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McLennan & Co. The Canadian Post. LINDSAY, FRIDAY, OCT. 14, 1887.

JESS. By H. RIDER HAGGARD. Author of 'King Solomon's Mines' etc.

CHAPTER XXVII. About 11 o'clock in the forenoon Bessie was employed upon her household duties as usual...

"Well, never mind. These things take a little time, especially with our soldiers, who move so slowly. I dare say that there was some delay waiting for guns or ammunition or something. I expect that we shall have something by ten."

"De Boeren, haa, de Boeren!" (The Boers are coming with a wagon, twenty of them or more, with Frank Muller at their head...

"Oh, uncle!" she said, "what shall we do?" The old man made no answer at the moment, but going to a rack upon the wall...

"We will meet them so," he said. "They shall see that we are not afraid of them. Don't be frightened, dear, they will not dare harm us; they will be afraid of the consequences of harrying English people."

"Don't answer me," thundered Muller; "get down and do as I bid you!" "Ah, what a devil of a man!" murmured the unfortunate Hans as he hurried to obey.

"I do not know what you mean," said the old man. "I am a subject of Queen Victoria and an Englishman. Now then, can I rebel against any republic? I am an Englishman, I say."

"Here," interrupted Muller, coldly, "Englishmen have no rights, except such as we choose to allow them."

"I am going, uncle, or must I denounce you as a traitor?" asked Muller, in malice, for he knew the old fellow's weakness and cowardice, and was playing on them.

"You are going?" said his terrible master once more. "Oh, yes, certainly yes. Dear Uncle Silas, pray put down that gun, it is so dangerous. Don't stand there looking like a wild ox, but come up to the yoke. You are old, Uncle Hans, and I don't want to have to hurt you."

"Go on, Hans; chuck a rem over his head; get him by the tail; knock him down with a yoke; turn the old bull on his back; shout the crowd of scoffers from the window, taking very good care, however, to clear off to the right and left in order to leave room for the expected blows."

"For reasons of his own he was anxious that the latter should shoot one of them, and he chose Hans Coetzee, whom he disliked and despised, for the sacrifice."

"Presently one of the men struck at him and missed him, but before he could retreat Silas burst down the stairs of his rifle on his head and down he went like an ox before a yoke. Then they closed on him, but for a while he kept them off, knocking down another man in his efforts. As he did so the witch doctor, Hendrik, who had been watching for an opportunity, brought down a dash of his old fowling piece upon Silas' head and felled him. Fortunately, the blow was not a very heavy one or it would have caved his skull in. As it was it only cut his head open and knocked him down."

Then Frank Muller interposed, fearing lest he should be hurt. Flung into the fray with a curse, he exercised his great strength, and pushed on to the veranda, then off it to the drive, where he fell over the body of the murdered Kaffir boy, and finally heaved up to the open space by the flagstaff, on which the Union Jack, that he had planted there some two months before, still waved bravely in the breeze. Here he crouched down upon the grass, his back against the flagstaff, and he faintly for some water. Bessie, who was weeping bitterly, and whose heart felt as though it were bursting with anguish and indignation, pushed her way through the men, and, running to the house, got some in a glass and brought it to him. One of the men tried to knock it out of her hand, but she avoided him and gave it to her uncle, who drank it eagerly.

"I call upon you, Silas Croft, to surrender to take your trial as a rebel against the republic," he said, "with a bow drawn."

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Hendrik paused, stepped a few paces back, resting his shoulders against the wall, immediately the other side of which was Jantje, and proceeded to chuckle aloud and rub his hands as he admired the results of his handiwork. The white man, the Hottentot on the farther side, the provocation was too great, and so was the opportunity. In his hand was the thick stick on which he was fond of cutting notches. Raising it in both hands he brought the heavy knob down with all his strength upon the one-eyed villain's unprotected chest. It was a skull, but the knob prevailed against it and fractured it, and down went the estimable witch doctor as though he were dead.

Next, taking a leaf out of his fallen enemy's book, Jantje slipped over the wall, and, seizing the senseless man, dragged him by one arm into the kitchen and rolled him under the table to keep company with the dead dog. Then, filled with a fearful joy, he slipped out, shutting and locking the door behind him, and crept round to a point of vantage in a little plantation seventy or eighty yards to the right of the house, whence he could watch the confidante that he knew must come, for the fire had taken instant and irremediable hold, and also see what the Boers were doing.

Ten minutes or so afterward that amiable character Hendrik partially regained his senses, to find himself surrounded by a sea of fire, in which he perished miserably, not having power to move, and his feeble cries being totally swallowed up and lost in the fierce roaring of the flames, even had there been anybody there to hear them. And that was the very appropriate end of Hendrik and the man of Hendrik.

Down by the flagstaff the old man lay in his bed, with Bessie tending him and a posse of Boers standing round, smoking and laughing or lounging about with an air of lordly superiority well worthy of victors in possession.

"Will none of you help me to take him to the house?" she cried. "Surely you have all treated an old man enough."

"Nobly stirred, not even Frank Muller, who was gazing at her tear-stained face with a three-mile playing round the corners of his clean-cut mouth, which his beard was trimmed to leave clear, he said: 'I will pass. I have often seen such fits. They come from too much excitement, or too much drink.'"

"What is it, what is it?" he said. "Ah! I remember. What is all this small of fire? Surely they have not set the house on fire? No, surely, it is only the dog's bark. The old man groaned: 'It took me ten years to build this, but by God, almost stone by stone, and now they have destroyed it. Well, why not? God's will be done! Give me your arms, I want to go to the water. I feel faint and sick.'"

"She did as he bade her, sobbing bitterly. Within fifteen yards, on the edge of the plantation, was a little spring or runnel of water, and of this he drank copiously and bathed his wretched head and face. "Don't fret; I feel quite myself again. I fear I made a fool of myself. I haven't learned to bear misfortune and disaster as I should yet, and, like Job, I felt as though God had forsaken me. But, as I said, his will be done. What is the next word? I remember. Ah! what shall I say now, for here comes our friend Frank Muller."

"I am glad to see that you have recovered, uncle," said Muller, politely, "and I am sorry to have to tell you that the house is beyond help. Believe me, if I know who fired it I would shoot him. It was not my wish or intention that the property should be destroyed. The old man merely bowed his head and made no answer. His dazed spirit seemed to be crushed out of him. "What is it your pleasure that we should do, sir?" said Bessie at last. "Perhaps, now that we are ruined, you will allow us to stay at Natal, which, I suppose, is still an English country?"

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