

various weapons of war, whose owners being killed would never want them again. Except a few starved dogs and jackals no living creature remained in the town. It was in its own way as waste and even more impressive than the graveyard of elephants by the lonely lake.

"The curse of the Child worked well," said Harât to me grimly. "First, the storm; the hunger; then the battle; and now the misery of flight and ruin."

"It seems so," I answered. "Yet that curse, like others, came back to roost, for if Jana is dead and his people fled, where are the Child and many of its people? What will you do without your god, Harât?"

"Repent us of our sins and wait till the Heavens send us another, as doubtless they will in their own season," he replied very sadly.

I wonder whether they ever did and, if so, what form that new divinity put on.

I slept, or rather did not sleep, that night in the same guest-house in which Harât and I had been imprisoned during our dreadful days of fear, reconstructing in my mind every event connected with them. Once more I saw the fires of sacrifice flaring upon the altar and heard the roar of the dancing hail that proclaimed the ruin of the Black Kendah as loudly as the trumpet of a destroying angel. Very glad was I when the morning came at length and, having looked my last upon Simba Town, I crossed the moats and set out homewards through the forest whereof the stripped boughs also spoke of death, though in the spring these would grow green again.

Ten days later we started from the Holy Mount, a caravan of about a hundred camels, of which fifty were laden with the ivory and the rest ridden by our escort under the command of Harât and our three selves. But there was an evil fate upon this ivory, as on everything else that had to do with Jana. Some weeks later in the desert a great sandstorm overtook us in which we barely escaped with our lives. At the height of the storm the ivory-laden camels broke loose, flying before it. Probably they fell and were buried beneath the sand; at any rate of the fifty we only recovered ten.

Ragnall wished to pay me the value of the remaining loads, which ran into thousands of pounds, but I would not take the money, saying it was outside of our bargain. Sometimes since then I have thought that I was foolish, especially when on glancing at that codicil to his will in after days, the same which he had given me before the battle. I found that he had set me down for a legacy of £10,000. But in such matters every man must follow his own instinct.