

White Man

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settling all those disputes which could be determined without recourse to legal argument. In this manner he sifted to a minimum the cases to come before the solemn conclave of chiefs.

On the first occasion that Andrea witnessed this tribal ceremony which occurred monthly at a certain stage of the moon, she began by feeling huffed but, lacking an audience for her mood, soon gave it up for one of scornful acquiescence which, in turn, surrendered to an interest that almost amounted to awe. The day in question began with the first information from M'sungu, who appeared carefully groomed and, for the first time in her experience, dressed in immaculate muffs, that she would have to amuse herself for two hours without his aid. Mystified by the unexplained developments, and the unexplained developments, she sat down—rapidly.

At the first of the camp was placed a large table and on it a camp armchair. To the right and left of this throne of authority sat in a crescent fourteen other seats of varying dignity—chairs, stools, benches, benches and an occasional stool—for every native king has the monarch of but one village, has the right to sit in the presence of authority, whatever its grade. The white man took the armchair and immediately, to the rumble of a dozen rattles, a horde of natives—all men—swarmed into the beaten court of the camp.

Those natives who lacked the royal hall-mark were squatting on their heels in a vast mass of serrated and concentric circles of which the innermost left an open space whose periphery was determined by the exact circumference of the wide-spreading branches of the tree. Andrea coughed softly but M'sungu did not look up—in fact, nobody looked up. It was exactly as though she were not. She slipped to the trunk of a tree and leaned on one hand placed against it. Somehow it seemed an only friend in an empty world.

The preliminary palaver was a matter of much leisurely ceremony, guttural pronouncements, grunts, pauses, more monologues, repeated grunts; but, once it was over, M'sungu settled back with a sigh and started dispens-



Dispensing Justice With a Breathless Rush.

ing justice with a breathless rush that reminded one of the manner in which he dispatched game.

It seemed to Andrea that he never waited to hear more than the statement of the offense when he would immediately pronounce sentence. "Twenty lashes; next! Thirty lashes; next! Twelve lashes; next," at the rate of about a case for every two minutes. Once times out of ten the victim would snuff sheepishly and withdraw; in the tenth case there would come a look of sullen wonder into the culprit's face, whereupon the white man would promptly call a halt and demand more evidence. Such cases were then allotted half an hour and even an hour each, and without exception resulted in the acquittal of the prisoner at the bar.

Andrea was suddenly aware of M'sungu's voice indubitably addressed to her though he kept his eyes to the front and spoke in a toneless monologue as if he were communing with himself. "Behold! Psychology on the job," he said. "Watch their faces. Every native that knows his sentence to be just, takes it with an apologetic smile; if he looks sullen, the chances are a hundred to one that he's innocent. I've never gone wrong. They think I'm a wonder. Next!"

One case alone that day was apparently intermingled. When at last it

was completed M'sungu dropped his eyes for the first time and sat for a long while with bowed head; then he drew erect, looked the prisoner in the eye and spoke three words. A gray hue crept into the black's face as he turned away. "I have surrendered him to the justice of his tribe," murmured M'sungu. "Poor devil!" And Andrea knew that she had witnessed the precursor to an inevitable sentence of death.

That night M'sungu was too tired to talk and excused himself immediately after dinner. Andrea read until her eyes ached and then went to bed wondering if she were feeling only slighted or if existence were actually becoming monotonous. She shrank from the latter admission for she knew that, once made, it would shatter the longest run of sheer peace of spirit which she had experienced in her short but much bored life. She need not have worried. When she stepped out early next morning dressed for the field in compliance with a message from M'sungu to put on her roughest and toughest she was so excited that even the memory of her doubt was blotted from her mind. Something was in the air of the camp that could be felt rather than heard, the sort of something that one could imagine possessing a hive just before it began to hum.

M'sungu was already sitting under the dining tree engaged in a diminutive palaver with three wizened blacks who squatted on the ground squinting up at him and speaking in turn in answer to his patient questioning. Around them but at a respectful distance were gathered various members of the camp's personal staff. On the faces of the wizened three and also on M'sungu's was the same look of fanatical exaltation, the look that proclaims any group of diverse men brothers at heart.

"What is it?" asked Andrea, breathless from hurrying.

"Elephant," replied M'sungu. He drew a chair to his side. "Sit down," he said softly as one whose mind is half-narcotized and fearful of losing the dream. "Watch and listen, for these men bring great tidings." He smiled almost like a boy.

One of the wizened produced a third wand, about twenty inches in length, freshly broken at one end. He passed it to his companions; who stared at it as though they saw it for the first instead of the hundredth time, fingered it, gurgled over it and finally gravely handed it to M'sungu. He went through more or less the same process and returned it to the man who first produced it with what was apparently a slighting remark.

The man glanced up with a pained look on his face, arose, laid the wand on the ground as a measure and with laborious fingers began to trace a mighty oval. M'sungu leaned across the table and gazed with fascinated eye; Andrea, watching him, could see the pulse throbbing at his temples. He was a new M'sungu, somebody young, approachable, lovable, an eager boy.

She leaned close to his shoulder. "Please, White Man," she murmured, "please tell me."

Without turning he put one hand out and grasped her wrist as though to still her. "The little man," he explained, "is drawing the spoor of a mighty beast. Look at it and learn it by heart, for it will be a photograph."

Having completed the circumference of his oval, the native was making various tracings on its face, dividing it as with a maze of tracks. When he had apparently finished, he sank back on his heels and gazed critically at his handiwork.

"Watch," said M'sungu. "Before he gets up, he'll put in some mark, some distinctive feature that distinguishes this spoor from all others."

No sooner had he spoken than the black leaned forward and with a sure touch deepened two of the cracks till they formed a long narrow V running diagonally half across the oval. That done he turned abruptly from his drawing, joined his comrades, turned his back on M'sungu and unstoppering a cartridge case, proceeded to take snuff.

M'sungu straightened with a long quivering sigh. "It is well," he said in dialect. "We will go." The three wizened men nodded their heads many times and grunted. With no further instruction, gunbearers, water boys, trackers and Marguerite's attendant scattered to their various preparations, hindered by excited women and children. The camp hummed, bathtub slapped breakfast on the table and then stood on one foot, then on the other in impatience. On the faces of all was the same half-smile, the same look of suppressed but mighty anticipation.

M'sungu ate a few mouthfuls but they seemed to choke him. He pushed back his plate, stuffed his pipe full and lit it. His eyes played over Andrea's face and fired hers with their own brilliance. When he spoke every word thrilled her as though this wonderful morning were surcharged with an emotional current sensitive to every sound and movement.

"Andrea Pellor," he said with a happy twinkle of mock solemnity in his glance, "you are about to be initiated into the mysteries of the major guild of many centuries, the closest corporation of sport in the world; in three words, the society of elephant hunters. You will probably witness death and I hope and pray it will be the death of the hunted, but for the comfort of your soft heart let me tell you that today we go forth not to slaughter but to battle."

He turned his eyes from her face and continued in a more serious strain: "The hunting of elephant is a

science. It is a crescendo of delicately balanced factors that starts from two distant points and beginning on a cool foundation of mutual respect passes upward through stages of intelligence against intelligence, caution for caution, perseverance on the heels of endurance, until it meets on the high plane of naked courage and sweeps to its tragic climax of white-hot battle and death."

His eyes came back to hers frankly. "Like all the great sciences," he continued, "it has used the lives of valiant men for stepping-stones so that we who go out today are backed by the age-long sacrifice of a noble company. Looking back only to the days of black powder and the four-bore rifle we are mere pygmies, but pygmies carried high on the crest of an ancient tradition. It's because we have an accumulation of knowledge to lean upon that I'm willing to take you with me today if you'll promise to surrender yourself to me, to do just exactly what I tell you and no more and no less."

Eyes wide and intent, cheeks flushed and lips parted, Andrea was too excited to speak. She threw out both hands toward him in a gesture of abandon and with an imploring gravity that made her look as though she were giving herself into his keeping not for a day but for all time.

(To be Continued.)

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His Fellow-Faeling.
Henry had been severely scolded for not turning off the water after he had been playing in the bath tub. Some time later there was a cloudburst near his home, and as he was watching the flooded streets his mother heard him say to himself, "I bet some angel is catching it for forgetting to turn off the water."

Saw it on the Way.
Billie was soon to have his third birthday and could hardly wait for the party his mother promised him. Every day he inquired about it. His mother told him his little birthday hadn't come yet and that he must wait until it came. He ran to the window and said: "Oh, mamma, I see it now coming up the road."

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