

A FIGHT WITH A SLAVER.

The coxswain of the pinnace woke up with a start from his position on the ice side of the stern sheets, and, as he sleepily assumed a sitting posture, thrust the great toe of his right foot into the open mouth of the Swahili interpreter, who was placidly slumbering at the bottom of the boat.

The choke, the gurgle, and the expostulation of the latter also woke the lieutenant who occupied the weather side, and then all three sat and stared about them; the remainder of the boat's crew remained soundly and stertorously asleep.

She was a twenty-eight foot pinnace, manned, armed and provisioned for twenty-eight days, and she was on her way down the coast of Madagascar in company with the whaler both boats belonged to H. M. corvette Pluto, and had been away from the ship twenty four days, and were on their way to rejoin her at Majunga. Some miles away on the port hand the coast showed up as a dim, dark line, shimmering in the heat haze, and away to the westward "there danced the deep before them blue, empty 'neath the sun."

"What's up?" growled the lieutenant to the seaman steering the boat.

The latter removed a sooty, black clay from the corner of his mouth, and expectorated respectfully over the stern, "I don't see nothing myself, sir, but that there Tom Dollar he 'alied me a minute ago as there was a dhow in sight on the starboard beam."

"Confound him, I believe he can see twenty miles," replied the officer, and then called "Tom." A broad, shining black face, wreathed in a portentous grin, showed itself before the weather side of the mast, and the owner of the face answered cheerfully, "Sare."

"Whither away, Tom?"

"Star'd beam, sare; dhow sail, sare."

"Hard aport and let her gybe," ordered the lieutenant, "and you, Simpkins, and Suleiman haul after the main sheet."

The coxswain and the interpreter did as they were bidden, and the heavily laden boat turned her stern to the shore.

"Don't wake the hands till tea time, and you let Tom on the boat."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the A. B. at the tiller, and the three occupants of the stern sheets again addressed themselves to slumber.

It would be hard for the landman to comprehend what the simple sentence of "manner, armed and provisioned for twenty-eight days" means. The boat carried twelve seamen, a coxswain, a Seedle boy, an officer and an interpreter sixteen souls in all; a seven-pounder gun, which weapon of offense was wrapped in a painted canvas jacket and lashed under the after thwart, while the carriage for mounting it stood in the bows, where it disputed the space with a cooking stove, the heel of the bowsprit, and the head sheets. The bottom of the boat was filled with seven-pounder ammunition, and boxes of small-arm cartridges, biscuit boxes, water breakers and small casks of salt pork were fitted in like pieces of a puzzle, and still space had to be found for a medicine chest, a small cask or rum, the men's change of clothing and their waterproofs. He who sails on the track of a slaver has scant room for luxuries.

Guided by the extraordinary vision of the Seedle boy, the pinnace steered in the direction of the dhow.

"To overhaul and examine all dhows met with, and assure himself by personal inspection that she carries no slaves, and to detain her if her equipment shows signs that she is engaged in such traffic," ran the preamble of the instructions issued to the lieutenant in the whaler. The breeze, which had been aft and paltry during the earlier part of the afternoon, now became fresh and strong, and the boats were making steady progress seaward; and now the huge sail of the dhow was plainly in sight as the vessel was making for the coast with a beam wind, and ripping through the smooth, blue water two feet for every one made by the heavily laden man-of-war boats, which were sailing to cut her off.

On the raised platform at the stern of the dhow crouched Sheikh Ibrahim, the Arab slave trader, alongside the captain and steersman of the dhow.

"May Allah confound all gliaours," he ejaculated, "and likewise the triple dyed fool De Siva, the Portuguese; did he not say the accursed Ingere had gone south in the warship, and now we run straight into the arms of these children of Shaitan?"

"Will the sail come down when the guns of gliaous shoot?" queried the captain.

"No," thundered Ibrahim, "by the beard of the Prophet, we be thirty fighting men, and they be twenty at the outside; we fight this time. I go bid my men prepare."

He descended from the platform, and mixed with the crew of desperadoes in the waist. Picked men these, lean as greyhounds and tempered to the toughness of their own good swords by many a scene of blood and outrage in the dim forests from which they left their prey. Down below hatches lay manacled grey wretches, torn from some unknown tract in the pathless wilds of Central Africa; all strong men these, and landed in good condition means a very large sum of money, and Sheikh Ibrahim's blood turned to gall when he thought of the unwarrantable interference of the chase.

The lieutenant stared long and steadily at her through his glasses, and then turned to the interpreter.

"What do you think of her?" he asked.

"She large dhow, sare, perhaps slaver," was the illuminating reply.

"She's got the heels of us, anyway, Simpkins," said the lieutenant to the coxswain "just loosen the lashings of the seven-pounder; if she don't heave to when we fire a rifle across her bows, we'll mount the gun and wing her."

It was now evident that the boats could not cut the dhow off; the latter wailing a point free was skimming through the smooth water like a racing cutter, and the laden boats were plinched up in the wind; if she did not alter her course, she would pass about two hundred yards ahead of them. And now a sort of idea crept into men's minds that there might be a fight after all, and the boat's crews without orders took rifle and cutlass from the decks under the thwarts and placed them handy.

Suddenly an exclamation came from the coxswain. "Whaler's mast gone over the side, sir."

"Bad luck," said the lieutenant; "Signal 'follow under oars.'"

Three tiny flags fluttered at the pinnace's masthead, an answered pennant was run up in the whaler, and then all attention centered once more upon the dhow. In obedience to orders, four seamen fired their rifles simultaneously across her bow, but no notice was taken; she was past like a flash, and slightly altering her helm presented nothing but her high stern to her now exasperated pursuers.

"Down head sails, mount the gun," was the order, and in less time than it takes to tell, the absurd little cannon was poking its nose over the bows of the pinnace.

"Go forward, Simpkins, you're the best shot, and aim at her mast; it's our only chance; she's a slaver right enough, and I don't fire at her hull with all those poor devils down below."

The gun was loaded and spoke once, and the shot tore a hole in the dhow's sail.

"Bravo, one better next time, Simpkins," shouted the lieutenant.

Again the coxswain fired, and this time a huge white splinter flew from her starboard quarter.

"Not so low man. Now, then, last chance; there hasn't been such a one in Mozambique for years."

Again the small gun barked, and this time a wild cheer went up from the man-of-war's men, as over the bows went mast and sail, and the dhow lay helpless on the waters.

"Down mast, out oars," came the order, and eager as hounds on a burning scent the men tugged at the tough ash oars. There was going to be a fight—a real old-fashioned hand-to-hand, rough and tumble, and the only thought and prayer in all that boat was that the dhow wasn't going to give in tamely.

But no idea of such a course entered the head of Sheikh Ibrahim. He had noted the catastrophe to the whaler with glee, and even now felt pretty sure of coming off victorious; he knew his men, he saw that the fight would probably be over before the whaler could come up, for here were these fools pulling madly to attack him without waiting for the second boat. And there was no question but that it was a first-class fight—the pinnace's crew admitted that when they came to think of it afterward.

They were received by a volley which severed one man's backbone, killing him on the spot, and shivering the glasses which the lieutenant held in his left hand then they were alongside, and matters became complicated.

The slave traders fought as those men fight who can feel the halter around their necks, and the seamen fought as only the British sailor can fight when he gets the chance. But the odds were very heavy, and in the breathless intervals of that really fine struggle, the lieutenant glanced occasionally over his shoulder to look for the whaler. He had not long to wait; it was not likely with twenty-six months getting his first chance of actual service—and in such a glorious row! The lieutenant had hastily cut away the wreck of his mast, and his five men pulled as they had never pulled at any Mediterranean regatta. Their arrival turned the scale. Heedless of the boat, all six flung themselves over the side and into the melee, and in five minutes it was over.

There is no occasion to count up the butcher's bill, but it would have made a respectable total had ten times the number of combatants been engaged. As luck would have it, just at sunset the ship, slowly making her way northward to meet the boats, came upon the scene.

Regret for fallen messmates was both genuine and sincere, but the sentiments of the whole ship's company, from the captain to the lower deck sweeper, were surely correctly indicated by the remark of the first lieutenant. He had come to visit his messmates, the other lieutenant, whose arm, laid open from shoulder to elbow by an Arab sword, had just been stitched up by the doctor.

"I'm awfully sorry you're winged, old man, but it can't be helped, and that must have been a glorious scrap; but there's some people in this world who have all the luck."—E. Hamilton Currey in Kansas City Independent.

Suspicious.

"I think it's about time for a committee to examine his accounts," said the first plain citizen, referring to a City Hall official.

"Why so?" inquired the other.

"I notice people are beginning to call him 'Honest John.'"—Catholic Standard and Times.

CANT SERVE TWO MISTRESSES.

This Woman Says Either Fashion or Ambition Must Be Sacrificed.

Several ambitious women were hunched together the other day, when the conversation turned—as it sometimes will when women talk—to clothes.

"Girls," solemnly said the youngest of the three, "I would give \$100 if I had it, to the person who would plan out my wardrobe for this summer without bothering me about it."

"There are those who could take you up on that," remarked the tallest girl, serving out the salad.

"Of course. But the trouble is that I have not the hundred dollars to spare. If I had I should place myself in the hands of a professional somebody whose thought runs along dress lines, and who could get me properly clothed without at the same time leaving me of my right mind—which last catastrophe is bound to happen if I have to fritter away my own brains over the problem."

"And yet," smiled the third woman, "dress is fondly supposed to be the one consuming topic of a woman's thoughts. Funny, isn't it?"

"Uproariously. Like the beauty hints, which are published by the ream under the fond delusion that women would move heaven and earth, forsake duty, friends and common sense for the sake of removing a freckle. Nobody reads 'beauty hints' but a few shallow females who haven't anything else to do," and the youngest girl stirred the cream on her chocolate with an air of profound conviction.

Then the tallest girl laid down her knife and fork and leaned forward earnestly.

"Girls," she began, "let me make a statement. It may not be strikingly original, but if the world ever knew it, it seems to have forgotten it. No woman can serve two mistresses! If her sole object in life is to dress well and look beautiful, it is all right; she can do it—and not much else! But, if she has any intelligent, serious purpose in life, such as to make the most of herself and be of some use to the world, then the world must not expect her to look as if she had just stepped out of a French band-box. To dress perfectly is an art in itself. It takes time and thought to plan the plainest of those 'exquisitely simple' garments men are always raving over. For the woman who has the money to put herself and her wardrobe in the hands of a professional dresser—just as she turns her house over to the professional decorator and furnisher—the problem is solved. She can be exquisitely and fittingly gowned, and still have time and spirit left for higher things. The woman who cannot afford this must choose one of two courses; she may spend half her days and two-thirds of her mental capacity in the effort to be good-looking and effective and 'up-to-date'; or she may just make sure that her dress is whole and neat and inconspicuous, and men think no more about it; but turn her attention to things more worth while. Not being a wax doll, I long ago chose the latter course. I do not flatter myself that I should take the prize for 'well dressing,' and the tall girl glanced smilingly down at her plain shirtwaist and dark walking skirt; "but I look respectable, and I am happy in my work, and I know," and she smiled with a happy light in her earnest eyes, "that I have a few friends who care for me for some better reason than my clothes. Are these things worth the sacrifice of fashion, girls?"

There was a soft clapping of hands, and the honest consensus of opinion in that corner of the tea room was that they were.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Needlework at Night.

The best of all lights for sewing at night is the good old-time lamp well filled with kerosene oil, the well-trimmed blaze covered by an immaculate chimney and shaded by an opaque white porcelain shade.

It may be neither an artistic nor up-to-date lamp, but it has the merit of being highly practical, which can not be said of the lamps with fancy colored globes and shades which mask the light so completely that close observation is impossible.

Having settled the question of light use some judgment in the selection of the material on which to sew. Do not attempt to work on black or on very dark colors; red is particularly trying to the eyes, as is material with fine stripes or checks. Reserve such goods for daylight work, and at night work on white and delicate colors as much as you can. By right planning, the different colors can be made up under the best light, and thus save much needless exhaustion. Changing from one color to another in sewing at night will sometimes prove very restful if the eyes are becoming tired.

Women Maltreat Their Hair.

Experts say that women maltreat their hair, and that as a consequence the hair line of the average woman is retreating from the forehead slowly, but surely.

Perhaps you have not noticed it, but the expert has, and that is where he has the advantage of you. After all, if the worst comes to the worst, our womankind will only be like the Italian beauties of the Raphaelite period, who used to shave the front part of the head and strain back the hair tightly from the remainder. It does not look pretty to us nowadays, but, as Jack Platt said, "use is everything, and we should get used to it in time."

FIRST BRITON IN LHASSA.

Thomas Manning saw the Lama when the latter was a child. The first Englishman who ever visited Lhasa, and saw the Dalai Lama was Lamb's very eccentric and very learned friend Thomas Manning. Born at his father's rectory at Broome, near the Suffolk border of Norfolk, he studied hard at Cambridge, became somewhat intimate with Porson, and, after some years at the university, began to be fascinated with the mystery of China, says the London Chronicle. At length he resolved at all costs to enter the Celestia Empire, and gave himself up to the acquisition of the Chinese language. Lamb wrote: "Pray try and cure yourself. Take hellebore. Pray to avoid the fens; read no more books of voyages; they are nothing but lies." But Manning was not to be shaken, and Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society, wrote to the directors of the East India Company, saying how dear an interest he felt in this very amiable young man, "both on account of his mild character and the energies of his mind."

From 1807 to 1810 Manning was at Canton qualifying himself for the great enterprise he had in view, but in June of the latter year he proceeded to Calcutta, where, in a fancy Tartar dress, he was much lionized, and, after a few months, started with one Chinese servant upon his venturesome expedition. On Dec. 17, 1811, he ascended to Potala to salute the grand lama, and make his offering in "the lofty towering palace, which forms a majestic mountain of building." Of the lama he wrote: "He was about seven years old; had the simple and unaffected manners of a well-educated princely child. His face was, I thought, poetically and affectingly beautiful. He was of a gay and cheerful disposition; his beautiful mouth perpetually unbending into a graceful smile, which illuminated his whole countenance." Manning, disgusted with the treatment he received from our officials, returned to England, lived the life of a recluse, and died at Bath, May 2, 1840, aged sixty-eight. His Chinese library is preserved by the Royal Asiatic Society.

Toads Afraid of Snakes.

As I was walking along a path through the woods this afternoon at about sunset, writes a Maiden doctor to the Boston Transcript, I noticed a toad who was out getting his evening meal of the insects that hovered about the path. I stopped to pass the time of day with him by touching him with my cane. I first touched the end of his nose—he put up his forefoot and preceptually pushed it away. This performance we went through with a few times, when he decided that he had had enough of that kind of fooling and hopped nonchalantly off I started along the path and had gone but a dozen steps when I saw a striped snake lying in the path, he, too, like the toad, out for his evening meal.

I have a strong dislike for snakes, so I promptly killed this one and crushed his head with the end of my cane. A few steps further along the path I came across another hungry toad. I advanced the cane to his nose, but before it had touched him his attitude had wholly changed. When I saw him first he was sitting with his nose well up in the air, keeping watch for any insect that might come near enough for him to seize with his tongue; now, before the cane had quite touched him he covered down, trying to bury his nose in the dust and make himself as small and compact as possible. I withdrew my stick, but he did not change his position.

I approached it to his nose again and he shrank away from it before it had touched him. I then, after the lapse of a few moments, touched the other end of him very lightly with the cane. It had barely touched him when he gave a vigorous jump, and he no sooner struck the ground than he gave another big jump, and he kept jumping as fast he could for several yards. The whole conduct of this second toad showed great fear of my cane, whereas the first toad scarcely took any notice of it at all, and that only in a mildly deprecatory manner. The reason was that the second toad smelled "snake" on the cane, and that was enough for him. I have watched a snake eat a toad. The process of getting a toad into the snake's mouth occupied over an hour, and from the horrible experience that the toad went through with the slow but steady surrender, millimeter by millimeter, into the snake's maw, I should think toads would have a great dread of snakes, as indeed they have. When I advanced my cane to this toad I did not think of his smelling the snake I had just killed, but when I saw him shrink away in abject fear I saw the reason in an instant, and though it may have caused the toad a few moments of dread, I touched him behind, wishing to see how he would act, and I saw the toad cover a few yards of path faster than I had ever seen one before.

The westward march of civilized labor has effected no change more remarkable than the conversion of the hitherto lazy, shiftless Indian back into a workman at \$1.50 a day. Large gangs of them are now employed by a western railroad in track-laying and they seem to like the work.

A PORTRAIT.

Two children, a boy and a girl, stood before a painting that hung upon the wall. The boy gazed with all his soul in his eyes, dimly conscious, perhaps, of what the picture would some day mean to him. It represented a soldier mounted on a black charger, and the man's face was earnest, ardent and earnest. With sword in his uplifted hand he seemed urging men to battle.

The little girl indifferently glanced at the portrait from time to time. She had seen it so many times, and then, too, patriotism had not yet awakened in her undisciplined little heart. She was proud in the thought, however, that she possessed something of absorbing interest to her new neighbor. Finally, she began to relate the story she had heard so often.

"You see, it's a really true man, and he painted himself on papa's horse."

Seven years later he came back for a visit. He had now attained the great age of seventeen, and when he had met his former playmate, who had just proudly entered upon her "teens," that long-looked-for period, he said most condescendingly:

"Why, this must be little Lucille Felton!"

Straightway Lucille felt she hated him, and they spent a few weeks of turbulent companionship in strife.

"I thought you were going to be a soldier," she said one day, "like the man on-horseback in the picture?"

"What's the use of being a soldier?" he laughed. "There are no wars; I'd rather be the man that painted the picture than the soldier he represents. Let's go, and look at it again."

"Papa gave it away—to the man who gave him the horse."

Ten years passed before Paul Willis saw his little playmate again. It was evening of a summer day at a fashionable watering place. He had just arrived and was instantly surrounded by a group of old-time friends who claimed his attention and recognition after his years of foreign travel. "Looking" beyond the little group about him into the ballroom his roving gaze was instantly caught and held by the vision of a girl with a pair of wonderful dark and deep eyes, an exquisite face and a quiet dignity in the carriage of her swiftest figure.

"Who is she?" he asked of the man nearest him, and even before the answer came he knew the name would be "Lucille Felton."

"Look out!" he was warned, "Lucille cannot be accused of flirting, but she attracts all men and always turns them down."

She saw him coming across the room and knew him by the winsome brown eyes that were still the eyes of the little boy she had played with years before.

Just before the last dance he found an opportunity to speak with her alone. He was tongue-tied from this "new" strange feeling.

"Are your parents well?" he finally asked abruptly. A shadow came over her face. The fan she held trembled.

"Did you not know? They died four years ago."

"Forgive me—I did not know," he said.

"And the old home," she continued, lifting saddened eyes to his, "burned down and all its contents."

She was more beautiful still with this sudden sorrow in her eyes.

"And you—where is your home?"

"I live with my sister, Mrs. Lottrop, in your home city."

Then others came up to her and he was outside the little circle.

Paul Willis stood before his easel, gazing at the unfinished picture—the picture of a fair-haired boy and a perfect darling of a little girl, who were both looking up at the wall. One of his old photographs had served as his model for the lad's portrayal, and love had brought to his memory her childish face, but the picture that hung on the wall he could only dimly recall. The subject and the attitude of the man on the horse that had so stirred his young fancy were in his memory, but not perfectly enough to transfer to canvas.

The next day, while rummaging through the old stock of a picture dealer, he saw a small painting in an antique frame that brought forth an exclamation of surprise and joy.

Willis secured the prize, and hastened to his studio, painting "the picture on the wall" with haste and skill.

It was Lucille's birthday. She was gazing with a half pleasure and half humor at the array of books, flowers and confectionery that covered the library table when a maid brought her in a note.

"There is a great, big package just come," she announced; "shall I have it fetched in here?"

"Wait!" and Lucille opened the envelope and scanned the note.

"Oh, Ethel!" she cried to her sister, "Paul Willis has sent me a picture—one he painted! Yes! (to the maid) have them bring it in here and open it here."

She was not a little excited and curious. Paul was attracting notice in the world of art and to possess one of his pictures was a privilege. What would the subject be?

When the final wrappings were removed, she stood before it, silent and memory-moved.

Her sister gave a little cry of pleasure.

"Oh, Lucille! I understand how he could paint you, but how could he remember that picture—the one we all loved so, and we were so provoked when papa gave it away? Why, Paul was a merry child when he was in!"

THE LATEST EXPEDITION.

His making elaborate preparations for his expedition, I suppose.

"Yes, indeed."

"Is he going to search for the 'blue pole'?"

"Oh, no. He's going to search for an undiscovered 'blue pole'."

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