

MARIA'S REVENGE.

BY A. HAGGARD WRITER.

CHAPTER I.

WE were on a visit to Allan Halfmain, at his shooting lodge near the Humber, and fine sport we had, I can tell you. After dinner, one evening, when we had polished off six bottles of champagne, two quarts of sherry, and a dozen claret, and were sitting over our toddy and cigars, the company consisting of Good, Purdis, Halfmain and myself, Good said, "That was fine shooting this evening; did you ever do anything like it in Africa?" "Once," replied Halfmain. "Tell us about it," said I. "Yes, a story!" said Purdis. "Don't mind if I do," said Halfmain, dashing off three tumblers of toddy by way of a start. "Here goes":—

"Once I started from Delagoa Bay for Wambe's country. The head carrier raised a mutiny among the men. He was afraid of Wambe. 'Bad luck walk about in Wambe's country,' he said, 'Bussy might meet him.' 'All right, Bussy,' I retorted, 'if you won't go I won't hurt you, but I'll put fifteen bullets through your brain.' 'All right, Massa, me go,' said he. When we entered Wambe's country we got in the track of a herd of buffaloes, and I wanted to kill some for the camp. We were in the midst of them and could hear them breathing, but could not see them for the thick cover. I was stealing upon one, when I heard a noise something like a bell and the rattle of wheels. 'Ha!' said I to myself, 'it's a Queen Street car, and its got the wind of us and is charging down.' Down it came, snorting and roaring like fury. I swung myself up to an electric light, and it passed, raging and tearing by. When it had passed I got down, and going over to the garrison commor, shot two or three Jersey cows and a Durham bull. 'That's beef enough,' I exclaimed, as I dragged it into camp.

"Next morning a messenger came from Tony, one of Wambe's chiefs. He said there were three elephants devastating Tony's kraal, and he wanted the big white hunter to come and kill them. I liked the idea, and started out alone, followed at a safe distance by Bussy and the niggers. When we came near Tony's kraal we found all the forest for five hundred miles around had been cut down by the elephants, and sawn up into boards. They snapped the trees off with their trunks, like pipe-stems, and slit them into boards with their tusks—not only boards, but lumber of various dimensions, scantling, two inch plank, and inch boards. This they had piled up regularly as in a large lumber yard, and were evidently just waiting for a railway to be built to ship it off to the nearest market. I thought it a fine instance of reason in brute beasts.

"Tony received me graciously at the door of the kraal and offered me a cigarette and a glass of dry champagne. He said he would give a ball in honor of my arrival, but that the ladies in his kraal had very spare clothing, as he had sent no ivory to the coast this year, and had received no cotton.

"'Don't let that trouble the little dears,' I replied. 'It is the custom in all the capitals of Europe for the ladies to wear very little clothes at balls and parties. The less they have on the more fully they are dressed. But I am not a society man, so Tony, my boy, say nothing about the ball and tell me about the elephants.'

"He then informed me that the elephants came every night into the mealy fields to feed, and that my plan would be to watch for them and stalk them.

"Accordingly, that night I got into a hickory nut tree and waited for the brutes. At twelve, midnight, like the ghost in *Hamlet*, they made their appearance. The first one was as large as the Union Station, with a trunk that reached as far as Hanlan's Point; the second was as large as the *Mail* building, and the third about the size of the City Hall.

"As they went to feeding, I waited to get a good shot, as I wanted to save ammunition. When I got them in a row I fired and killed two of them, the *Mail* building and the City Hall, which died without a struggle. The other was only touched with the ball and simply lost his head. He became so mad he did not know what he was doing and ran bellowing into the midst of the village, trampling down huts and people. When he came to a Queen Anne hut with stained glass windows and a large silver plate on the door bearing the inscription, 'Mrs. Mumbo,' he stopped, looked more angry than usual, and putting his trunk in a chamber window, drew out something. What was it? Alas! he had seized Mrs. Mumbo in her sweet slumbers, and was savagely twirling her in the air. I was about to shoot him when Tony ran out of his palace, exclaiming, 'Don't, don't, it's my poor mother-in-law. Let the elephant alone!' 'But I'm going to kill the beast and save her.' 'No, no, don't fire, you might hit her.' 'But I won't hit her,' I said, 'I'll strike the elephant right in the heart, which is 100 yards from her.' 'No, no, don't, please, don't; his heart is very hard and the ball might glance and strike her. Oh! please don't, mighty hunter, better let the elephant alone.' While we were talking what did the brute do but put her in his mouth and chew her up. I glanced at Tony. He did not burst into tears; he had on a broad grin. Thus ended my elephant hunt for that occasion. "This is all true, I suppose?" commented Purdis. "True?" ejaculated Halfmain, indignantly, "it's as true as Haggard!"

THE ENFANT TERRIBLE.

BENNIE waltzed into the sitting-room the other day where his mother and sister Rosina were busy preparing floral designs for the harvest home festival, and said:

"Ma, if you put salt on a bird's tail, can you catch it?"

"You must not express yourself like that," said Rosina, a sweet girl graduate. "You should say chloride of sodium on a bird's posterior."

Next day at dinner Bennie convulsed everybody by requesting his mentor of the day before to pass him the "sodide of glorium," and later on in the evening sent Rosina into hysterics by straying into the parlor and remarking pleasantly to young Mr. De Jones that the posterior of his coat looked like it had been chewed some by a bull pup.

HOME RULE.

LET our brother Pat take heart of grace. Sandy has made up his mind to have home rule for the land of cakes, and Sandy never starts out without getting there, and what Scotland gets, Ireland can safely count on securing. British statesmen are aware that the radical cure for the home troubles is local self-government for all four divisions of the Kingdom. They are only taking their customary rest of a century or so before proceeding to apply the remedy.

MR. I. G. BOSSE is the new judge in the Quebec Queen's Bench. No doubt he will prove a very good Bosse.