

RETURN of TARZAN By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

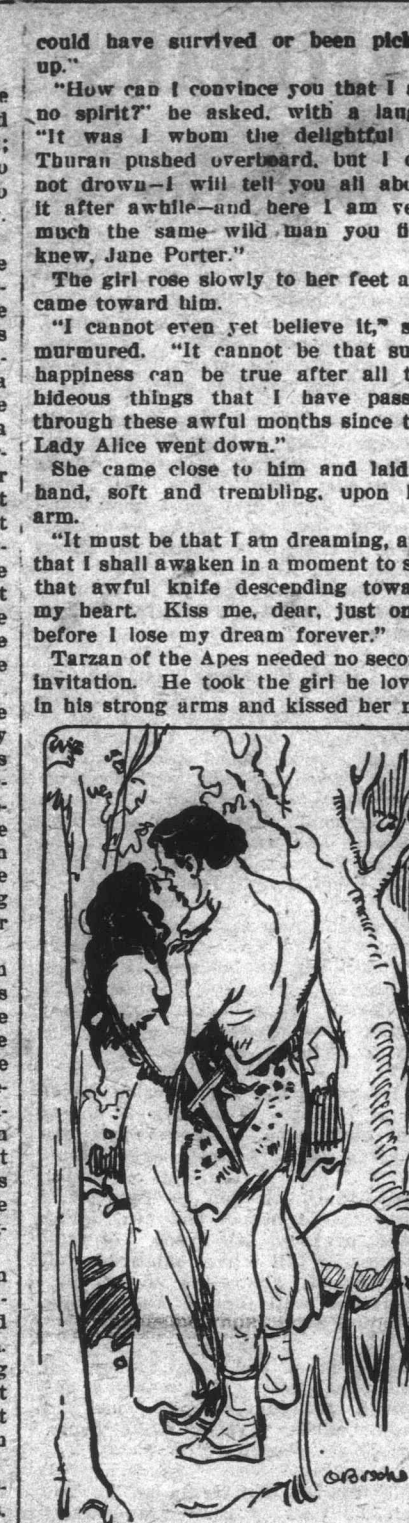
"Here is water," he said. "But first let me remind you that you must not... Clayton interrupted him. "Stop! he cried. "Stop! What manner of cur are you that you traduce the character of a good woman whom we believe dead?... Clayton rolled over and, burying his face in his arms, gave up the battle. The next day Thurian determined to set out toward the north along the coast, for he knew that eventually he must come to the habitations of civilized men. At least he could be no worse off than he was here, and furthermore the ravings of the Englishman were getting on his nerves. So he stole Clayton's spear and set off upon his journey. He would have killed the sick man before he left had it not occurred to him that it would really have been a kindness to do so. That same day he came to a little cabin by the beach, and his heart filled with renewed hope as he saw this evidence of the proximity of civilization, for he thought it but the outpost of a nearby settlement. Had he known to whom it belonged and that his owner was at that very moment but a few miles inland, Nikolaus Rokoff would have fled the place as he would a pestilence. But he did not know, and so he remained for a few days to enjoy the security and comparative comforts of the cabin. Then he took up his northward journey once more. In Lord Tennington's camp preparations were going forward to build permanent quarters and then to send out an expedition of a few men to the north in search of relief. As the days had passed without bringing the longed for succor, hope that Jane Porter, Clayton and M. Thurian had been rescued began to die. No one spoke of the matter longer to Professor Porter, and he was so immersed in his scientific dreaming that he was not aware of the elapse of time. Occasionally he would remark that within a few days they should certainly see a steamer drop anchor off their shore and that then they should all be reunited happily. Sometimes he spoke of it as a train and wondered if it were being delayed by snowstorms. "If I didn't know the dear old fellow so well by now," Tennington remarked to Miss Strong, "I should be quite certain that he was—er—not quite right, don't you know?" "If it were not so pathetic it would be ridiculous," said the girl sadly. "I, who have known him all my life, know how he worships Jane, but to others it must seem that he is perfectly callous to her fate. It is only that he is so absolutely impractical that he cannot conceive of so real a thing as death unless nearly certain proof of it is thrust upon him."

"Yes," she replied. "I could have loved Jane Porter no more had she been my own sister." Tennington did not show the surprise he felt. That was not at all what he meant. He had been much with this fair daughter of Maryland since the wreck of the Lady Alice, and he had recently come to him that he had grown much more fond of her than would prove good for the peace of his mind, for he recalled almost constantly now the confidence which M. Thurian had imparted to him that he and Miss Strong were engaged. He wondered it, after all, Thurian had been quite accurate in his statement. He had never seen the slightest indication on the girl's part of more than ordinary friendship. "And then in M. Thurian's loss, if they are lost, you would suffer a severe bereavement," he ventured. She looked up at him quickly. "M. Thurian had become a very dear friend," she said. "I liked him very much, though I have known him but a short time." "Then you were not engaged to marry him?" he blurted out. "Heavens, no!" she cried. "I did not care for him at all in that way." There was something that Lord Tennington wanted to say to Hazel Strong. He wanted very badly to say it, and to say it at once, but somehow the words stuck in his throat. He started to speak, but the words cleared his throat, became red in the face and finally ended by remarking that he hoped the cabins would be finished before the rainy season commenced. But though he did not know it, he had conveyed to the girl the very message he intended, and it left her happy—happier than she had ever before been in all her life. Just as the further conversation was interrupted by the sight of a strange and terrible looking figure which emerged from the jungle just south of the camp. Tennington and the girl saw it at the same time. The Englishman reached for his revolver, but when the half naked, bearded creature called his name aloud and came running toward them he dropped his hand and advanced to meet it. None would have recognized in the filthy, emaciated creature, covered by a single garment of small skins, the immaculate M. Thurian the party had last seen upon the deck of the Lady Alice. Before the other members of the little community were apprised of his presence Tennington and Miss Strong questioned him regarding the other occupants of the missing boat. "They are all dead," replied Thurian. "The three sailors died before we made land. Miss Porter was carried off into the jungle by some wild animal while I was lying delirious with fever. Clayton died of the same fever but a few days since. And to think that all this time we have been separated by but a few miles—scarcely a day's march! It is terrible!" CHAPTER XXVIII. How Tarzan Came Again to Opar. HOW long Jane Porter lay in the darkness of the vault beneath the temple in the ancient city of Opar she did not know. For a time she was delirious with fever, but after this passed she commenced slowly to regain her strength. Every day the woman who brought her food beckoned to her to arise, but for many days the girl could only shake her head to indicate that she was too weak. But eventually she was able to gain her feet and then to stagger a few steps by supporting herself with one hand. Hope Left Her Entirely, and She Trembled in an Agony of Fright. hand upon the wall. Her captors now watched her with increasing interest. The day was approaching, and the victim was gaining in strength. Presently the day came when she could walk and a young woman whom Jane Porter had not seen before came with several others to her dungeon. Here some sort of ceremony was performed. That it was of a religious nature she was sure, and so she took new heart and rejoiced that she had fallen among people upon whom the refining and softening influence of religion evidently had fallen. They would treat her humanely, of that she was now quite sure. And so, when they led her from her dungeon through long, dark corridors and up a flight of concrete steps to a brilliant courtyard, she went willingly

—even gladly—for was she not among the servants of God? It might be of course, that their intention of the supreme being differed from her own, but that they owned a god was sufficient evidence to her that they were kind and good. But when she saw a stone altar in the center of the courtyard and dark brown stains upon it and the nearby concrete of the floor she began to wonder and to doubt. And as they stood and bound her ankles and secured her wrists behind her doubts were turned to fear. A moment later as she was lifted and placed across the altar's top hope left her entirely, and she trembled in an agony of fright. During the grotesque dance of the rotaries which followed she lay frozen in horror, nor did she require the sight of the thin blade in the hand of the high priestess as it rose slowly above her to enlighten her further as to her doom. As the hand began its descent Jane Porter closed her eyes and sent up a silent prayer to the Maker she was so soon to face. Then she succumbed to the strain upon her tired nerves and swooned. Day and night Tarzan of the Apes ranged through the primeval forest toward the ruined city in which he was positive the woman he loved lay either a prisoner or dead. In a day and a night he covered the same distance that the fifty frightful men had taken the better part of a week to traverse, for Tarzan of the Apes traveled along the middle terrace high above the tangled obstacles that impede progress upon the ground. The story the young bull ape had told made it clear to him that the girl captive had been Jane Porter, for there was not another small, white "she" in all the jungle. The "bulls" he had recognized from the ape's crude description as the grotesque parodies upon humanity who inhabit the ruins of Opar. And the girl's fate he could picture as plainly as though he were an eyewitness to it. When they would lay her across that grim altar he could not guess, but that huge lion loitered in the mid of the rotaries. Seling a cudgel from the nearest priest, he laid about him like a veritable demon as he forged his rapid way toward the altar. The hand of La had paused at the first noise of interruption. When she saw who the author of it was she went white. She had never been able to fathom the secret of the strange white man's escape from the dungeon in which she had locked him. She had not intended that he should ever leave Opar, for she had looked upon his giant frame and handsome face with the eyes of a woman and not those of a priestess. In her clever mind she had concocted a story of wonderful revelation from the lips of the flaming god himself, in which she had been ordered to receive this white stranger as a messenger from him to his people on earth. That would satisfy the people of Opar, she knew. The man would be satisfied, she felt quite sure, to remain and be her husband rather than to return to the sacrificial altar. But when she had gone to explain her plan to him he had disappeared, though the door had been tight locked as she had left it, and now he had returned—materialized from thin air—and was killing her priests as though they had been sheep. For the moment she forgot her victim, and before she could gather her wits together again the huge white man was standing before her, the woman who had lain upon the altar in his arms. "One side, La!" he cried. "You saved me once, and so I would not harm you, but do not interfere or attempt to follow, or I shall have to kill you also." As he spoke he stepped past her toward the entrance to the subterranean vaults. "Who is she?" asked the high priestess, pointing at the unconscious woman. "She is mine," said Tarzan of the Apes. For a moment the girl of Opar stood wide eyed and staring. Then a look of hopeless misery suffused her eyes. She fell into them, and, with a little cry, she sank back to the floor just as a swarm of frightful men dashed past her to leap upon the unconscious woman. But Tarzan of the Apes was not there when they reached out to seize her. With a light bound he had disappeared into the passage leading to the pits below, and when his pursuers came more cautiously after they found the chamber empty, but they laughed and labored to find another, for they knew that there was no exit from the pits other than the one through which he had entered. If he came out at all he must come this way, and they would wait and watch for him above. And so Tarzan of the Apes, carrying the unconscious Jane Porter, came through the pits of Opar beneath the temple of the flaming god without pursuit. But when the men of Opar had talked further about the matter he recalled to mind that this very man had escaped once before into the pits, and though they had watched the entrance, he had not come forth, and yet today he had come upon them from the outside. They would again send fifty men out into the valley to find and capture this desecrator of their temple. After Tarzan reached the shaft beyond the broken wall he felt so positive of the successful issue of his flight that he stopped to replace the tumbled stones, for he was not anxious that any of the inmates should discover this forgotten passage and through it come upon the treasure chamber. It was in his mind to return again to Opar and bear away a still greater trophy than that he had already buried in the amphitheater of the apes.

CHAPTER XXVIII. Love in the Wilderness. O through the passageway he trotted, past the first door and through the treasure vault; past the second door and into the long, straight tunnel that led to the lofty hidden exit beyond the city. Jane Porter was still unconscious. At the crest of the great boulder he halted to cast a backward glance toward the exit. Coming across the plain he saw a band of the hideous men of Opar. For a moment he hesitated. Should he descend and make a race for the distant cliffs, or should he hide here until night? And then a glance at the girl's white face determined him. He could not keep her here and permit her enemies to get between them and liberty. For aught he knew they might have been followed through the tunnels, and to have been before and behind would result in almost certain capture since he could not fight his way through the enemy burdened as he was with the unconscious girl. To descend the steep face of the boulder with Jane Porter was no easy task, but by binding her across his shoulders with the grass rope he succeeded in reaching the ground in safety before the Oparians arrived at the great rock. As the descent had been made upon the side away from the city, the searching party saw nothing of it, nor did they dream that their prey was so close before them. By keeping the kopje between them and their pursuers Tarzan of the Apes managed to cover nearly a mile before the men of Opar reached the granite sentinel and saw the fugitives before them. With loud cries of savage delight they broke into a mad run, thinking doubtless that they would soon overtake the burdened runner, but they both underestimated the powers of the ape-man and overestimated the possibilities of their own short, crooked legs. By maintaining an easy trot Tarzan kept the distance between them always the same. Occasionally he would glance at the face so near his own. Had it not been for the faint beating of the heart pressed so close against his own he would not have known that she was alive, so white and drawn was the poor, tired face. And thus they came to the flat top of the mountain and the barrier cliffs. During the last mile Tarzan had let himself out, running like a deer that he might have ample time to descend the face of the cliffs before the Oparians could reach the summit and hurl rocks down upon them. And so it was that he was half a mile down the mountainside ere the fierce little men came panting to the edge. With cries of rage and disappointment they ranged along the cliff top, shaking their cudgels and dancing up and down in a perfect passion of anger. But this time they did not pursue beyond the boundary of their own country. Whether it was because they recalled the futility of their former long and irksome search or after witnessing the ease with which the ape-man swung along before them and the last burst of speed they realized the utter hopelessness of further pursuit it is difficult to say, but as Tarzan reached the woods that began at the base of the foothills which skirted the barrier cliffs they turned their faces once more toward Opar. Just within the forest's edge, where he could yet watch the cliff tops, Tarzan laid his burden upon the grass and, going to the nearby rivulet, brought water with which he bathed her face and hands, but even this did not revive her and, greatly worried, he gathered the girl into his strong arms once more and hurried on toward the west. Late in the afternoon Jane Porter regained consciousness. She did not open her eyes at once. She was trying to recall the scenes that she had last witnessed. Ah! She remembered now. The altar, the terrible priestess, the descending knife. She gave a little shudder, for she thought that either she was dead or that the knife had buried itself in her heart and she was experiencing the brief delirium preceding death. And when finally she mustered courage to open her eyes the sight that met them confirmed her fears, for she saw that she was being borne through a leafy paradise in the arms of her dead love. "If this be death," she murmured, "thank God that I am dead!" "You speak, Jane!" cried Tarzan. "You are regaining consciousness!" "Yes, Tarzan of the Apes," she replied. "And for the first time in months a smile of peace and happiness lighted her face. "Thank God!" cried the ape-man, coming to the ground in a little grassy clearing beside the stream. "I was in time after all!" "What do you mean?" she questioned. "In time to save you from death upon the altar, dear," he replied. "Do you not remember?" "Save me from death?" she asked in a puzzled tone. "Are we not both dead, my Tarzan?" He had placed her upon the grass by now, her back resting against the stem of a huge tree. At her question he stepped back where he could the better see her face. "Dead!" he repeated, and then he laughed. "You are not Jane, and if you will return to the city of Opar and ask them who dwell there they will tell you that I was not dead a few short hours ago. No, dear, we are both very much alive." "But both Hazel and M. Thurian told me that you had fallen into the ocean a hundred miles from land," she urged as though trying to convince him that he must indeed be dead. "They said that there was no question but that it must have been you and less that you

could have survived or been picked up." "How can I convince you that I am no spirit?" he asked, with a laugh. "It was I whom the delightful M. Thurian pushed overboard, but I did not drown—I will tell you all about it after awhile—and here I am very much the same wild man you first knew, Jane Porter." The girl rose slowly to her feet and came toward him. "I cannot even yet believe it," she murmured. "It cannot be that such happiness can be true after all the hideous things that I have passed through these awful months since the Lady Alice went down." She came close to him and laid a hand, soft and trembling, upon his arm. "It must be that I am dreaming, and that I shall awaken in a moment to see that awful knife descending toward my heart. Kiss me, dear, just once before I lose my dream forever." Tarzan of the Apes needed no second invitation. He took the girl he loved in his strong arms and kissed her not



CHAPTER XXIX. The Passing of the Ape-Man. THAT night Tarzan built a snug little bower high among the swaying branches of a glauk tree, and there the tired girl slept, while in a crotch beneath her the ape-man curled, ready, even in sleep, to protect her. It took them many days to make the long journey to the coast. Where the way was easy they walked hand in hand beneath the arching boughs of the mighty forest, as might in a far gone past have walked their primal forbears. Where the underbrush was tangled he took her in his great arms and bore her lightly through the trees, and the days were all too short, for they were very happy. Had it not been for their anxiety to reach the coast Clayton they would have drawn out the sweet pleasure of that wonderful journey indefinitely. On the last day before they reached the coast Tarzan caught the scent of men ahead of them—the scent of black men. He told the girl and cautioned her to maintain silence. "There are few friends in the jungle," he remarked dryly. In half an hour they came stealthily upon a small party of black warriors fleeing toward the west. As Tarzan saw them he gave a cry of delight. It was a band of his own Wasiri. Basuli was there and others who had accompanied him to Opar. At sight of him they danced and cried out in exuberant joy. For weeks they had been searching for him, they told him. The blacks exhibited considerable wonderment at the presence of the white girl with him, and when they found that she was to be his woman they vied with one another to do her honor. With the happy Wasiri laughing and dancing about them, they came to the rude shelter by the shore. There was no sign of life and no response to their calls. Tarzan clambered quickly to the interior of the little tree but, only to emerge a moment later with an empty tin. Throwing it down to Basuli, he told him to fetch water and then he beckoned Jane Porter to come up. Together they leaned over the emaciated child that once had been an English nobleman. Tears came to the girl's eyes as she saw the poor, sunken cheeks and hollow lips, and the lines of suffering upon the once young and handsome face. "He still lives," said Tarzan. "We will do all that can be done for him, but I fear that we are too late." When Basuli had brought the water Tarzan forced a few drops between the cracked and swollen lips. He wetted the hot forehead and bathed the pitting limbs. Presently Clayton opened his eyes. A faint, shadowy smile lighted his countenance as he saw the girl leaning over him. At sight of Tarzan the expression changed to one of wonderment. "It's all right, old fellow," said the ape-man. "We've found you in time. Everything will be all right now, and we'll have you on your feet again before you know it." The Englishman shook his head weakly. "It's too late," he whispered. "But it's just as well, I'd rather die." "Where is M. Thurian?" asked the girl. "He left me after the fever got bad. He is a devil. When I begged for the water that I was too weak to get, he drank before me, threw the rest out and laughed in my face." At the thought of it the man was suddenly animated by a spark of vitality. He raised himself upon one elbow. "Yes," he almost shouted; "I will live! I will live long enough to find and kill that beast!" But the brief effort left him weaker than before, and he sank back again upon the rotting grasses that, with his old ulster, had been the bed of Jane Porter. "Don't worry about Thurian," said Tarzan of the Apes, laying a reassuring hand on Clayton's forehead. "He belongs to me, and I shall get him in the end, never fear." For a long time Clayton lay very still. Several times Tarzan had to put his ear quite close to the sunken chest to catch the faint beating of the worn-out heart. Toward evening he aroused again for a brief moment. "Jane," he whispered, the girl bent her head closer to catch the faint message. "I have wronged you—and him," he nodded weakly toward the ape-man. "I loved you so. It is a poor excuse to offer for injuring you, but I could not bear to think of giving you up. I do not ask your forgiveness. I only wish to do now the thing I should have done over a year ago." He fumbled in his pocket of the ulster beneath him for something that he had discovered there while he lay between the paroxysms of fever. Presently he found it—a crumpled bit of yellow paper. He handed it to the girl, and as she took it his arm fell flinching across his chest, his head dropped back, and with a little gasp he stiffened and was still. Then Tarzan of the Apes drew a fold of the ulster across the upturned face. As they rose and stood on either side of the now peaceful form tears came to the ape-man's eyes, for through the anguish that his own heart had suffered he had learned compassion for the suffering of others. Through her tears the girl read the message upon the bit of faded yellow paper, and as she read her eyes went very wide. Twice she read those startling words before she could fully comprehend their meaning. J. C. Tarzan, Baltimore, Md. Finger prints prove you Graystoka. Congratulations D'ARNOT. She handed the paper to Tarzan. "And he has known it all this time," she said, "and did not tell you?" "I knew it first, Jane," replied Tarzan. "I did not know that he knew" (To be Continued)

BRU... attached in the heart is engaged allied arm... LON... firming t... forces to... advance, to begin... PAR... nounced... in an... man sold... Meuse an... back acro... PAR... that inva... engaged... reached t... corp com... Tuscany, and was... PAR... troops a... there is... line abou... sampré, French... PAR... engagem... pulsed t... pieces of... of the se... was disa... in the vi... but suffe... office's o... OTT... are affr... gone, w... the Cann... ing of th... BRI... German... heavy lo... back a G... German... brilliant... MOI... from Me... pleases... by R. S... The... shipped... danger f...