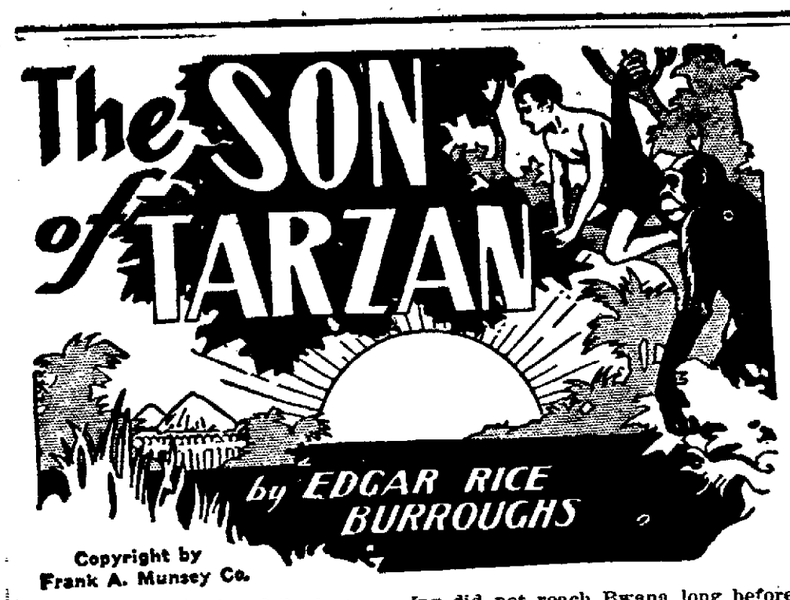

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And presently she found the features of Korak slowly dissolving and merging into those of another, and the figure of a tanned, half-naked Tarmangani became a khaki-clothed and sturdy Englishman astride a hunting pony.

* * * * * * *

The Hon. Morison Baynes was sitting with Meriem upon the veranda one evening after the others had retired. Earlier they had been playing tennis, a game in which the Hon. Morison shone to advantage, as, in truth, he did in most all manly sports. He was telling her stories of London and Paris, of balls and banquets, of the wonderful women and their wonderful gowns, of the pleasures and pastimes of the rich and powerful.

Meriem was entranced. His tales were like fairy stories to this little jungle maid. The Hon. Morison loomed large and wonderful and magnificent in her mind's eye. He fascinated

"Meriem!" He Whispered. "My Little Meriem!"

her, and when he drew closer to her after a short silence and took her hand she thrilled as one might thrill beneath the touch of a deity—a thrill of exaltation not unmixed with fear.

He bent his lips close to her ear.

"Meriem!" he whispered. "My little Meriem! May I hope to have the right to call you 'my little Meriem?'"

The girl turned wide eyes upward to his face, but it was in shadow. She trembled, but she did not draw away. The man put an arm about her and drew her closer.

"I love you!" he whispered.

She did not reply. She did not know what to say. She knew nothing of love. She had never given it a thought. But she did know that it was very nice to be loved, whatever it meant. It was nice to have people kind to one. She had known so little of kindness or affection.

"Tell me," he said, "that you return my love."

His lips came steadily closer to hers. They had almost touched when a vision of Korak sprang like a miracle before her eyes. She saw Korak's face close to hers, she felt his lips against her lips, and then for the first time she guessed what love meant.

She drew away gently.

"I am not sure," she said, "that I love you. Let us wait. There is plenty of time. I am too young to marry yet, and I am not sure that I should be happy in London or Paris. They rather frighten me."

She was not sure that she loved him! That came rather in the nature of a shock to the Hon. Morison's vanity. It seemed incredible that this little barbarian should have any doubt whatever as to the desirability of the Hon. Morison Baynes.

He glanced down at the girl's profile. It was bathed in the silvery light of the great tropic moon. She was most alluring.

Meriem rose. The vision of Korak was still before her.

"Good night," she said. "It is almost too beautiful to leave." She waved her hand in a comprehensive gesture which took in the starry heavens, the great moon, the broad, silvered plain and the dense shadows in the distance that marked the jungle. "Oh, how I love it!"

"You would love London more," he said earnestly. "And London would love you. You would be a famous beauty in any capital of Europe. You would have the world at your feet, Meriem."

"Good night," she repeated, and left him.

CHAPTER XII.
A Night Ride.

Meriem and Bwana were sitting on the veranda together the following day when a horseman appeared in the distance riding across the plain toward the bungalow.

Bwana shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed out toward the oncoming rider. He was puzzled. Strangers were few in central Africa. Even the blacks for a distance of many miles in every direction were well known to him. No white man came within a hundred miles that word of his coming did not reach Bwana long before the stranger. His every move was reported to the big Bwana—just what animals he killed and how many of each species, how he killed them, too, for Bwana would not permit the use of prussic acid or strychnine, and how he treated his "boys."

But here was evidently one who had slipped into the country unheralded. Bwana could not imagine who the approaching horseman might be.

After the manner of frontier hospitality the globe round, he met the newcomer at the gate, welcoming him even before he had dismounted. He saw a tall, well-knit man of thirty or more, blond of hair and smooth-shaven. There was a tantalizing familiarity about him that convinced Bwana that he should be able to call the visitor by name, yet he was unable to do so.

Bwana was wondering how a lone white man could have made his way through the savage, unhospitable miles that lay toward the south. As though guessing what must be passing through the other's mind, the stranger vouchsafed an explanation.

"I came down from the north to do a little trading and hunting," he said, "and got way off the beaten track. My head man, who was the only member of the safari who had ever before been in the country, took sick and could find no natives to guide us, and so I simply swung back straight north. We have been living on the fruits of our guns for over a month.

"Didn't have an idea there was a white man within a thousand miles of us when we camped last night by a water hole at the edge of the plain. This morning I started out to hunt and saw the smoke from your chimney, so I sent my gun bearer back to camp with the good news and rode straight over here myself. Of course I've heard of you—everybody who comes into central Africa does—and I'd be mighty glad of permission to rest up and hunt around here for a couple of weeks."

"Certainly," replied Bwana. "Make yourself at home."

They had reached the veranda now, and Bwana was introducing the stranger to Meriem and My Dear, who had just come from the bungalow's interior.

"This is Mr. Hanson," he said, using the name the man had given him. "He is a trader who has lost his way in the jungle to the south."

My Dear and Meriem bowed their acknowledgments of the introduction. The man seemed rather ill at ease in their presence. His host attributed this to the fact that his guest was unaccustomed to the society of cultured women, and so found a pretext to extricate him quickly from his seemingly unpleasant position and lead him away to his study and the brandy and soda, which were evidently much less embarrassing to Mr. Hanson.

When the two had left them Meriem turned toward My Dear.

"It is odd," she said, "but I could almost swear that I had known Mr. Hanson in the past. It is odd, but quite impossible," and she gave the matter no further thought.

For three weeks Hanson had remained. During this time he said that his boys were resting and gaining strength after their terrible ordeals in the untracked jungles to the south, but he had not been as idle as he appeared to have been. He divided his small following into two parts, intrusting the leadership of each to men whom he believed he could trust.

One party he moved very slowly northward along the trail that connects with the great caravan routes entering the Sahara from the south. The other he ordered straight westward with orders to halt and go into permanent camp just beyond the great river which marks the natural boundary of the country that the big Bwana rightfully considers almost his own.

To his host he explained that he was moving his safari slowly toward the north—he said nothing of the party moving westward. Then one day he announced that half his boys had deserted, for a hunting party from the bungalow had come across his northerly camp, and he feared that they might have noticed the reduced numbers of his following.

And thus matters stood when one hot night Meriem, unable to sleep, rose and wandered out into the garden. The Hon. Morison had been urging his suit once more that evening, and the girl's mind was in such a turmoil that she had been unable to sleep.

The wide heavens above her seemed to promise a greater freedom from doubt and questioning. Baynes had urged her to tell him that she loved him. A dozen times she thought that she might honestly give him the answer that he demanded.

Korak was fast becoming but a memory. That he was dead she had come to believe since otherwise he would have sought her out. She did not know that he had even better reason to believe her dead and that it was because of that belief he had made no effort to find her after his raid upon the village of Kovudoo.

Behind a great flowering shrub Hanson lay gazing at the stars and waiting. He had lain thus and there many nights before. For what was he waiting or for whom? He heard the girl approaching and half raised himself to his elbow. A dozen paces away, the reins looped over a fence post, stood his pony.

Meriem, walking slowly, approached the bush behind which the waiter lay. Hanson drew a large bandanna handkerchief from his pocket and rose stealthily to his knees. A pony neighed down at the corrals. Far out across the plain a lion roared. Hanson changed his position until he squatted upon both feet.

Again the pony neighed, this time closer. There was the sound of his body brushing against shrubbery. Hanson heard and wondered how the animal had got from the corral, for it was evident that he was already in the garden. The man turned his head in the direction of the beast.

What he saw sent him to the ground, huddled close beneath the shrubbery—a man was coming, leading two ponies.

Meriem heard now and stopped to look and listen. A moment later the Hon. Morison Baynes drew near, the two saddled mounts at his heels.

Meriem looked up at him in surprise. The Hon. Morison grinned sheepishly.

"I couldn't sleep," he explained, "and was going for a bit of a ride when I chanced to see you out here, and I thought you'd like to join me. Ripping good sport, you know, night riding. Come on."

Meriem laughed. The adventure appealed to her. "All right," she said.

Hanson swore beneath his breath. The two led their horses from the garden to the gate and through it. There they discovered Hanson's mount.

"Why, here's the trader's pony," remarked Baynes.

"He's probably down visiting with the foreman," said Meriem.

"Pretty late for him, isn't it?" remarked the Hon. Morison. "I'd hate to have to ride back through that jungle at night to his camp."

A moment later the two had mounted and were moving slowly across the moon-bathed plain.

Their horses were pressed side by side. Baynes was pressing Meriem's hand as he poured words of love into her ear, and Meriem was listening.

"Come to London with me," urged the Hon. Morison. "I can gather a safari, and we can be a whole day upon the way to the coast before they guess that we have gone."

"Why must we go that way?" asked the girl. "Bwana and My Dear would not object to our marriage."

"I cannot marry you just yet," explained the Hon. Morison. "I must inform my people, and there are other formalities to be attended to first. You do not understand. It will be all right. We will go to London. I cannot wait. If you love me you will come."

"You love me?" she asked. "You will marry me when we have reached London?"

"I swear it-" he cried.

"I will go with you," she whispered, "though I do not understand why delay is necessary." She leaned toward him, and he took her in his arms and bent to press his lips to hers.

* * * * * * *

At the bungalow Bwana had met the returning adventurers on the veranda. Returning from the foreman's quarters, Bwana had noticed that the corral gate was open, and further investigation revealed the fact that Meriem's pony was gone and also the one most often used by Baynes.

Explanations on the part of the Englishman met a rather chilly reception from his host. Meriem was silent. She saw that Bwana was angry with her. It was the first time, and she was heartbroken.

"Go to your room, Meriem," he said. "And, Baynes, if you will step into my study I'd like to have a word with you in a moment."

Bwana saw Hanson in the garden and called him to the veranda.

Hanson paused. Both men were silent for a time. Presently the trader coughed in an embarrassed manner, as

"I Will Go With You," She Whispered.

though there was something on his mind he felt in duty bound to say, but hated to.

"What is it, Hanson?" asked Bwana. "You were about to say something, weren't you?"

"Well, you see, it's like this," ventured Hanson. "Bein' around here evenings a good deal I've seen them two together a lot, and, beggin' your pardon, sir, but I don't think Mr. Baynes means the girl any good. I've overheard enough to make me think he's tryin' to get her to run off with him."

Hanson, to fit his own ends, hit nearer the truth than he knew. He was afraid that Baynes would interfere with his own plans, and he had hit upon a scheme both to utilize the young Engishman and get rid of him at the same time.

"And I thought," continued the trader, "that, inasmuch as I'm about due to move, you might like to suggest to Mr Baynes that he go with me. I'd be willin' to take him north to the caravan trails as a favor to you, sir."

Bwana stood in deep thought for a moment. Presently he looked up.

"Of course, Hanson, Mr. Baynes is my guest," he said, a grim twinkle in his eye. "Really I cannot accuse him of planning to run away with Meriem on the evidence that we have, and as he is my guest I should hate to be so discourteous as to ask him to leave. But if I recall his words correctly it seems to me that he has spoken of returning home, and I am sure that nothing would delight him more than going north with you. You say you start tomorrow? I think Mr. Baynes will accompany you.

"Drop over in the morning, if you please, and now good night, and thank you for keeping a watchful eye on Meriem."

Hanson hid a grin as he turned and sought his saddle. Bwana stepped from the veranda to his study, where he found the Hon. Morison pacing back and forth, evidently very ill at ease.

"Baynes," said Bwana, coming directly to the point, "Hanson is leaving for the north tomorrow. He has taken a great fancy to you and just asked me to say to you that he'd be glad to have you accompany him. Good night, Baynes!"

At Bwana's suggestion Meriem kept in her room the following morning until after the Hon. Morison Baynes had departed. Hanson had come for him early—in fact, he had remained all night with the foreman, Jervis, that he might get an early start.

The farewell exchanges between the Hon. Morison and his host were of the most formal type, and when at last the guest rode away Bwana breathed a sigh of relief. It had been an unpleasant duty, and he was glad that it was over, but he did not regret his action.

He did not mention the subject again to Meriem, and in this he made a mistake, for the young girl, while realizing the debt of gratitude she owed Bwana and My Dear, was both proud and sensitive, so that Bwana's action in sending Baynes away and giving her no opportunity to explain or defend him hurt and mortified her. Also it did much toward making a martyr of Baynes in her eyes and arousing in her breast a keen feeling of loyalty toward him.

(Continued next week.)

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Dairymen's Meeting.

Indiana County Dairy Association will hold their monthly meeting in the Y. M. C. A. hall Saturday, June 5 at 2 p. m. All members are requested to be present.

J. M. JOHNSTON, Pres.
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AUDITOR'S NOTICE.

The undersigned, an auditor appointed by the Orphans' Court of Indiana county, to hear and report upon the exceptions to the First and Final Account and to settle, adjust and report distribution of funds in the hands of Ira M. Roser, executor of estate of Fry Roser, late of Pine Township, deceased, hereby gives notice that he will attend to the duties of his appointment, at his office, No. 629 Philadelphia street, in the borough of Indiana, Pa., on Tuesday, July 6, 1920, at 10:00 o'clock p. m., when and where all persons interested may attend if they see proper.

JOHN S. TAYLOR,
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NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO DISSOLVE CORPORATION.

Notice is hereby given that application will be made to the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Indiana on Monday, June 7, 1920, for dissolution of the INDIANA NORMAL SCHOOL OF PENNSYLVANIA, a corporation organized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

THOMAS SUTTON,
Solicitor.

5-20-3t

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