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200

stopped their customary twinkling and grew unusually sharp and bright. His trunk now curled, and his great muscles seemed to draw in as if he were preparing for an attack. Something in that wind spoke of days long gone by, carried the challenge of foes not seen in years, called to battle like a bugle.

Suddenly Hannibal screamed, not a scream of fear or cowardice, but of terrible defiance. The peons at the noon-tide meal slid to their knees and crossed themselves. The wild birds ceased their chattering. Far away cattle trembled, bolted and ran.

Then Mahama shouted at Hannibal in his native tongue and sharply prodded him with a little goad.

The elephant began to tremble, his muscles relaxed, and he was soon the obedient animal again. But as he ambled back to the bridge, he would now and then look anxiously at the Cordillera. Something had called to him from the peaks.

Mahama talked to Waite about it. "Eez strange things ober dere?" pointing to the range. "De beast smell someting not heez friend. He get mad. Ven he cry like dat, mooch trouble coming."

"Jaguars and all kinds of wildcats are over there," explained Waite. "The jaguar is something like the lion of your country, only worse. Perhaps Hannibal smelt one."

"Dat's eet. De day is varm, de leon get hot skin, and de air blow ober it. Dat Hannibal smell. He no like leon and leon no like him. Ooch! Hannibal no 'fraid."

Through the afternoon and the succeeding fortnight Hannibal performed his duties faithfully, but daily he scented the wind to see if that call from the jungle might come back to him, and daily the winds, which had shifted their direction, brought him no message. Mahama made for him a rough harness of sisal,—the native hemp,—and he not only lifted immense burdens, but hauled them. The peons came to admire him, and when they saw how gently he would wind his trunk about Tom, Mahama, or even Waite, and set them on his back, they developed great faith in his amiability and powers.

The flooring of the bridge was down and the side braces well set when one

morning there came riding out of the west a Mexican sugarcane planter, whose horse bolted when it saw Hannibal, and had to be led away, while its rider came ahead on foot and asked Tom for Waite. To Waite he explained that for two days past a jaguar from the mountains had been ravaging the flocks and young herds of his hacienda. He was unprovided with suitable weapons to hunt the beast, but had tracking dogs. Would the American lend him a rifle or two for the chase?

Waite was only too glad to give the planter two excellent magazine guns and explain how they should be used. The planter said that the jaguar only raided the domestic animals when extremely hungry, and therefore more than usually savage. He had heard from the native Indians that wild-animal feeding had been scarce on the range that year, and that the pumas and jaguars had been hunting in the lowlands.

"The jaguar is the king," he said. "When he is much hungry, senior, he is not afraid to take you or me."

"They have not come near our camp yet," replied Waite, "but the large amount of fresh meat we serve ought to draw them in if they're hungry."

"They will come," answered the Mexican, "when they know we are fighting them. They will come when you least expect it—they are not afraid except of guns. Adios, senior!"

But two days passed, and nothing more was heard of the jaguar raids. The animal is one of the fiercest known, a cat of extraordinary size and quickness, a better general and a harder fighter than the famed lion.

The morning of the third day after the planter's visit opened blazing hot. The sun made the Del Norte's waters look like molten glass, and on the bridge the heat was so deadly that Waite called off his men for a siesta, and with Tom and Hannibal, went down to the water-pool for a swim. All three were in the water, and Hannibal having a riot with his spoutings, when suddenly a light breeze came rippling in from the mountains. They were but two miles distant from the bridge, the level between the river and the foot-hills being covered with cane-brake.

Hannibal caught the first whiffs of the wind, and suddenly his playing stopped. The call had come again! He recognized it. It was in that wind, it was threat and defiance, a challenge his ancestors had met through all the ages of elephant life. He was out of the water on the instant, Tom clinging to his tail and shouting again for Mahama.

Once on the bank, the elephant wheeled about so that he faced the cane-brake. His eyes were blazing. Little hairs on part of his body stood upright like spear-points. He was braced in every muscle of his body, and he screamed, not once, but thrice, prodigious trumpeting that shivered the hot atmosphere. Literally, to whatever was beyond in the brake, he cried:

"Come on! I'm waiting! I'm not afraid! Come on and meet your master!"

Mahama rushed in, crying: "Me leetle von, me pet, me precious one, eet eez nutting!"

It was the language of the East Indian to his comrade and friend, but he might just as well have talked to the mountains. Twice had the wind brought Hannibal the call. No longer could it be ignored.

He made for the bridge, Tom, having partly got on his clothes, chasing after him, his goad in hand.

"He scents the jaguar!" Waite shouted. "Don't let him get away, or he'll run all over the country after that smell!"

Mahama hung back. Like all of his kind, he had great respect and fear for "the leon," as he would call it.

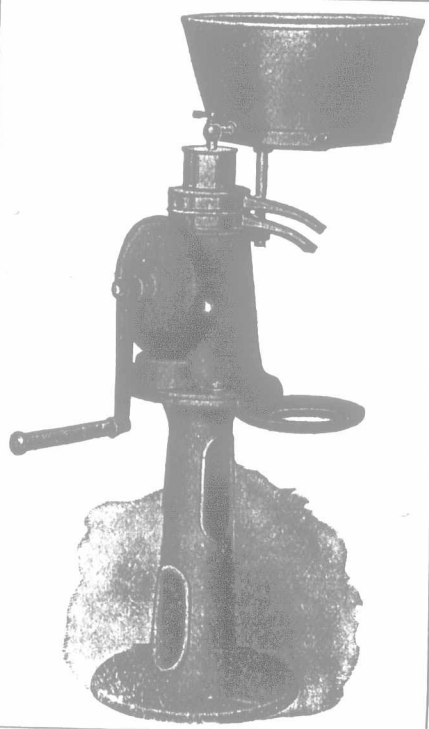
When Tom gained the bridge shortly after Hannibal, he found the resting peons scattered in every direction. The screams of the elephant and his charge up the bank had nearly driven them out of their wits.

But this was not all Tom saw. As his eyes ran along the bridge, it rested at the farther end on a thing of yellow-black, a long, tube thing, with switching tail, blazing eyes, and snarling lips that curled back over ivory-white fangs.

That was desperate, the jaguar had come down from the range, through the brake, in all the riotous heat, and now for life

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