

'Love in the Wilds'

The Romance of a South African Trading Station,

CHAPTER LII. A MOMENT OF PERFECT BLISS.

"Here you are, sir, then, at last. It

"We've kept a pretty sharp lookout

There ain't a wessel we haven't over

ing very faint; come along into

"Gon on," breathed the young gen

"Well." responded the old man

rather bewildered by these sings of

emotion, and thrown off the rails-

well, I thinks as we have got him-

"Go on -go on!" breathed the other,

sir-he's as like as two peas to your

description on 'im-I'm 'feared he's

"Not dead!" almost shricked the

you have been breaking that to me-

even dying, but not dead-oh, Heaven,

"No, no, no! He ain't dead," replied

the old man, anxious to dispel the

fearful agony plainly demonstrated

by the white, strained face, "He ain't

dead, but he's in a bad state, a very

bad state, and it ain't no use con

The young gentleman gave a sigh

of relief, and then-oh, wonderful hu-

man nature!-dropped on a bale and

"Oh, I say, you know, sir; for

Heaven's sake don't you go to take on

ike that!" remonstrated the old man

laintively, and looking around with

ealin' of it as I knows on."

urst into a torrent of tears.

cottage-a drop o' waten."

in. I think."

rapidly.

in a bad way-"

not dead!"

He did not open it in the litle shop, f in the cushions and hid his face in but waited a few minutes to buy a his hands. weather with the shop-keeper. Neither the huge walls of the docks. over his eyes, he hurried along to the hand of the for-once-satisfied Jehu, park and, withdrawing a little from hurried through the little wicket and the stream of people pouring down there stopped. the path to a clump of trees, stopped and held the letter before him and fearful tremor had assailed his heart paused as if to regain breath. The and he almost longed in those mohand with which he held it trembled like the leaves above his head, and as he tore open the envelope the blood calm and courage, the bent form of deserted his face and left it waxen the old man, Tovey, came out of the

But it rushed back in a crimson hat, drew him aside. torrent as he deciphered the painful scrawl, and by the time he had reach- be three days since I sent the letter, ed the signature he felt faint enough and I was afeared it 'ad gone wrong."

to lean against the friendly tree. tion, one of the guardians of the peo- ter with a nod, however, and the old ple, who was leaning against the rails, man went on: eating nuts and trying to look as if he were not swallowed a kernel, settled young sir, both of us, Joe and my his neck in his stock with a look of determination and marched toward hauled, and-dear me, sir, you're look

But before he could knock him down or take him in charge-for your courses-John Stanfield had hired a will go on in a moment-tell me, hackney cab and, giving the driver at please, quick." address to which to drive, sank back



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himself, rose to his feet rather sharpvery quietly:

"I'm very sorry; don't you mind, lesse von see I haven't seen mymy brother for some years, and it's rather bad news. There, I am all right. Now, go on, please; do go on, tell me all-all, please; everything!"

Rather hesitatingly, for Mr. Tovey was terribly afraid of another out burst on the part of the listener and rather distrusted this unnatural calin,

about two biscuits a day! Your gentleman was one of those good-hearted ship's sides long and long ago. They brick-a-goin' about the ship, en-

exchange a remark in regard to the between the gates of Hyde Park and a mutiny—leastways, there would But at last the jolting vehicle pull- the spirits; but your gentleman stood the street, but with his lips tightly ed up with a rattle and a wheeze, and beside the officers and acted so braveshut and his spectacles very much the youth, thrusting a guinea into the like that the poor chaps were cowed and give in. But there; you're a-cry-

> Now that he was near the "nuse" ments of suspense to be miles away.

While he was waiting, regaining box, and, with many touchings of the vesse came in-he'd bore up as long The secretary was disinclined or as there was any occasion, just up to confusion Wiley and me smuggled him into the cottage and got him to ed out, you know, but just said, 'Are all the women saved?' and when we said 'Yes, and all the men, too,' dropped over and fainted away." tleman, faintly. "Tell me-here - we

"Oh, my noble heart-my noble

heart!" murmured the secretary. "What did you say, sir? Beg pardon thought you spoke. Well, there came a rare host o' people-regular swells and nobs, some of 'em, inquiring for the hero of the 'Sclavonia,' and I was asked all manner o' questions. But I said I knew nothing about it-it was no business o' mine; and Joe, he caps lutching his arm and pressing his it by swearin' as he sees him go out the ship was in, and so we managed to put 'em off the scent. And to make a long story short, sir, there he is, alying in the cottage at this momentchaps hasn't stole him away."

secretary, grasping his arm until he winced—"not dead! Don't tell me that replaced his spectacles; but his hands -nay, his whole lithe body-trembled still, and he waited a moment quietly not dead-anything, ill, crippled-ay,

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nan, with alacrity, and he started off toward the cottage, muttering: "Fifty pounds! fi-f-ty pounds! My eye!" The secretary stood in the shadow

Presently the old man came back

breathlessly. "He's there-all safe-and asleep,

"Asleep? Thank Heaven!" murmured the secretary; then with a sudden, wistful eagerness, added: "Do you

straight upstairs.

on't be home till dinner-time. He'll stonning before the closed door.

retary, more with his eyes than his

The old man nodded, opened the door and stood outside. The youth passed in and closed the

door behind him It was a small room, but clean and

omfortably furnished. At the further end was the bed, an of a man, his face, thin, but tanned h the sun, lying on his arm, thin, b

sinewy and tanned, too. The bedclothes were pushed awa from his breast and left it expose showing two scars from old swor

The whole form was stretched in a attitude of majestic, graceful rest, th pose of the arms, the play of th

All this the quiet secretary took in with the first devouring look; then, he sprang poiselessly forward and spectacles now-lying within an inch bosom actually touching the scarred breast, his breath mingling with the sleeper's, and his eyes drinking inoh, how thirstily!-every inch of the

Ah, surely those who sing of life as a voidful, joyless thing have never felt love have never sipped the nectar of such a moment as this!



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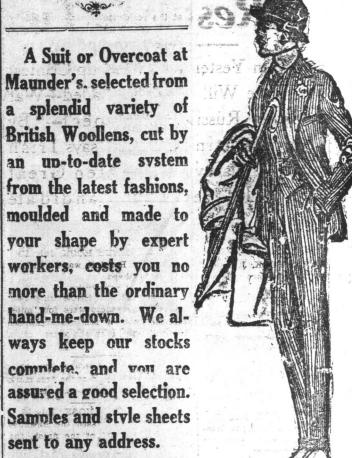
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