



(Copyright, 1898, by William Murray Graydon.) In the latter part of the year 1890 it came to the knowledge of Karl Hamrach & Co. that the one firm which they regarded as a formidable rival, that of Moss & Crawley of Liverpool and New York, was at frequent intervals receiving choice consignments of wild beasts from the east coast of Africa. This fact, and the intelligence that one of the vessels which brought a shipment of animals had touched at the port of Mombasa, was the extent of their information. The matter was allowed to rest until Matthew Quin returned from the Rocky mountains. Then his employers consulted him, and the upshot of it was that Karl Hamrach & Co. sent the shrewd little agent off to Mombasa, where he arrived in the spring of 1891. And this led to his first encounter with a man whom he was destined to be pitted against on future occasions—a man as clever as himself and thoroughly unscrupulous in the bargain.

shores fringed with green jungle and mangrove swamp, the steamer plowed its way. Toward the close of the afternoon Quin and his men were landed at a small clearing in the forest, where the bank shelved into deep water. "I'll be back for you in three days at the most!" Menzies promised, and he and his helpers waved farewell as the steamer carried them out of sight around a bend. Then Quin and the Swahilis cheerfully put up a couple of huts of poles and grass and prepared to spend the night comfortably. They were provided with firearms, food and some other necessary luggage.

How Quin accomplished what he had come for may be briefly told. The caravan route was but two miles away, and he was on the spot early the next morning. He had calculated more fully than he had thought, for within three hours the motley caravan came trailing along on its way to Mombasa. The lions were there—two half-grown animals, that gave every promise of enormous size and superb beauty. They were in separate cages, placed side by side on a low



SILVA WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM.

truck with clumsy wooden wheels. A bargain was soon made, and the modest number of silver dollars agreed on was counted out to the native chief. Then the caravan continued its slow progress, and Quin and his Swahilis spent the greater part of the day in cutting a track through the tall grass and dragging the truck and the cages to the riverside camp. Quin had brought an extra supply of dollars with him, hoping that the natives dwelling in the vicinity might have something in his line to dispose of, or could do a little wild beast trapping for him at short notice. But his men, whom he sent off at daybreak on the following morning, returned about noonday with adverse reports, declaring that they could find no native villages in the neighborhood. They brought back a small deer they had shot and fed it to the lions.

As the steamer would be along in another twenty-four hours, there was clearly no time for the Swahilis to extend their search in a wider radius. Quin made the best of his disappointment, which he could afford to do, since he had attained the primary object of his journey; it was not hot to gramping about, so he squatted against the shady side of his hut and smoked steady pipes of his strong tobacco. The surrounding jungle reeked with miasmatic odors, and out of the Guba the heat waves shimmered above the sluggish water. The lions, gorged to satiety, were sleeping in their cages under a clump of trees.

Toward the close of the afternoon, when Quin had fallen into a doze, he was roused by the eager voices of the Swahilis. He saw that they were pointing to the tall grass north of the camp, and as he glanced in that direction he heard a rustling, thrashing noise. The next instant a man broke from cover and strode across the camp. He carried a rifle on his shoulder, and wore high boots, a sun helmet and a suit of gray khaki. He was about 40 years old, with black mustache and pointed beard, and his features and yellowish skin proclaimed at least a strain of Portuguese blood in his veins. Quin rose to his feet, rather surprised by the sight of a European; the stranger paused before him and bowed politely.

"I hope you will pardon my intrusion," he said, with a friendly smile. "I was passing by, and caught a glimpse of your huts." He looked earnestly toward the lion cages and added: "That is a fine pair of animals you have. Did you trap them from hereabouts?" "No; I bought them from a native caravan," Quin answered. "His manner was cool at first, but he presently thawed a little under the genial manner of his visitor, who seemed an honest, free-and-easy sort of chap. "You may have heard my name," the man suggested. "I am Inspector Gonzales of the British East African company. My camp is in the neighborhood, and I am on the lookout for some rascals who have been smuggling firearms and spirits up the river to the negroes. But I can't find them—luck is against me so far."

Quin sympathized with his visitor, and in turn stated his own name and what further particulars politeness required. "Won't you take supper with me?" he added. "I can't offer you much—" "Then let me be the best," interrupted Inspector Gonzales. "My camp is but half a mile away, and I have there a bottle of wine and some other supplies one does not find in the African jungle. It will be a great pleasure to me, I assure you. I have been up country for a fortnight and have seen no

Englishmen in that time." Quin accepted without much hesitation. He rather liked the man, and never doubted that he was what he claimed to be, and he was not averse to while away in pleasant company some of the long hours that must elapse before the arrival of the steamer. He gave the Swahilis some instructions about the care of the camp and the tigers, bade them stay awake until his return, and then departed with his new acquaintance. The box of silver dollars he had concealed that morning while his men were absent.

The distance traversed was nearer a mile than a half mile. Inspector Gonzales led the way through the tall grass and reeds, and the camp huts, snugly upon Quin's view. It consisted of two tents pitched in a small clearing that bordered a pool of brackish water, and outside the larger of the tents squatted four armed natives, villainous of feature, who appeared to be a blend of Arab and Comoro Islander. They were not the sort of men Quin would have expected to find in the service of the company, but, keen-witted and observant as he usually was, this circumstance did not strike him at the time. He was hot and hungry, and moreover the daylight was beginning to

"Welcome to my poor quarters!" said Inspector Gonzales. "Make yourself as comfortable as you can—supper will be served directly."

The negroes looked far from clean, and Quin was relieved to see that they had no intention of preparing the meal. That was done by the host, and all things considered, it was a particularly good supper. A log served for a table, and the roots and trunk of a tree for seats. The menu comprised tinned meat, biscuits, fruit and an Indian pickle, and by way of liquid refreshment a bottle of fair claret. Quin ate heartily, but drank sparingly of the wine. When a strange drowsiness began to steal over him he attributed it to the heat of the sun. It grew steadily worse. He saw Inspector Gonzales smiling at him, and he was vaguely aware of some story of adventure his host was relating. He tried to speak, but could not. Then the mist before his eyes, and he remembered nothing more.

It was night when Quin woke up. A cool air was blowing, and a moon shone slantingly over the jungle top into the clearing. He was lying at the foot of the tree and his head felt dull and heavy. Recollecting what had occurred the night before, he looked about him. The clearing was empty, deserted! Tents, negroes and the inspector had vanished! And he had been robbed of his brace of pistols!

"I see it all!" he muttered angrily. "What a fool I've been! That wine was drugged, though I fortunately did not drink enough of it to keep me asleep long. But why was I made the victim of such a tardy trick? What object could the man Gonzales have had—" He stopped abruptly as he caught sight of a tiny white object in the trampled grass at his feet. He picked it up, scanned it by the light of the moon, and stood for a moment as if in a trance. What he found was the fragment of an envelope having a brown elephant stamped on the corner, and containing this much of the address, "To Antonio Silva." The brown elephant was the mark of Moss & Crawley of Liverpool. And without a doubt Antonio Silva, alias Inspector Gonzales, was the man for whom he was probably a new man, for in the list of the rival firm's employees, which Karl Hamrach & Co. made a point of keeping, no such individual as this Portuguese figured.

Of course the whole affair was as clear as daylight now, and Quin bitterly cursed his own stupidity—blamed himself for falling so easily into the trap. He was more wrathful about the cunning trickery itself than the possible consequences, and he thirsted for an opportunity of getting even with Antonio Silva. He wasted no further time, for he knew by the moon that the night was yet young, and this gave him a slight glimmer of hope.

He had his bearings all right, and plunging into the tall grass he bore on as a trot until he emerged, breathless and perspiring, within his own camp. The first glance showed him the empty truck, stripped of its cages; the second revealed the four Swahilis bound each to a tree, and with foul gags thrust into their mouths. Quin cut the men loose and quickly learned what had happened.

It was a brief story. About two hours before a dozen Arabs had stolen suddenly upon the camp and overpowered the Swahilis. Then they signalled for a show, which ran alongside the bank. The lion cages were carried on board, as well as all the weapons in the camp, and the vessel and its crew made sail down the river. The Swahilis



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had seen nothing of the Portuguese, but two of them declared that the leader of the Arabs was SARRU, a well-known rascal engaged in the slave trade. But whether Silva was with the party or not, there could be no doubt that he had instigated the affair and made use of the Arabs.

For a time Quin stamped savagely about the camp, making use of language that would not look well in print. Then the Swahilis mentioned something that cheered him up a little; they stated that while absent that morning they had stumbled on a canoe less than a mile down the river. Quin cut off his flow of sulphurous words and reflected for a moment. "One of you fellows must guide me to the spot," he exclaimed. "Ten to one the show is making for the coast, but there is not enough wind to take it along very rapidly. If I can slip by it and get to the river mouth the man-of-war down gander will give me a boat and send me down the coast. By heavens, I'll outwit that scoundrel yet!"

A few moments later Quin was off, accompanied by one of his men named Ali, he had instructed the rest to remain at the camp and await his return. All led the way along the river shore, and had no trouble in finding the place where the canoe was concealed in a narrow backwater. It was in good condition, and two paddles lay in the bow. Quin and the Swahili seated themselves, and they were soon gliding down the Guba, keeping along shore in the shadow of the overhanging rocks. The night was cool and a waste of rippling water, black dots of islands and faint mangrove swamps. Quin began to feel anxious, for he and Ali had paddled fast

down, and hanged if it had any cargo but a pair of young lions in cages—" "Lions!" shouted Quin. "That's right. The Arabs said they were taking the brutes to a Portuguese vessel up the coast, so I had to let them go—" "Was there a Portuguese on board?" "If there was I didn't see him."

Quin, turned to Lieutenant Birney. "There's time to overhaul the rascals!" he cried. "Don't let them get away! You shan't lose by it if you help me to recover the lions! What do you say, man?" Further pleading was required on Quin's part, but the upshot of it all was that he and Ali found themselves five minutes later gliding swiftly down the Guba in the second launch. Lieutenant Mell, having learned the facts, had consented to do all in his power to thwart Antonio Silva's evil designs. Birney and his crew stayed behind with their prize.

How the chase turned out may be told briefly. The sudden dropping of the wind promised success, but six miles were left behind, and the river bar was very near, when a big sail loomed in sight around a curve. And as the sailors pulled close, recklessly showing themselves in the moonlight, they discovered that fate had played the game into their hands. "By Jove, the Arabs have stuck fast!" exclaimed Lieutenant Mell. "It's a treacherous channel hereabouts!" "When we've got them!" cried Quin, his hand tightening on his cutlass. "It looks that way. Let go hard, men!" The oars bent under the strain, and the launch covered half the distance in a rapid spurt. Then an outcry was heard from the show, which was indeed fast on the bottom and badly keeled over.

"They're jumping!" groaned Quin, and as he spoke half a dozen black figures scrambled over the bulwarks and splashed into the water. In all probability the Portuguese had recognized Quin by the moonlight, and realized that the game was up. "Give way, men; give way!" shouted the lieutenant. A brief but exciting chase followed. The Arabs had a goodish stretch to swim to shore, and the last man was still splashing through the shallows when the boat's prow cut into the beach close alongside of him.

"They'll give us the slip!" exclaimed Quin. "Why don't you fire?—we're within easy gunshot. I don't want to lose those lions!" "Hang the lions!" growled Birney. He put his hands to his mouth and shouted loudly: "Tua tangal! Tua tangal!" which was native speech for "heave to."

But the Arabs did not heave to; the show sped serenely on. "Give them a shot, Fowler," said the lieutenant, "and if that don't do the business we'll fake them with a volley. They shan't get away!" The coxswain lifted his rifle and fired. Crack! the latest sail swayed and dropped. There was a flurry and rush on the show's deck, and some frightened voices rang over the water.

"By Jove, you must have cut the hal-yards of the sail!" shouted Birney. "Give way, men!" The rest was easy. The launch skimmed the tide like a bird, and as it drew near its helpless and drifting prey, a steady sound of splashing was heard. Then the bow scraped the show's hull, and in a trice half of the crew were on deck, including Quin and the officer. But the Arabs had followed their usual course and jumped overboard, and already the bobbing black heads were close to the bank. If Antonio Silva was among them he could not be picked out.

"It's goodby to the Portuguese," said Quin, as he lifted the hatch covering, "but I've got the lions." "Have you?" laughed Lieutenant Birney. He had struck a match, and as he held it over Quin's shoulder the high shone down on a mass of shranked negroes thrust densely into the hold, and the smell that arose was something awful. The officer dropped the covering and backed away. "Hurra!" he cried. "Slaves! We've got a prize!"

A great shout went up from the men. Quin peered into the empty after cabin around the deck, and looked sadly at the shore, where the Arabs had vanished. "No lions," he muttered. "Hanged if I understand it—" Just then a rattle of oars was heard, and the second launch glided around a bend, a short distance down stream. Voices came from the newcomers, and they were soon alongside the show. Birney leaned over the bulwark, and made brief explanation to his brother officer, Lieutenant Mell. The latter was properly envious, and could not help

showing it. "Yes, you struck it rich," he grumbled. "As for me, I've had the devil's own luck. I stopped and boarded a show a mile or so down the river, and I've got the lions."

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The Portuguese wheeled around with a snarling cry and a cut-throat pistol in hand. Quin lifted his cutlass, but Silva was too quick for him. There was a flash and a report, and the plucky little man went down in a heap. Dawn was breaking when Quin came to his senses on board the stranded show to learn that his lions were safe; that the bullet had done no more than plow an ugly furrow alongside his head, and that Antonio Silva had escaped.

So the end of the night's adventure was that Quin recovered his stolen property, and that Birney's crew had a cargo of slaves and a show to send in to the prize court. It was useless to search for Silva, but from one of the Arab prisoners taken a true version of the trick was gleaned by bits. The Portuguese, knowing himself that the lions were coming from the interior, had met the caravan several hours after Quin. Learning what had happened and where the English-ship was encamped, he went in haste to the Arab chief. Silva's name, which he had formerly had some shady dealings in slaves,

and whose hiding place was in a nearby creek. The arrangement made between the two was to have been of mutual benefit. Quin knew that the man-of-war suspected him, and had a boat watching the mouth of the river. So he intended to give the boat a short chase after the show containing the stolen lions, and thus get it out of the way and give the other show a chance to slip up the coast with her cargo of slaves; the lions were to have been put on a Portuguese ship that lay a few miles north of the Guba. That the cunning plan failed was due in part to Quin's canoe trip, but mainly because the man-of-war had sent two boats out, and these had pushed up the river instead of lurking at the mouth.

Quin's wound was not serious enough to cause him any inconvenience. Ali paddled him up to camp in the canoe, and an hour after they reached there Menzies' steamer came along and took the whole party on board. The lions were lifted from the show on the way down, and were transferred to the English ship in Mombasa harbor that night.

A fortnight later Quin was on his way up country with the returning caravan, the chief of which had agreed to procure him a lot of wild beasts in the interior. But he did not forget Antonio Silva, and he was to learn in the future that Silva had by no means forgotten him.

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