laurence, who seemed determined that Cecil should not neglect himself in his careful attendance on him.

"Oh, the coffee!" said Cecil, glancing at the can from which Laury had drunk. "There's enough for me and to spare. I'll have this."

And before Laurence could remonstrate he lifted the cup and sipped it, a sweet flush sweeping over the girlish face and a smile full of tender, mysterious meaning lighting up the dark eyes as the lips touched place where Laury's had rested.

Then he got the steak and commenced upon it for, although he had passed a sleepless night, he was hungry.

Laurence watched him with silent gravity for some moments, then said: "Cecil, I'm afraid, judging from my sensations, that I shall not be able to get away from here to-day."

"Tell me some news, Laury," retorted the youth, with a smile.

The cattle-runner sighed.

"Is it any use asking you to leave me and return?" he said.

"Not the slightest, as I have told you a score of times—before," said Cecil, decisively.

Laurence paused.

"How much antelope have you in that saddle-bag?" he asked.

Cecil rose and showed it to him.

"Hum!" he said; "enough for two days."

"And enough outside for forty," said Cecil, waving his hand toward the door.

Laurence smiled.

"Not a step," he said, "out of my sight, lad. I won't trust you after that last adventure."

"Well, well!" pleaded the youth. At least let me creep to the bushes yonder. You can see them from where

you lie. Last night I saw a herd pass near enough for me to mark them, and I would have gone then but I was afraid of awaking you."

Laurence sighed.

"Well," he said, "to the bushes, then; but no further."

Cecil, delighted at his acquiescence, jumped up, and, seizing the gun, crept on his hands and knees to the covert, and looking back now and then toward the hut, as if he feared something might turn up to injure or interfere with his charge, waited patiently for the desired game.

An hour passed and Laurence was awakened from an uneasy doze by the report of a gun, and in a few minutes Cecil ran in all aglow with triumph and delight.

"Laury, I have shot one—a beauty! Did you ever! Who says I'm of no use now, eh? Oh, Laury, I wish you could have seen him leap up into the air and stagger forward! Such a monster, such a strong, fine, powerful-looking fellow to be shot by a weak, tiny-handed girl like me!"

"What?" said Laurence.

"What's the matter?" asked Cecil, turning suddenly pale and then blushing like a rose. "Well, aren't you always calling me a girl, Mr. Impudence, and mayn't I do it once in a way myself?" It was only a taunt, and I hope you're ashamed of it. You'll remember this shot when the words on your lips again."

"Ay, lad," said Laury. "And yet you're like a woman for all your bravado, in tenderness and gentleness, at least. Go and drag the buck—But, stay; you can not get it here—it's too heavy!"

Cecil's face fell at this reminder, but suddenly brightened again.

"I know," he said, and ran out.

Presently Laurence heard him come back, talking to one of the horses, and the next moment Cecil stopped the black at the hut door and pointed, with a smile, to the antelope, which he had tied by the horns to the saddle-girth and made the powerful horse drag along.

"There, ain't I clever?" he asked.

"It was an awful job, for the black didn't understand it. But we are very good friends, and after a deal of coaxing he trotted off with it. Necessity is the mother of invention. And now I'm going to sit down while you sleep."

"I can't sleep," said Laurence; "but sit down, lad, and give me my pipe."

"Pipe!" said Cecil, looking terrified. "Oh, I'm sure that can't be right. A pipe! Why, it would be your death!"

"Nonsense! Give me my pipe," said Laurence, grimly.

And not daring to refuse, the youth reached it from the pocket of his coat and, filling it, handed it to him in silence.

"That's a good lad again," said Laurence, with a quiet smile. "I was afraid you wouldn't let me have it, and if you'd stood out I'd 'a' had to give in, for you've been too kind to be worried."

(to be continued.)

Fashion Plates.

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Pattern 3229 is used to make this attractive model. It is cut in 4 Sizes: 8, 10, 12 and 14 years. A 12 year size will require 4 yards of 44 inch material. Blue or green linen with facings of white pique or pipings in a contrasting color, could be used for this design. As here shown, plaid gingham was employed, with linen embroidered in colors for collar and other trimmings.

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