By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

AUTHOR OF "KING SOLOMON'S MINES," "SHE," "JESS," "THE WITCH'S MEAD," ETC.

quite young. when he got opposite to us ne halted, put down the basket and struck the spike of his spear into the ground, so that it stood upright.

"Let us talk," he said. "The first messenger we sent to you could not talk;" and he pointed to the head which lay upon the paving of the stoep-a ghastly sight in the moonlight; "but I have words to speak if ye have ears to hear. Also I bring presents," and he pointed to the basket and laughed with an air of swaggering insolence that is perfectly indescribable, and yet which one could not but admire, seeing that he was surrounded by enemies. "Say on," said Mr. Mackenzie.

"I am the 'Lygonani'" (war captain) "of a part of the Masai of the Guasa Amboni, I and my men followed these three white men," and he pointed to Sir Henry, Good, and myself, "but they were too clever for us, and escaped hither. We have a quarrel with them, and are going to kill them."

"Are you, my friend?" said I to myself. "In following these men we this morning caught two black men, one black woman, a white donkey, and a white girl. One of the black men we killed-there is his head upon the pavement; the other ran away. The black woman, the little white girl, and the white ass we took and brought with us. In proof thereof have I brought this basket that she carried. Is it not thy daughter's basket?" Mr. Mackenzie nodded, and the warrior

"Good! With thee and thy daughter we have no quarrel, nor do we wish to harm thee, save as to thy cattle, which we have already gathered, 240 head-a beast for every man's father."

Here Mr. Mackenzie gave a grean, as he greatly valued this herd of cattle, which he bred with much care and trouble.

"So, save for the cattle, thou mayst go free; more especially," he added, frankly, glancing at the wall, "as this place would be a difficult one to take. But as to these men it is otherwise; we have followed them for eight days, and must kill them. Were we to return to our kraal without having done so, all the girls would make a mock of us. So, however troublesome it may be, they must

"Now, I have a proposition for thine ear. We would not harm the little girl; she is too fair to harm, and has besides, a brave spirit. Give us one of these three men-a life for a life-and we will let her go and throw in the black woman with her also. This is a fair offer, white man. We ask but for one, not for the three; we must take another opportunity to kill the other two. I do not even pick my man, though I should prefer the big one," pointing to Sir Henry; "he looks

strong, and would die more slowly." "And if I say I will not yield the man?" said Mr. Mackenzie.

"Nay, say not so, white man," answered the Masai, "for then thy daughter dies at dawn, and the woman with her says thou hast no other child. Were she older I would take her for a servant; but as she is so young I will slay her with my own hand-ay, with this very spear. Thou canst come and see an' thou wilt. I give thee a safe conduct," and the fiend laughed aloud at his brutal

Meanwhile I had been thinking rapidly, as one does in emergencies, and had come to the conclusion that I would exchange myself against Flossie. I scarcely like to mention the matter for fear it should be missinderstood. Pray do not let any one be misled into thinking that there was anything heroic about this, or any such nonsense. It was merely a matter of common sense and common justice. My life was an old and worthless one, hers was young and valuable. Her death would pretty well kill her father and mother also, while nobody would be much the worse for mine; indeed, several charitable institutions would have cause to rejoice thereat. It was indirectly through me that the dear little girl was in her present position. Lastly, a man was better fitted to meet death in such a peculiarly awful form than a sweet young girl. Not, however, that I meant to let these gentry torture me to death-I am far too much of a coward to allow that, being naturally a timid man; my plan was to see the girl safely exchanged, and then to shoot myself, trusting that the Almighty would take the peculiar circumstances of the case into consideration and pardon the act. All this and more went through my mind in very few seconds. "All right, Mackenzie," I said, "you can

tell the man that I will exchange myself against Flossie, only I stipulate that she shall be safely in this house before they kill me." "Eh?" said Sir Henry and Good, simultane-

ously. "That you don't." "No, no," said Mr. Mackenzie, "I will have no man's blood upon my hands. If it please God that my daughter die this awful death, his will be done. You are a brave man" (which I am not by any means) "and a noble man, Quatermain, but you shall not go." "If nothing else turns up I shall go," I said,

decidedly. "This is an important matter," said Mackenzie, addressing the Lygonani, "and we must think it over. You shall have our an-

swer at dawn." "Very well, white man," answered the savage, indifferently; "only remember, if thy answer is late thy little white bud will never grow into a flower, that is all, for I shall cut it with this," and he touched the spear. "I should have thought that thou wouldst play a trick and attack us at night, but I know from the woman with the girl that your men are down at the coast, and that thou hast but twenty men here. It is not wise, white man," he added with a laugh, "to keep so small a garrison for your 'boma'" (kraal). "Well, good night, and good night to you also, other white men, whose eyelids I shall soon close once and for all. At dawn thou wilt bring me word. If not, remember it shall be as I have said." Then turning to Umslopogaas, who had all the while been standing behind him, and shepherding him, as it were, "Open the door for me, fellow,

quick now. This was too much for the old chief's patience. For the last ten minutes his lips had been, figuratively speaking, positively watering over the Masai Lygonani, and this he could not stand. Placing his long hand on the Elmoran's shoulder, he griped him and gave him such a twist as brought him face to face with himself. Then, thrusting his flerce countenance to within a few inches of the Masai's evil, feather framed features, he said. in a low, growling voice:

"Seest thou me?" "Ay, fellow, I see thee." "And seest thou this?" and he held Inkosi-

kaas before his eyes. "Ay, fellow, I see the toy; what of it?" "Thou Masai dog, thou boasting windbag, thou capturer of little girls, with this 'toy' will I hew thee limb from limb. Well for thee that thou art a herald, or even now

would I strew thy members about the grass." The Masai shook his great spear and laughed long and loud as he answered, "I would that thou stoodst against me man to

man, and we would see," and again he turned | to go, still laughing.

"Thou shalt stand against me man to man, be not afraid," replied Umslopogaas, still in the same ominous voice. "Thou shalt stand face to face with Umslopognas, of the blood of Chaka, of the people of the Amazulu, a captain in the regiment of the Nkomabakosi, as many have done before, and bow thyself to Inkosi-kaas, as many have done before. Ay, laugh on, laugh on! to-morrow night shall the jackals laugh as they crunch thy ribs."



"To-morrow night shall the jackals laugh as they crunch your ribs."

When the Lygonani had gone, one of us thought of opening the basket he had brought as a proof that Flossie was really their prisoner. On lifting the lid, it was found to contain a most lovely specimen of both bulb and flower of the Goya lily, which I have already described, in full bloom and quite uninjured, and what was more, a note in Flossie's childish hand, written in pencil upon a greasy piece of paper that had been used to wrap up some food in.

"Dearest Father and Mother," ran the note-"The Masai count us when we were coming home with the Ely. I tried to escape, but could not. They killed Tom; the other man ran away. They have not burt nurse and me, but say that they mean to exchange us against one of Mr Quatermain's party. I will have nothing of the sort. Do not let anybody give his life for me Try and attack them at night; they are going to feast on three bullocks they have stolen and killed. I have my pistol, and if no help comes by dawn I will shoot myself. They shall not kill me. If so, remumber me always, dearest father and mother. I am very frightened, but I trust in God. I dare not write any more, as they are be ginning to notice. Goodby. Scrawled across the outside of this was

"Love to Mr. Qautermain. They are going to take up the basket, so he will get the lily. When I read these words, written by that brave little girl in an hour of danger sufficiently near and horrible to have turned the brain of a strong man, I own I wept, and once more in my heart I vowed that she should not die while my life could be given to save her.

Then eagerly, quickly, almost flercely, we fell to discussing the situation. Again I said that I would go, and again Mackenzie nega-Lived it, and Curtis and Good, like the true men that they are, vowed that, if I did, they would go with me, and die back to back with

"It is," I said at last, "absolutely necessar that an effort of some before the morning."

"Then let us attack them with what force we can muster, and take our chance," said

Sir Henry. "Ay ay," growled Umslopogaas, in Zulu; "spoken like a man, Incubu. What is there to be afraid of? Two hundred and fifty Masai, forsooth! How many are we? The chief there" (Mr. Mackenzie) "has twenty men, and thou, Macumazahn, hast five men, and there are also five white men-that is, thirty men in all-enough, enough. Listen now, Macumazahn, thou who art very clever and old in war. What says the maid! These men eat and make merry; let it be their funeral feast. What said the dog whom I hope to hew down at daybreak? That he feared no attack because we were so few. Knowest thou the old kraal where the men havecamped? I saw it this morning; it is thus," and he drew an oval on the floor; "here is the big entrance, filled up with thorn bushes, and opening on to a steep rise. Why, Incubu, thou and I with axes will hold it against an hundred men striving to break out! Look, now, thus shall the battle go. Just as the light begins to glint upon the oxen's hornsnot before, or it will be too dark, and not later, or they will be awakening and perceive us-let Bougwan creep round with ten men to the top end of the kraal, where the narrow entrance is. Let them sliently slay the sentry there, so that he makes no sound, and stand ready. Then, Incubu, let thee and me and one of the Askari-the one with the broad chest-he is a brave man-creep to the wide entrance that is filled with thorn bushes, and there also slay the sentry, and armed with battle axes, take our stand also one on each side of the pathway, and one a few paces beyond, to deal with such as pass the twain at the gate. It is there that the rush will come. That will leave sixteen men. Let these men be divided into two parties, with one of which shalt thou go, Macumazahn, and with one the 'praying man'" (Mr. Mackenzie), "and, all armed with rifles, let them make their way one to the right side of the kraal and one to the left; and when thou, Macumazahn, lowest like an ox, all shall open fire with the guns upon the sleeping men, being very careful not to hit the little maid. Then shall Bougwan at the far end and his ten men raise their war cry, and, springing over the wall, put the Masai there to the sword. And it shall happen that, being yet heavy with food and sleep, and bewildered by the firing of the guns, the falling of men and the spears of Bougwan, the soldiers shall rise and rush like wild game toward the thorn stopped entrance, and there the bullets from either side shall plow through them, and there shall Incubu and the Askari and I wait for those who break though. Such is my plan, Macuma-

zahn; if thou hast a better, name it." When he had done, I explained to the others such portions of this scheme as they had failed to understand, and they all joined with me in expressing the greatest admiration of the acute and skillful programme devised by the old Zulu, who was, indeed, in his own savage fashion, the finest general I ever knew. After some discussion we determined to accept the scheme as it stood, it being the only one possible under the circumstances. and giving the best chance of success that such a forlorn hope would admit of-which, however, considering the enormous odds and the character of our foe, was not very great.

"Ah, old lion!" I said to Umslopogaas, "thou knowest how to lie in wait as well as how to bite, where to seize as well as where to hang on.

"Ay, ay, Macumazahn," he answered. "For thirty years have I been a warrior, and have seen many things. It will be a good fight, I smell blood."

CHAPTER VI. THE NIGHT WEARS ON. As may be imagined, at the very first sign women and countless children-huddled up nce in awed tones of the awfulness of Masai

outline of our plan of action as suggested by Umslopogaas, Mr. Mackenzie sent for four sharp boys of from 12 to 15 years of age, and dispatched them to various points whence camp, with orders to report from time to time what was going on. Other lads, and even women, were stationed at intervals along the wall, in order to guard against the possibility of surprise.

After this the twenty men who formed his whole available fighting force were summoned by our host into the square formed by the house, and there, standing by the bole of the great conifer, he earnestly addressed

them and our four Askari. "Men," said Mr. Mackenzie, after he had put all the circumstances of the case fully and clearly before them, and explained to them the proposed plan of our forlorn hope-"men, for years I have been a good friend to you, protecting you, teaching you, guarding you and yours from harm, and ye have prospered with me. Ye have seen my child -the Waterlily, as ye call her-grow year by year, from tenderest infancy to tender childhood, and from childhood on toward maidenhood. She has been your children's playmate, she has helped to tend you when sick, and ye have loved her."

"We have," said a deep voice, "and we will die to save her."

"I thank you from my heart-I thank you. Sure am I that now, in this hour of darkest trouble, now that her young life is like to be cut off by cruel and savage men-who of a truth 'know not what they do'-ye will strive your best to save her, and to save me and her mother from broken hearts. Think, too, of your own wives and children. If she dies, her death will be followed by an attack upon us here, and at the best, even if we hold our own, your houses and gardens will be destroyed and your goods and cattle swept away. I am, as ye well know, a man of peace. Never in all these years have I lifted my hand to shed man's blood; but now I say strike, strike, in the name of God, who bade us protect our lives and homes. Swear to me," he went on, with added fervor-"swear to me that while a man of you remains alive ye will strive your uttermost with me and with these brave white men to save the child from a bloody and a cruel death."

"Say no more, my father," said the sam deep voice, that belonged to a stalwart elder of the mission; "we swear it. May we and ours die the death of dogs, and our bones be thrown to the jackals and the kites, if we break the oath! It is a fearful thing to do, my father, so few to strike at so many, yet

will we do it or die in the doing. We swear!" "Ay, thus say we all," chimed in the others. "Thus say we all," said I.

"It is well," went on Mr. Mackenzie. "Ye are true men and not broken reeds to lean on. And now we will begin our preparations in good earnest."

The men who were to form each little party were carefully selected, and still more carefully and minutely instructed as to what was to be done. After much consideration it was agreed that the ten men led by Good, whose duty it was to stampede the camp, were not to carry firearms; that is, revolver as well as a short sword-the Masai "sime" which I had taken from the at the sight he presented armed for battle. body of our poor servant who was murdered in the canoe. We feared that if they had firearms the result of three cross fires carried on at once would be that some of our own people would be shot; besides, it appeared to all of us that the work they had to do would best be carried out with cold steel-especially to Umslopogaas, who was, indeed, a great advocate of cold steel. We had with us four Winchester repeating rifles, besides half a dozen Martinis. I armed myself with one of the repeaters-my own; an excellent weapon for this kind of work, where great rapidity of fire is desirable, and fitted with ordinary flap sights, instead of the usual cumbersome sliding mechanism which they generally have. Mr. Mackenzie took another, and the two remaining ones were given to two of his men, who understood the use of them and were noted shots. The Martinis and some rifles of Mr. Mackenzie's were served out, together with a plentiful supply of ammunition, to the other natives who were to form the two parties whose duty it was to be to open fire from separate sides of the kraal on the sleeping Masai, and who were fortunately shirt. all more or less accustomed to the use of a

As for Umslopogaas, we know how he was armed-with an ax. It may be remembered that he, Sir Henry, and the strongest of the Askari were to hold the thorn stopped ontrance to the kranl against the anticipated rush of men striving to escape. Of course, for such a purpose as this guns were useless. Henry selected one of these, weighing about work. two and a half pounds and very broad in the blade, and the Askari took another a size smaller. After Umslopogaas had put an extra edge on these two ax heads, we fixed them to three feet six belves, of which Mr. Mackenzie fortunately had some in stock, made of a light but exceedingly tough native wood, something like English ash, only more springy. When two suitable helves had been selected with great care, and the end of the haft notched to prevent the hand from slipping, the ax heads were fixed on them as firmly as possible, and the weapons immersed in a bucket of water for half an hour. The result of this was to swell the wood in the socket in such a fashion that nothing short of burning would get it out again. When this in the eastern sky that palely heralded the important matter had been attended to by Umslopogaas, I went into my room and proceeded to open a little tin lined deal case which had not been undone since we left England, and which contained-what do you think?-nothing more or less than four mail

It seems almost laughable to talk of steel shirts in these days of bullets, against which they are, of course, quite useless; but where one has to do with savages, armed with cutting weapons such as assegais or battleaxes, they afford the most valuable protection, being, if well made, quiet invulnerable to them. I have often thought that if only the English government had in our savage wars, and more especially in the Zulu war, thought fit to serve out light steel shirts, there would be many a man alive today who, as it is, is dead and forgotten.

To return: on the present occasion we strong a man, and the protection afforded to up the rear with the six remaining natives.

stone wall, and were now to be seen-men, consented, and called the Zulu, who came bearing Sir Henry's ax, which he had now together in little groups, and all talking at fixed up to his satisfaction, with him. When we showed him the steel shirt, and explained manners and customs, and of the fate that to him that we wanted him to wear it, he at they had to expect if those bloodthirsty sav- first declined, saying that he had fought in ages succeeded in getting over the stone wall. | his own skin for thirty years, and that he was Immediately after we had settled upon the not going to begin now to fight in an iron one. Thereupon I took a heavy spear, and spreading the shirt upon the floor, drove the spear down upon it with all my strength, the weapon rebounding without leaving a mark they could keep an outlook upon the Masal upon the tempered steel. This exhibition half converted him; and when I pointed out to him how necessary it was that he should not let any old fashioned prejudices he might possess stand in the way of a precaution which might preserve a valuable life at a time when men were scarce, and also that if he wore this shirt he might dispense with a shield, and so have both hands free, he yielded at once, and proceeded to invest his great frame with the "iron skin." And indeed, although made for Sir Henry, it fitted the great Zulu like a skin. The two men were almost of a height; and though Curtis looked the bigger man, I am inclined to think that the difference was more imaginary than real, the fact being that, although he was plumper and rounder, he was not really bigger, except in the arm. Umslopognas had, comparatively speaking, thin arms, but they were as strong as wire ropes. At any rate, when they both stood, ax in hand, invested in the brown mail, which clung to their mighty forms like a web garment, showing the swell of every muscle and the curve of every line, they formed a pair that any ten men might shrink

from meeting. It was now nearly 1 o'clock in the morning, and the spies reported that, after having drunk the blood of the oxen and eaten enor mous quantities of ment, the Masai were going to sleep round their watch fires, but that sentries had been posted at each opening of the kraal. Flossie, they added, was sitting not far from the wall in the center of the western side of the kraal, and by her were the nurse and the white donkey, which was tethered to a peg. Her feet were bound with a rope, and warriors were lying about all round

As there was absolutely nothing further that could be done then we all took some supper and went to lie down for a couple of

The bed whereon I lay was near an open GREENWOOD, window that looked on to the veranda, through which came an extraordinary sound of groaning and weeping. For a time I could not make out what it was, but at last I got up, and putting my head out of the window stared about. Presently I saw a dim figure kneeling on the end of the veranda and beating his breast-in which I recognized Alphonse. Not being able to understand his French talk, or what on earth he was at, I called to him and asked him what he was

"Ah, monsieur," he sighed, "I do make prayer for the souls of those whom I shall slay to-night." "Indeed," I said; "then I wish that you

would do it a little more quietly." Alphonse retreated, and I heard no more of his groams. And so the time passed, till at length Mr. Mackenzie called me in a whisper through the window, for of course everything had now to be done in the most absolute silence, "Three o'clock," he said;

"we must begin to move at half past." I told him to come in, and presently be entered, and I am bound to say that if it bad with the exception of Good himself, who had not been that just then I had not got a laugh To begin with, he had on a clergyman's black swallow tail and a kind of broad rimmed black felt hat, both of which he had donned on account, he said, of their dark color. In his hand was the Winchester repeating rifle we had lent him; and stuck in an elastic cricketing belt, like those worn by English boys, were, first, a huge buckhorn handled carving knife with a guard to it, and next a long barreled Colt's revolver.

"Ah, my friend," he said, seeing me staring at his belt, "you are looking at my 'carver." I thought it might come in bandy if we came to close quarters; it is excellent steel, and many is the pig I have killed with it."

By this time everybody was up and dressing. I put on a light Norfolk jacket over my mail shirt, in order to have a pocket handy to hold my cartridges, and buckled on my revolver. Good did the same; but Sir Henry put on nothing except his mail shirt. steel lined cap and a pair of "veldtschoons" or soft hide shoes, his legs being bare from the knees down. His revolver he strapped on round his middle outside the armored

Meanwhile Umslopogaas was mustering the men in the square under the big tree, and going the rounds to see that each was properly armed, etc. At the last moment we reade one change. Finding that two of the men who were to have gone with the firing parties knew little or nothing of guns, but were good spearsmen, we took away their rifles, supplied them with shields and long Therefore Sir Henry and the Askari proceeded to arm themselves in like fashion. It off to join Curtis, Umslopogaas and the so happened that Mr. Mackenzie had in his Askari in holding the wide opening-it havlittle store a selection of the very best steel ing become clear to us that three men, how-English made hammer backed ax heads. Sir ever brave and strong, were too few for the

CHAPTER VII.

A SLAUGHTER GRIM AND GREAT. Then came a pause, and we stood there in the chilly, silent darkness waiting till the moment came to start. It was, perhaps, the most trying time of all-that slow, slow quarter of an hour. The minutes seemed to drag along with leaden feet, and the quiet, the solemn hush, that brooded over all-big, as it were, with a coming fate-was most oppressive to the spirits. The moon went down; for a long while she

had been getting nearer and nearer to the horizon, now she finally sank, and left the world in darkness save for a faint gray tinge

Mr. Mackenzie stood, watch in hand, kis wife clinging to his arm and striving to stifle her sobs. "Twenty minutes to four," he said; "it ought

to be light enough to attack at twenty minutes past four. Capt. Good had better be moving; he will want three or four minutes' Good gave one final polish to his eyeglass,

nodded to us in a jocular sort of way-which I could not help feeling it must have cost him something to muster up-and, ever polite, took off his steel lined cap to Mrs. Mackenzie and started for his position at the head of the kraal, to reach which he had to make a detour by some paths known to the natives. Just then one of the boys came in and re-

ported that everybody in the Masai camp. with the exception of the two sentries who were walking up and down in front of the reblessed our foresight in bringing these shirts, and also our good luck in that they had not Then the rest of us took the road. First been stolen by our rascally bearers when they ran away with our goods. As Curtis had gazs, the Wakwasi Askari and Mr. Mackentwo, and, after considerable deliberation, had | zie's two mission natives, armed with long made up his mind to wear his combination spears and shields. I followed immediately one himself-the extra three or four pounds' after with Alphouse and five natives, all weight being a matter of no account to so armed with guns, and Mr. Mackenzie brought

the thighs being a very important matter to The cattle kraal where the Masai were an individual not armed with a shield of any camped lay at the foot of the hill on which kind-I suggested that he should lend the the house stood, or, roughly speaking, about of a Masai the entire population of the mission station had sought refuge inside the stout danger and the glory of his post. He readily first 500 yards of this distance we traversed

quietly indeed, but at a good pace; after that we crept forward as silently as a leopard on his prey, gliding like ghosts from bush to bush and stone to stone. When I had gone a little way I chanced to look behind me, and saw the redoubtable Alphonse staggering along with white face and trembling knees, and his rifle, which was at full cock, pointed directly at the small of my back. Having halted, and carefully put the rifle at "safety," we started again, and all went well till we were within 100 yards or so of the kraal, when his teeth began to chatter in the most aggressive

(To be continued.)

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