PLAITSMOUTH WEEKLY HERALD, THURSDAY OCTOBER 20, 1887.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

OTHON OF "KING BOLOMON'S MINES," "EHE" "JESS," "THE WITCH'S HEAD," ETC.

fore we got black to our quarters. Tiere we heard from Alphonse, who was deeply aggrieved because our non-return had spoiled his dinner (for he had turned cook again now), that Good had come back from his hawking and gone on duty. As instructions had already been given to the officer of the outer guard to double the sentries at the gate, and as we had no reason to fear any immediate danger, we did not think it worth while to hunt him up and tell him anything of what had passed, which at best was, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, one of those tasks one prefers to postpone; so, after swallowing our food, we turned in to get some much needed rest. Before we did so, however, it occurred to Curtis to tell old Umslopogaas to keep a lockout in the reighborhood of Nyleptha's private apartments. Umslopognas was now well known about the place, and by the queen's order allowed to pass whither he would by the guards; a permission of which he often availed himself by hours in a nocturnal fashion that he favored. and which is by no means uncommon among black men generally. His presence in the corridors would not, therefore, be likely to excite remark. Without any comment the Zulu took up his ax and departed, and we also departed to bed.

I seemed to have been asleep but a few minutes when I was awakened by a peculiar sensation of uneasiness. I felt that somebody was in the room and looking at me, and instantly sat up, to see to my surprise that it was already dawn, and that there, standing at the foot of my couch, and looking peculiarly grim and gaunt in the gray light, was Umslopognas himself.

"How long hast thou been there?" I asked, testily, for it is not pleasant to be aroused in such a fashion.

"Mayhap the half of an hour, Macumazahn. I have a word for thee."

"Speak on," I said, now wide enough awake.

"As I was bid, I went last night to the place of the White Queen, and hid myself behind a pillar in the second anteroom, beyond which is the sleeping place of the queen. Bougwan (Good) was in the first anteroom alone, and outside the curtain of that room was a sentry; but I had a mind to see if I could pass in unseen, and I did, gliding behind them both. There I waited for many hours, when suddenly I perceived a dark figure coming secretly toward me. It was the figure of a woman, and in her hand she held a dagger. Behind that figure crept another, unseen by the woman. It was Bougwan following in her tracks. His shoes were off, and for so fat a man he followed very well. The woman passed me, and the starlight shone upon her face."

"Who was it?" I asked, impatiently.

"The face was the face of the 'Lady of the Night,' and of a truth she is well named.

"I waited, and Bougwan passed me also. Then I followed. So we went slowly and without a sound up the long chamber; first the woman saw not Bougwan, and Bougwan

served her well if Umslopogaas had cut her down in the act." "Ay," said the Zulu. "Fear not; I should have slain her ere she struck; I was but waiting the moment."

I said nothing; but I could not help thinking that many a thousand doomed lives would have been saved if he had meted out to Sorais the fate she meant for her sister. And, as the issue proved, I was right. After he had told his tale Umslopogaas

went off unconcernedly to get his morning meal, and Sir Henry and I fell to talking.

At first he was very bitter against Good, who, he said, was no longer to be trusted, having designedly allowed Sorais to escape by some secret stair when it was his duty to have handed her over to justice. Indeed he spoke in the most unmeasured terms on the matter. I let him run on a while, reflecting to myself how easy we find it to be hard on the weaknesses of others, and how tender we are to our own.

"Really, my dear fellow," I said at length, "one would never think, to hear you talk, that you were the man who had an interview with this same lady yesterday and found it rather difficult to resist her fascinations, notwithstanding your ties to one of the loveliest and most loving women in the whole world. Now suppose that it was Nyleptha who had tried to murder Sorais, and you had caught her, and she had pleaded with you, would you have been so very eager to hand her over to roaming about the palace during the still an open shame and to death by fire? Just look at the matter through Good's eye glass for a minute before you denounce an old friend as a scoundrel."

He listened to this jobation submissively, and then frankly acknowledged that he had spoken harshly. It is one of the best points in Sir Henry's character that he is always

ready to admit it when he is in the wrong. But, though I spoke up thus for Good, I was not blind to the fact, however natural his behavior might be, it was obvious that he was being involved in a very awkward and disgraceful complication. A foul and wicked murder had been attempted, and he had let the murderess escape, and thereby, among other things, allowed her to gain a complete ascendancy over himself. In fact he was in a fair way to become her tool-and no more dreadful fate can befall a man than to become the tool of an unscrupulous woman, or indeed of any woman. There is but one end to it: when he is broken, or has served her purpose, he is thrown away--turned out on the world to hunt for his lost self respect. While I was pondering thus and wondering

what was to be done-for the whole subject was a thorny one-I suddenly heard a great clamor in the court yard outside and distinguished the voices of Umslopogaas and Alphonse, the former cursing furiously and the latter yelling in terror.

Hurrying out to see what was the matter, I was met by a ludicrous sight. The little Frenchman was running up the courtyard at an extraordinary speed, and after him sped Umslopogaas like a great greyhound. Just as I came out he caught him, and lifting him right off his legs, carried him some paces to a beautiful but very dense flowering shrub which bore a flower not unlike the gardenia, but was covered with short thorns. Next, despite his howls and struggles, he with one

mighty thrust plunged poor Alphonse head first into the bush, so that nothing but the calves of his legs and his heels remained in evidence. Then, satisfied with what he had done, the Zulu folded his arms and stood the woman, then Bougwan, and then I; and grimly contemplating the Frenchman's kicks, and listening to his yells, which were awful.

my father, Macumazahn the fox, though I be but a broken down Zulu wardog-a chief for whom there is no room in his own kraal, an outcast and a wanderer in strange places; ay, I love thee, Macumazahn, for we have grown gray together, and there is that between us that cannot be seen, and yet is too strong for breaking;" and he took his snuffbox, which was made of an old bress cartridge, from the slit in his ear, where he always carried it, and handed it to me for me to help myself.

I took the pinch of snuff with some emotion. It was quite true I was much attached to the bloodthirsty old rufflan. I don't know what was the charm of his character, but it had a charm; perhaps it was its fierce honesty and directness; perhaps one admired his almost superhuman skill and strength, or it may have been simply that he was so absolutely unique. Frankly, with all my experience of savages, I never knew a man quite like him, he was so wise, and yet such a child with it all; and though it seems laughable to say so, like the hero of the Yankee parody, he "had a tender heart." Anyway, I was very fond of him, though I should never have thought of telling him so.

"Ay, old wolf," I said, "thine is a strange love. Thou wouldst split me to the chin if I stood in thy path to-morrow,"

"Thou speakest truth, Macumazahn; that would I if it came in the way of duty, but I should love thee all the same when the blow had gone fairly home. Is there any chance of some fighting here, Macumazahn?" he went on, in an insinuating voice. "Methought that what I saw last night did show that the two great queens were vexed one with an-other, else had the 'Lady of the Night' not brought that dagger with her."

I agreed with him that it showed that more or less pique and irritation existed between the ladies, and told him how things stood, and that they were quarreling over Incubu.

"Ah, is it so?" he exclaimed, springing up in delight; "then will there be war as surely as the rivers rise in the rains-war to the end. Women love the last blow as well as the last word, and when they fight for love they are pitiless as a wounded buffalo. See thou, Macumazahn, a woman will swim through blood to her desire, and think naught of it. With these eyes have I seen it once, and twica also. Ah, Macumazahn, we shall see this fine place of houses burning yet, and hear the battle cries come ringing up the street. After all, I have not wandered for nothing. Can this folk fight, think ye?"

Just then Sir Henry joined us, and Good arrived, too, fram another direction, looking very pale and hollow eyed. The moment Umslopogans saw the latter he stopped his bloodthirsty talk and greeted him.

"Ab, Bougwan," he cried, "greeting to thee, Inkoos, thou art surely weary. Didst thou hunt too much yesterday?" Then, without waiting for an answer, he went on:

"Listen, Bougwan, and I will tell thee a story; it is about a woman, therefore wilt thou hear it; is it not so?

"There was a man, and he had a brother, O queen!" and there was a woman who loved the man's brother, and was beloved of the man. The man's brother had a favorite wife, and loved conduct." not the woman, and he made a mock of her. Then the woman, being very cunning and fierce hearted for revenge, took counsel with herself, and said to the man, 1 love thee, and if thou wilt make war upon thy brother I will marry thee.' And he knew it was a lie, yet because of his great love of the woman. who was very fair, did he listen to her words and made war. And when many people had saw not me. At last the 'Lady of the Night' "What art thou doing?" I said, running up. been killed his brother sent to him, saying, 'Why slayest thou me? What hurt have I done unto thee? From my youth up have I bed and throne?" not loved thee? When thou wast little did I Curtis winced at this, and turning towards not nurture thee, and have we not gone down to war together and divided the cattle, girl by girl, ox by ox, and cow by cow? Why slayest thou me, my brother, son of my own mother? "Then the man's heart was heavy, and he knew that his path was evil; and he put aside the tempting woman, and ceased to make war on his brother, and lived at peace in the same kraal with him. And after a time the woman came to him, and said, 'I have lost the past, I will be thy wife.' And in his heart he knew that it was a lie, and over her rival. that she thought the evil thing, yet because of his love did he take her to wife. "And the very night that they were wed, when the man was plunged into a deep sleep, did the woman arise and take his ax from his hand, and creep into the hut of his brother and slay him in his rest. Then did she slink back like a gorged lioness, and place the thong of the red ax back upon his wrist and go her ways. "And at the dawning the people came shouting, 'Lousta is slain in the night!' and they came unto the hut of the man, and there he lay asleep, and by him was the red ax. Then did they remember the war, and say, 'Lo! he hath of a surety slain his brother, and they would have taken and killed him, but he rose and fled swiftly, and as he fleeted by he slew the woman. "But death could not wipe out the evil she had done, and on him rested the weight of all her sin. Therefore is he an outcast, and his name a scorn among his own people; for on him, and him only, resteth the burden of her who betrayed. And therefore does he wander afar, without a kraal, and without an ox or a wife, and therefore will be die afar like a stricken buck, and his name be accursed from generation to generation, in that the people say that he slew his brother, Lousta, by treachery in the night time." The old Zulu paused, and I saw that he was deeply agitated by his own story. Presently he lifted his head, which he had bowed to his breast, and went on: "I was that man, Bougwan. Ou! I was that man; and now hark thou! Even as I am, so wilt thou be—a tool, a plaything, an ox how much more so, then, being what he is!" of burden to carry the evil deeds of another. Listen! When thou didst creep after the 'Lady of the Night' I was hard upon thy track. When she struck thee with the knife in the sleeping place of the White Queen I was there also. When thou didst let her slip away like a snake in the stones I saw thee; and I knew that she had bewitched thee, and that a true man had abandoned the truth. and he who aforetime loved a straight path | had taken a crooked way. Forgive me, my father, if my words are sharp, but out of a full heart are they spoken. See her no more, so shalt thou go down with honor to the grave. Else because of the beauty of a woman that weareth as a garment of fur shalt thou be even as I am, and perchance with more cause. I have said." Throughout this long and eloquent address Good had been perfectly silent, but when the tale began to shape itself so aptly to his own case he colored up, and when he had learned that what had passed between him and Sorais had been overseen he was evidently much distressed. And now, when at last he spoke, it was in a tone of humility quite foreign to him. "I must say," he said with a bitter little laugh, "that I scarcely thought that I should live to be taught my duty by a Zulu, but it just shows what we can come to. I wonder if you fellows can understand how humiliated ways, and I mine, each to his own people and his own place. The high veldt or will die in deserve it all. Of course I should have handed the fat bush country, and so it is with me, her over to the guard, but I could not, and the e two. Macumazahn. I am rough, I know it, and that is a fact. I let her go and I promised to two. when my blood is warm I know not what to do, but yet wilt thou be sorry when the night told me that if I would side with her she swallows me and I am utterly lost in the would marry me and make me king of this blackness; for in thy heart thou lovest me, | country; but thank goodness, I did find the thrice she failed, but at last her voice came.

heart to say that even to marry her I could not desert my friends. And now you can do what you like; I deserve it all. All I have to say is that I hope you may never love a woman with all your heart and then be so sorely tempted of her," and he turned to go. "Look here, old fellow," said Sir Henry, "just stop a minute; I have a little tale to tell you, too." And he proceeded to narrate what

had taken place the previous day between Sorais and himself. This was a finishing stroke to poor Good. It is not pleasant to any man to be made a tool of, but when the circumstances are as peculiarly atrocious as in the present case it is about as bitter a pill as anybody can be

called upon to swallow. "Do you know," he said, "I think that between you you fellows have about worked a cure," and he turned and walked away, and I for one felt very sorry for him. Ah, if the moths would always carefully avoid the can-

dle, how few burnt wings there would be! That day was a court day, when the queens sat in the great hall and received petitions, discussed laws, etc., and thither we adjourned shortly afterwards. On our way we were joined by Good, who was looking exceedingly

depressed, and no wonder. When we got into the hall Nyleptha was already on her throne, and proceeding with business as usual, surrounded by councilors, courtiers, lawyers, priests, and an unusually strong guard. It was, however, easy to see from the air of excitement and expectation on the faces of everybody present that nobody was paying much attention to ordinary affairs, the fact being that the knowledge that civil war was imminent had now got abroad. We saluted Nyleptha and took our accustomed places, and for a little while things went on as usual, when suddenly the trumpets began to call outside the palace, and from the great crowd that was gathered there in anticipation of some unusual event there rose a roar of "Sorais! Sorais!"

Then came the roll of many chariot wheels and presently the great curtains at the end of the hall were drawn wide, and through them entered the "Lady of the Night" herself. Nor did she come alone. Preceding her was Agon, the high priest, arrayed in his most gorgeous vestments, and on either side were other priests. The reason for their presence was obvious-coming with them it would have been sacrilege to attempt to detain her. Behind her were a number of the great lords, and behind them a small body of picked guards. A glance at Sorais herself was enough to show that her mission was of no peaceful kind, for in place of her gold embroidered "kaf" she wore a shining tunic formed of golden scales, and on her head a little golden helmet. In her hand, too, she bore a toy spear, beautifully made and fashioned of solid silver. Up the hall she came, looking like a lioness in her conscious pride and beauty, and as she approached the spectators fell back bowing and made a path for her. By the sacred stone she halted, and laying her hand on it, she cried out with a loud voice to Nyleptha on the throne, "Hail,

"All hail, my sister!" answered Nyleptha. Draw thou near. Fear not, I give thee safe Sorais answered with a haughty look, and

swept on up the hall till she stood right before the thrones,

"A boon, O queen!" she cried again. "Speak on, my sister; what is there I can

give thee who hath half our kingdom?" "Thou canst tell me a true word-me and the people of Zu-Vendis. Art thou, or art thou not, about to take this foreign wolf,"

Raising her silver spear, she shook it, and Bank Cass County the light glanced from it and from the golden scales of her cuirass.

"And thinkest thou, Nyleptha," she said, in notes which pealed through the great hall like a clarion-"thinkest thou that I, a queen of the Zu-Vendi, will brook that this base outlander shall sit upon my father's throne, and rear up half breeds to fill the place of the great house of the Stairway! Never! never! while there is life in my bosom and a man to follow me and a spear to strike with. Who

is on my side?-who?

The Difference

Omaha teacher-"Yes, my children, remember there is no human love equal to a mother's love."

Little girl-"Womens love their children better than their husbands, don't they?"

"Very often."

"Yes indeed. When we gets the hic coughs mamma gets sorry and tries to cure 'em, but when papa gets the hic coughs she gets mad."

Couldn't Fool the Littie Girl

[Omaha World] Omaha Mamma-Now, dear, you must invite one of your little friends in to share your candy. Little Dot-I-I guess I'll invite Lucy. "Well, that will be nice." "Yes, candy makes her tooth ache an' she never eats much,"

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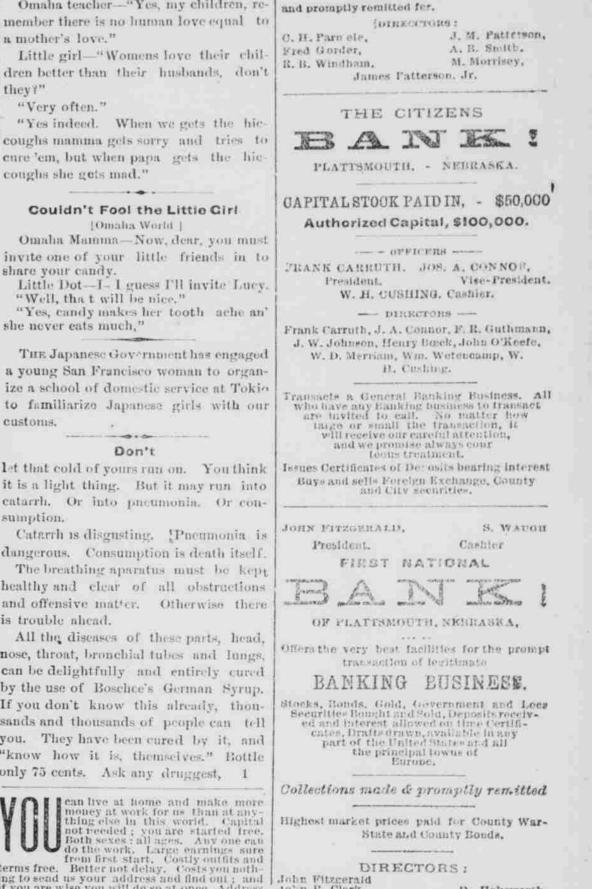
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let that cold of yours run on. You think it is a light thing. But it may run into catarrh. Or into pneumonia. Or consumption.

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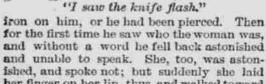
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came to the curtains that shut off the sleep ing place of the White Queen, and put out her left hand to part them. She passed through, and so did Bougwan, and so did L. At the far end of the room is the bed of the queen, and on it she lay very fast asleep. I could hear her breathe, and see one white arm lying on the coverlid like a streak of snow on the dry grass. The 'Lady of the Night' doubled herself thus, and with the long knife lifted crept towards the bed. So straight did she gaze thereat that she never thought to look behind her. When she was quite close Bougwan touched her on the arm, and she caught her breath and turned, and I saw the knife flash, and heard it strike. Well was it for Bougwan that he had the skin of





ished, and spoke not; but suddenly she laid her finger on her lip, thus, and walked toward and through the curtain, and with her went Bougwan. So close did she pass to me that her dress touched me, and I was nigh to slaying her as she went. In the first outer room she spoke to Bougwan in a whisper, and clasping her hands thus she pleaded with him. but what she said I know not. And so they passed on to the second outer room, she pleading, and he shaking his head, and saying, 'Nay nay, nay.' And it seemed to me that he was about to call the guard, when she stopped talking and looked at him with greateyes, and I saw that he was bewitched by her beauty. Then she stretched out her hand, and he kissed it, whereon I gathered myself together to advance and take her, seeing that now had Bougwan become a woman, and no longer knew the good from the evil, when behold! she was gone."

"Gone!" I ejaculated.

"Ay, gone; and there stood Bougwan staring at the wall like one asleep, and presently he went too, and I waited a while and came away also,

"Art thou sure, Umslopogaas," said I, "that thou hast not been a dreamer this night?"

In reply he opened his left hand, and produced about three inches of the blade of a dagger of the finest steel. "If I be, Macumasahn, behold what the dream left with me. The knife broke upon Bougwan's bosom, and as I passed I picked this up in the sleeping place of the White Queen."

CHAPTER XVIII. WAR! RED WAR.

Telling Umslopogaas to wait, I tumbled into my clothes and went off with him to Sir Henry's room, where the Zulu repeated his story word for word. It was a sight to watch Curtis' face as he heard it.

"Great heavens!" he said; "here have I been snoring away while Nyleptha was nearly murdered-and all through me, too. What I fiend that Sorais must be! It would have

"Wouldst thou kill the man? Full him out of the bush!"

With a savage grunt he obeyed, seizing the wretched Alphonse by the ankle, and with a jerk that must have nearly dislocated it, tearing him out of the heart of the shrub. Never did I see such a sight as he presented, his clothes half torn off his back, and bleeding as he was in every direction from the sharp thorns. There he lay, and yelled and rolled, and there was no getting anything out of him

At last, however, he got up, and ensconcing himself behind me, cursed old Umslopogaas by every saint in the calendar, vowing by the blood of his heroic grandfather that he would poison him and "have his revenge."

At last I got the truth of the matter. It appeared that Alphonse habitually cooked Umslopogaas' porridge, which the latter ate for breakfast in the corner of the court yard, just as he would have done at home in Zululand, from a gourd, and with a wooden spoon. Now Umslopogaas had, like many Zulus, a great horror of fish, which he considered a species of water snake; so Alphonse, who was as fond of playing tricks as a monkey, and who was also a consummate cook, determined to make him eat some. Accordingly he grated up a white fish very finely and mixed it with the Zulu's porridge, who swallowed it nearly all down in ignorance of what he was enting. But unfortunately for Alphonse he could not restrain his joy at this sight and came capering and peeping round, till at last Umslopogaas, who was clever in his way, suspected something, and after a careful examination of the remains of his porridge, discovered "the buffalo heifer's" trick, and in revenge served him as I have said. Indeed, the little man was fortunate not to get a broken neck for his pains; for, as one would have thought, he might have learned from the episode of his display of axmanship that le monsieur noir was an ill

person to play practical jokes on. This incident was unimportant enough in itself, but I narrate it because it led to serious consequences. As soon as he had stanched the bleeding from his scratches and washed himself, Alphonse went off, still cursing, to recover his temper, a process which I knew from experience would take a very long time. When he had gone, I gave Umslo-pogaas a jobation, and told him that I was ashamed of his behavior.

"Ah, well, Macumazahn," he said, "you must be gentle with me, for here is not my place. I am weary of it-weary to death of eating and drinking, of sleeping and giving in marriage. I love not this soft life in stone houses that takes the heart out of a man, and turns his strength to water and his flesh to fat. I love not the white robes and the delicate women, the blowing of trumpets and the flying of hawks. When we fought the Masai at the kraal yonder, ah, then life was worth the living; but here is never a blow struck in anger, and I begin to think I shall go the way of my fathers and lift Inkosi-kaas no more," and he held up the ax and gazed at

it in sorrow. "Ah," I said, "that is thy complaint, is it?" Thou hast the blood sickness, hast thou? and the Woodpecker wants a tree. And at thy age, too. Shame on thee, Umslopogaas!" "Ay, Macumazahn, mine is a red trade, yet it is better and more honest than some. Better is it to slay a man in fair fight than to suck out his heart's blood in buying and selling and usury, after your white fashion. Many a man have I slain, yet is there never a one that I should fear to look in the face again; ay, many are they who once were friends, and whom I should be right glad to snuff with. But there! there! thou hast thy

and she pointed to Sir Henry with her toy spear, "to be a husband to thee and share thy

Sorais, said to her in a low voice, "Methinks that yesterday thou hadst other names than wolf to call me by, O queen!" and I saw her bite her lips as, like a danger flag, the blood flamed red upon her face. As for Nyleptha, who is nothing if not original, she, seeing that the thing was out, and that there was nothing further to be gained by concealment, answered the question in a novel and effectual manner, inspired thereto, as I firmly believe, by coquetry and a desire to triumph

Up she rose, and descending from th throne swept in all the glory of her royal grace on to where her lover stood. There sh stopped and untwined the golden snake that was wound around her arm. Then she bade him kneel, and he dropped on one knee on the marble before her; and next, taking the golden snake with both her hands, she bent the pure soft metal round his neck, and when it was fast deliberately kissed him on the brow and called him her "dearflord,"

"Thou seest," she said, when the excited murmur of the spectators had died away, addressing her sister as Sir Henry rose to his feet, "I have put my collar round the 'wolf's neck,' and behold! he shall be my watch dog, and that is my answer to thee, Sorais, my sister, and to those with thee. Fear not, she went on, smiling sweetly on her lover, and pointing to the golden snake she had twined round his massive throat. "If my yoke be heavy, yet is it of pure gold, and it shall not gall thee."

Then, turning to the audience, she continued, in a clear proud tone: "Ay, Lady of the Night, lords, priests, and people here gathered together, by this sign do I take the foreigner to husband, even here in the face of ye all. What, am I a queen, and yet not free to choose the man whom I will love? Then should I be lower than the meanest girl in all my provinces. Nay, he hath won my heart, and with it goes my hand and throne and all I have—ay, had he been a beggar instead of a great lord, fairer and stronger than any here, and having more wisdom and knowl-And she took his hand and gazed proudly on him, and holding it, stood there boldly facing the people. And such was her sweetness, and the power and dignity of her per-son, and so beautiful she looked standing hand in hand there at her lover's side, so sure of him and of herself, and so ready to risk all things and endure all things for him, that most of those who saw the sight, which I am sure no one of them will ever forget, caught the fire from her eyes and the happy color from her blushing face, and cheered her like wild things. It was a bold stroke for her to make, and it appealed to the imagination: but human nature in Zu-Vendis, as elsewhere, loves that which is bold and not afraid to break a rule, and is moreover peculiarly susceptible to appeals to its poetical side.

And so the people cheered till the roof rang; but "Sorais of the Night" stood there with downcast eyes, for she could not bear to see her sister's triumph, which robbed her of the awfulness of her jealous anger she trembled and turned white like an aspen in the wind. I think I have said somewhere of her that she reminded me of the sea on a calm day, having the same aspect of sleeping power about her. Well, it was all awake now, and, like the face of the furious ocean, it awed and yet fascinated me. A really hansdome woman in a royal rage is always a beautiful sight, but such beauty and such a rage I never saw combined before; and I can only say that the effect produced was well worthy of the

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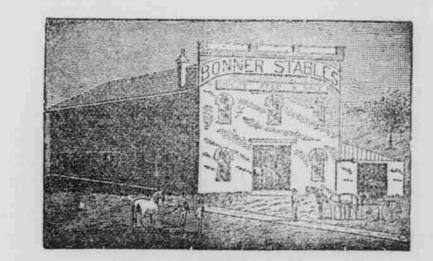
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