

#### BY H. BIDLE HAGGARD.

at the bottom for a water-way, over which the road went sublimely on. At another place it was cut in zigz igs out of the side of a precipice five hundred feet deep, and in the third it tunneled right through the base of an intervening ridge a space of thirty yards or more.

Here we noticed that the sides of the funnel were covered with quaint sculptures mostly of mailed figures driving in chariots. One, which was exceedingly beautiful, represented a whole battle scene with a convoy of captives being marched off in the distance.

"Well," said Sir Henry, after inspecting this ancient work of art, "it is very well to call this Solomon's Road, but my humble opinion is that the Egyptians have been here before Solomon's people ever set a foot on it. If that isn't Egyptian handiwork, all I have to say is it is very like it."

By midday we had advanced sufficiently far down the mountain to reach the region where wood was to be met with. First we came to scattered bushes which grew more and more frequent, till at last we found the road winding through a vast grove of silver trees similar to those which are to be seen on the slopes of Table Mountain at Cape Town. I had never before met with them in all my wanderings, except at the Cape, and their appearance here astonished me greatly.

"Ah !" said Good, surveying these shiningleaved trees with evident enthusiasm, "here is lots of wood, let us stop and cook some dinner; I have about digested that raw meat.'

Nobody objected to this, so leaving the road we made our way to a stream which was babbling away not far off, and soon had a goodly fire of dry boughs blazing. Cutting off some substantial hunks from the flesh of the inco which we had brought with us, we proceeded to toast them on the end of sharp sticks, as one sees the Kafirs do, and ate them with relish. After filling ourselves, we lit our pipes and gave ourselves up to enjoyment, which, compared to the hardships we had recently undergone, seemed almost heavenly.

The brook, of which the banks were clothed with dense masses of a gigantic species of maiden-hair fern interspersed with feathery tuits of wild asparagus, babbled away merrily at our side, the soft air murmured through the leaves of the silver trees, doves cooed around, and bright winged birds flashed like living gems from bough to bough. It was like Paradise.

The magic of the place, combined with the overwhelming sense of dangers left behind, and of the promised land reached at last, seemed to charm us into silence. Sir Henry and Umbopa sat conversing in a mixture of broken English and Kitchin Zulu in a low voice, but earnestly enough, and I lay, with my eyes half shut, upon that fragrant bed of fern and watched them. Presently I missed Good, and looked to see what had become of him. As I did so I observed him sitting by the bank of the stream, in which he had been bathing. He had nothing on but his flannel shirt, and his natural habits of extreme neatness having reasserted themselves, was actively employed in making a most elaborate toilet. He had washed his guttapercha collar, thoroughly shaken out his trousers, coat and waist-coat, and was now folding them up neatly till he was ready to put them on, shaking his head sadly as he did so over the numerous rents and tears in them, which had naturally resulted from our frightful journey. Then he took his boots, scrubbed them with a handful of ferns, and tinally rubbed them over with a piece of fat, which he had carefully saved from the inco meat, till they looked, comparatively speaking, respectable. Having inspected them indiciously through his eveglass, he put them on and began a fresh operation. From a little bag he carried he produced a pocket-comb in which was fixed a tiny looking-glass, and in this he surveyed himself. Apparently he was not satisfied, for he proceeded to do his hair with great care. Then came a pause whilst he again contemplated the effect: still it was not satisfactory. He felt his chin, on which was now the accumulated scrub of a ten days' beard. "Surely." thought I. "he is not going to try and shave." But so it was. Taking the piece of fat with which he had greased his boots, he washed it carefully in the stream. Then diving again 'into the bag he brought out a little pocket razor with a guard to it, such as are sold to people afraid of cutting themselves, or to those about to un lertake a sea voyage. Then he vigorously scrubbed his tace and chin with the fat and began. But it was evidently a painful process, for he groaned very much over it, and I was convalsed with inward laughter as I watched him struggling with that stubby beard. If seemed so very odd that a man should take the trouble to shave himself with a piece of fat in such a place and under such circumstances. At last he succeeded in getting the worst of the scrub off the right side of his face and chin, when suddenly 1, who was watching, became aware of a flash of light that passed just by his head. Good sprang up with a profane explanation (if it had not been a safety razor he would certainly have cut his throat) and so did I, without the exclamation, and this was what I saw. Standing there, not more than twenty paces from where I was, and ten from Good, were a group of men. They were very tall and copper-colored, and some of them wore great plumes of black feathers and short cloaks of leopard skins; this was all I noticed at the moment. In front of them stood a youth of about seventeen, his hand still raised and his body bent forward in the attitude of a Grecian statue of a spear-thrower. Evidently the flash of light had been a weapon, and he had thrown it.

tace of our momer's sons?" and ne pointed to Umbopa. I looked at Umbopa as he said it, and it flashed across me that he was right. Umbopa was like the faces of the men before me, so was his great form. But I had not thee to reflect on this colucidence.

"We are strangers and come in peace," answered, speaking very slow, so that he might understand me, "and this man is our servant."

"Ye lie," he answered; "no strangers can cross the mountains where all things die, But what do your lies matter? if we are strangers then ye must die, for no strangers may live in the land of the Kukuanas. It is the king's law. Prepare then to die, oh strangers !"

I was slightly staggered at this, more especially as I saw the hands of some of the party of men steal down to their sides, where hung on each what looked to me like a large and heavy knife.

"What does that beggar say?" asked Good. "He says we are going to be scragged," I answered grunty.

"Oh, Lord," groaned Good; and, as it was his way when perplexed, put his hands to his false teeth, dragging the top set down and allowing them to fly back to his jaw with a snap. It was a most fortunate move. tor next second the dignified crowd of Kukuanas gave a simultaneous yell of horror, and boited back some yards.

"What's up?" said I.

"It's his teeth," whispered Sir Henry, excitedly. "He moved them. Take them out, Good, take them out!"

He obeyed, slipping the set into the sleeve of his flannel shirt.

In another second curiosity had overcome fear, and the men advanced slowly. Apparently they had now forgotten their amiable intentions of doing for us.

"How is it, oh strangers," asked the old man solemnly, "that the teeth of the man' (pointing to Good, who had nothing on but a flannel shirt, and had only half finished his shaving) "whose body is clothed, and whose legs are bare, who grows hair on one side of his sickly face and not on the other, and who has one shining and transparent eye, and teeth that move of themselves, coming away from the jaws and returning of their own will?"

"Open your mouth," I said to Good, who promptly curled up his lips and grinned at the old gentleman like an angry dog, revealing to their astonished gaze two thin lines of gum as utterly innocent of ivories as a newborn elephant. His audience gasped. "Where are his teeth?" they should;

"with our eyes we saw them."

Turning his head slowly and with a gesture of ineffable contempt, Good swept his hand across his mouth. Then he grinned again, and lo! there were two rows of lovely teeth.

The young man who had flung the knife threw himself down on the grass and gave vent to a prolonged howl of terror; and as for the old gentleman his knees knocked together with fear.

"I see that ye are spirits," he said, falteringly; "did ever man born of woman have hair on one side of his face and not on the other, or a round and transparent eye, or teeth which moved or melted away and grew again? Pardon us, oh, my lords." Here was luck, indeed, and, needless to

say, I jumped at the chance. "It is granted," I said, with an imperial

smile. "Nay, ye shall know the truth. We come from another world, though we are men such as ve; we come," I went on, "from the biggest star that shines at night." grosped the chorus of a "Oh! oh!"

may speak with him."

There was a most general and hasty expression of dissent.

"Let not good magic be wasted on our poor bodies," said one, "we are satisfied. All the witchcraft of our people cannot show the like of this."

"It is so," remarked the old gentleman, in a tone of intense relief; "without any doubt it is so. Listen, children of the stars, children of the shining eye and the movable teeth, who roar out in thunder and slay from afar. I am Infadoos, son of Kafa, once king of the Kukuana people. This youth is Scrogga."

"He nearly scragged me," murmured Good.

"Seragga, son of Twala, the great king-Twala, husband of a thousand wives, chief and lord paramount of the Kukuanas, keeper of the great road, terror of his great enemies, student of the black arts, leader of an hundred thousand warriors, Twala the One-eyed, the Black, the Terrible,"

"So," said I, superciliously, "lead us then to Twala. We do not talk with low people and underlings."

"It is well, my lords, we will lead you, but the way is long. We are hunting three days' journey from the place of the king. But let my lords have patience, and we will lead them."

"It is well," I said, carelessly. "all time is before us, for we do not die. We are ready, lead on. But Infadoos, and thou Scragga, beware! Play us no tricks, make for us no snares, for before your brains of mud have thought of them we shall know them and avenge them. The light from the transparent eye of him with the bare legs and the half-haired face" (Good) "shall destroy you, and go through your land; his vanishing teeth shall fix themselves fast in you and eat you up, you and your wives and children; the magic tubes shall talk with you loudly and make you as sieves. Beware!" This magnificent address did not fail of

its effect; indeed, it was hardly needed, so deeply were our friends already impressed with our powers.

The old man made a deep obeisance, and murmured the word, "Koom, Koom," which I afterward discovered was their royal salute, corresponding to the Bayete of the Zulus, and turning addressed his followers. These at once proceeded to hay hold of all our goods and chattels, in order to bear them for us, excepting only the guns, which they would on no account touch. They even seized Good's clothes, which were, as the reader may remember, neatly folded up bevide him.

He at once mide a dive for them, and a loud altercation ensued.

"Let not my lord of the transparent eye and the melting teeth touch them," said the old man. "Surely his slaves shall carry the things."

"But I want to put 'em on !" roared Good, in nervous English.

Umbopa translated.

"Nay, my lord," put in Infadoos, "would my lord cover up his beautiful white legs" (aithough he was so dark Good had a singularly white skin) "from the eyes of his servants? Have we offended my lord that he should do such a thing?"

Here 1 nearly exploded with laughing; and meanwhile, one of the men started on with the garments.

"Damn it!" roared Good, "that black villian has got my trousers."

"Look here, Good," said Sir Henry, "you have appeared in this country in a certain character, and you must live up to it. It irregular pulse, fainting, smotherwill never do for you to put on trousers ing, dropsy, etc. His Restorative again. Henceforth you must live in a fian-Nervine cures headache, fits, etc.

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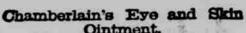
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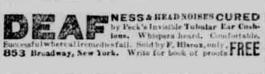
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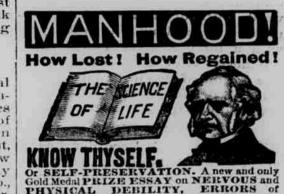


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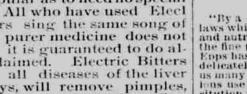
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As I looked an old soldier-like looking man stepped forward out of the group, and catching the youth by the arm said something to him. Then he advanced upon us.

Sir Henry, Good, and Umbopa had by this time seized their rifles and lifted them threateningly. The party of natives still came on. It struck me that they could not know what rifles were, or they would not have treated them with such contempt. "Put down your guns!" I halloed to the others, seeing that our only chance of safety lay in conclination. They obeyed, and walk-ing to the front I addressed the elderly man who had checked the youth.

"Greeting." I said in Zulu, not knowing what language to use. To my surprise I was understooil.

"Greeting," answered the man, not, indeed, in the same tongue, but in a dislect so closely allied to it, that neither. Umbopa or myself had any difficulty in understanding it. Indeed, as we afterward found out, the "Tanguage Apoken that people was an old." "Fashioned form of the Zelu tengue, bearing about the same relationship to it that the English of Chaucer does to the English of the nineteenth century.

Whence come ye?" he went on, "what are you? and why are the faces of three of while, and the face of the fourth as the tonished aborigines.

"Yes," I went on, "we do, indeed;" and 1 again smiled benignly as 1 uttered that emazing lie. "We come to stay with you a he while, and bless you by our sojourn. Ye will see, oh, friends, that I have prepared

m self by learning your language.' "It is so, it is so," said the chorus, "Only, my lord," put in the old gentleman,

"thou hast learned it very badly." 1 east an indignant glance at him and he

quailed. "Now, friends," I continued, "ye might uk that after so long a journey we should tind it in our hearts to avenge such a reception, mayhap to strike cold in death the impious hand that-that, in short-threw a knife at the head of him whose teeth come and go.

"Spare him, my lords," said the old man in supplication; "he is the king's son, and 1 am his uncie. If anything befalls him his blood will be required at my hands.'

"Yes, that is certainly so," put in the young man with great emphasis.

"You may perhaps doubt our power to avenge," I went on, heedless of this by-'Stay, I will show you. Here, you play. dog and slave" (addressing Umbopa in a savage tone), "give me the magic tube that speaks:" and I tipped a wink toward my express rifle.\*

Unibopa rose to the occasion, and with something as nearly resembling a grin as 1 had ever seen on his dignified face, handed me the rifle.

"It is here, oh, lord of lords," he said with a deep obeisance.

Now, just before I asked for the rifle I had perceived a little klipspringer antelope standing on a mass of rock about seventy yards away, and determined to risk a shot at

"Ye see that buck," I said, pointing the animal out to the party before me. "Tell me, is it possible for a man, born of woman, to kill it from here with a noise?"

"It is not possible, my lord," answered the oid man.

"Yet shall I kill it," said I, quietly. The old man smiled. "That my lord can not do," he said.

I raised the rifle, and covered the buck. It was a small animal, and one which one might well be excused for missing, but I knew that it would not do to miss.

I drew a deep breath, and slowly pressed

on the trigger. The buck stood still as stone. "Bang! thud !" The back sprang into the

air and fell on the rock dead as a door-nail. A groan of terror burst from the group be fore us.

"If ye want meat." I remarked, coolly, "go fetch that buck."

The old man made a sign, and one of his followers depart.d, and presently returned bearing the klip-pringer. I noticed, with satisfaction, that I had hit it fairly behind the shoulder. They gathered round the poor creature's body, gazing at the bullet-hole ir consternation.

"Ye see," I said, "I do not speak empty words."

'fbere was no answer.

"If ye yet doubt our power," I went on, "let one of ye go stand upon that rock that I may make him as this buck."

None of them seemed at all inclined to take the hint, till at last the king's sor

spoke. "It is well said. Do thou, my uncle, go stand npon the rock. It is but a buck that

The old gentleman did not take the sug-gestion in good part. Indeed, he seemed hurt.

"No! no!" he ejaculated, hastily. "my old eyes have seen enough. These are wizards, indeed. Let us bring them to the king. Yet if any should wish a further proof let him nel shirt, a pair of boots, and an eyeglass." "Yes," I said, "and with whiskers on one



side of your face and not on the other. If you change any of these things they will girls eloping with negroes, tramps think we are impostors. I am very sorry for and coachmen. The well-known you, but, seriously, you must do it. If once they begin to suspect us our lives will not be worth a brass farthing."

"Do you really think so?" said Good gloomily.

"I do indeed. Your 'beautiful white legs' and your eyeglasses are now the feature of our party, and as Sir Henry says, you must live up to them. Be thankful that you have got your boots on, and that the air is warm." Good sighed, and said no more, but it took him a fortnight to get accustomed to his attire.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE ENTER KUKUANALAND. All that afternoon we traveled on along

the magnificent roadway, which headed steadily in a north-westerly direction. Infadoos and Scragga walked with us, but their fellows marched about one hundred paces ahead.

"Infadoos, I said at length, "who made this road?"

"It was made, my lord, of old time, none know how or when, not even the wise woman Gagool, who has lived for generations. We are not old enough to remember its making. None can make such roads now, but the king lets no grass grow upon it."

"And whose are the writings on the walls of the caves through which we have passed on the road?" I asked, referring to the Egyptian-like sculptures we had seen.

"My lord, the hands that made the road wrote the wonderful writings. We know not who wrote them."

"When did the Kukuana race come into this country?"

"My lord, the race came down here like the breath of a storm ten thousand thousand moons ago, from the great lands which lie there beyond." and he pointed to the north. "They could travel no further, so say the old voices of our fathers that have come down to us, the children, and so says Gagool, the smeller out of witches, because of the great mountains which ring in the land," and he pointed to the snow-clad peaks. "The country, too, was good, so they settled here and grew, strong and powerful, and now our the magic has killed. Surely it cannot kill a mumbers are like the sea-sand, and when Twals the king calls up his regiments their pinnes opver the plain as far as the eye of an can reach!"

"And if the land is walled in with mountains, who is there for the regiments to fight with?" "Nay, my lord, the country is open there,"

and again he pointed toward the north, "and Druggist, Denver. now and again warriors sween down m

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