

off goes Lis head. Why, the blacks who have wandered into civilised parts absolutely shake when they mention her. The lady is said to be physically stronger than any man in her domain, and I should imagine that she is quite capable of picking up her Prime Minister in one hand and chucking him out of the council chamber if he says anything which displeases her. By all accounts, she is a terror, one of the worst, and this is the ogress that has got Smith in her clutches."

"Then," I said, getting up and hobbling to the mantelpiece for a match, for my old enemy, the gout, had me in a close grip, "I think I'll stay here, if you don't mind. I don't fancy interviewing her. But, seriously," I continued, as I resumed my seat, "doesn't it occur to you that all this sounds very like a fairy tale?"

"I daresay it does sound like a fairy tale," said the General, "a good many true things do. The fact remains, that such a woman does exist, and by accounts given at different periods by black fellows who have never seen one another, she is holding a white man in captivity. Now, not a few white men must have got into her clutches, because it is known that there is plenty of gold in the district that she rules, and in spite of the danger several fellows have been after that gold. Smith thought he was the first, but he wasn't. Nothing more was ever heard of those white men, and so presumably, our queen, finding nothing particularly attractive about any of them, disposed of them in the usual way."

"They went into the interior in two senses?" I suggested.