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no she believed Jeeki's interpretation of the visions, it seemed quite certain that her mind was void of fears or doubts. She was sure that Alan was about to become her husband, and had summoned all the people of the Asiki to be present at the ceremony of their marriage, and incidentally of the death of the Mungana, who, poor wretch, was to be forced to kill himself upon that occasion.

Before they parted she had spoken to Alan sweetly enough.

"Vernoon," she said, "I know that you do not love me as I love you, but the love will come, since for your sake I will change myself. I will become gentle; I will shed no more blood; that of the Mungana shall be the last, and even him I would spare if I could, only while he lives I may not marry you; it is the one law that is stronger than I am, and if I broke it you would be murdered. You shall even teach me your faith, if you will, for what is good to you is henceforth good to me. Ask what you wish of me, and as an earnest I will do it if I can."

Now Alan looked at her. There was one thing that he wished above all others—that she would let him go. But this he did not dare to ask; moreover, it would have been utterly useless. After all, if the Asika's love was terrible, what would be the appearance of her outraged hate? What could he ask? More gold? He hated the very name of the stuff, for it had brought him here. He remembered the old cannibal chief, Fahni, who like himself languished a prisoner, daily expecting death. Only that morning he had implored him to obtain his liberty.

"I thank you, Asika," he said. "Now, if your words are true, set Fahni free, and let him return to his own country, for if he stays here he will die."

"Surely, Vernoon, that is a very small thing," she answered smiling, "though it is true that when he gets there he will probably make war upon us. Well, let him, let him." Then she clapped her hands and summoned priests, whom she bade go at once and conduct Fahni out of Bonsa-Town. Also she bade them loose certain slaves who were of the Ogula tribe, that they might accompany him laden with provisions, and send on orders to the outposts that Fahni and his party should pass unmolested from the land.

This done, she began to talk to Alan about many matters, however little he might answer her. Indeed, it seemed almost as though she feared to let him leave her; as though some presentiment of loss oppressed her.

At length, to Alan's great relief, the time came when they must part, since it was necessary for her to attend a secret ceremony of preparation or purification, that was called "The Putting Off of the Past." Although she had been thrice summoned still she would not let him go.

"They call you, Asika," said Alan.

"Yes, yes, they call me," she replied, springing up. "Leave me, Vernoon, till we meet to-morrow to part no more. Oh! why is my heart so heavy in me? That black dog of yours read the visions that I summoned, but might not look on, and they were good visions. They showed that the woman who loved you is dead; they showed us wedded, and other deeper things. Surely he would not dare to lie to me, knowing that if he did, I would flay him living and throw him to the vultures. Why, then, is my heart so heavy in me? Would you escape me, Vernoon? Nay, you are not so cruel, nor could you do it, except by death. Moreover, Man, know that even in death you cannot escape me, for there I shall follow you and claim you, to whose side my spirit has toiled for ages, and

what is there so strong that it can snatch you from my hand?"

She looked at him for a moment, then, of a sudden, burst into a flood of tears, and seizing his hand, threw herself upon his knees and kissed it again and again.

"Go, now," she said, "go, and let my love go with you, through lives and deaths, and all the dreams beyond, oh! let my love go with you, as it shall, Vernoon."

So Alan went, leaving her there weeping on her knees.

During the dark hours that followed, Alan and madness were not far apart. What could he do? Escape was utterly impossible. For weeks he and Jeeki had considered it in vain. Even if they could win out of the Gold House fortress, what hope had they of making their way through the crowded, tortuous town where, after the African fashion, people walked about all night, everyone of whom would recognise the white man of whom all were talking, whether he was masked or no? Besides, beyond the town were the river and the guarded walls and gates, and beyond them open country, where they would be cut off or run down. No, to attempt escape was suicide. Suicide! That gave him an idea; why should he not kill himself?

Alan paused in his walk up and down the room, and looked at Jeeki, who sat upon the floor with his back resting against the stone altar.

"Jeeki," he said, "time's up. What am I to do?"

"Do, Major?" he replied with affected cheerfulness. "Oh! that quite simple. Jeeki arrange everything. You marry Asika, and by and by, when you master here and tired of her, you give her slip."

"Look here, Jeeki, you old scamp, I am sorry for you, for you have been a good friend to me and we are fond of each other. But just understand this, I am not going to marry that woman if I can help it. It's against my principles. So I shall wait till to-morrow, and then I shall walk out of this place. If the guards try to stop me, I shall shoot them while I have any cartridges. Then I shall go on until they kill me."

(To be continued.)

THE INDIAN AND HIS HORSE.

A SPANIARD was riding a tired old horse in a lonely part of Mexico. By and by he met an Indian mounted on a fresh, strong, young horse.

"Let us exchange horses," said the Spaniard.

"Certainly not," replied the Indian, "for yours is not nearly so good as mine."

The Spaniard, who was armed, then seized the Indian's horse by force, and rode away on it. The poor Indian followed, and, as he was a capital runner, managed to keep up with the thief. They reached the next village together, and there the Indian loudly complained to the chief magistrate of the shameful way in which he had been treated. Whereupon the Spaniard coolly said that the horse was his own.

As there was no witness to prove which claimant was right, the magistrate was about to dismiss the case when the Indian said, "The horse is mine, and I can prove it."

He took off his cloak and threw it over the horse's head. "Now," said he, "which eye is he blind in, the right or the left?"

"The right eye, to be sure," replied the Spaniard.

"Then you are wrong," said the Indian, withdrawing the cloak, "for he is blind in neither."

On this the magistrate decided that the horse belonged to the Indian, and severely punished the wicked Spaniard.—*Little Folks.*



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