

August 31, 1913.

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DURHAM BRANCH: S. HUGHES, Manager.

ADVENTURE

Continued from page 5

"What name you walk about this place?" he demanded.

At the same time he stole a glance seaward to where the Fitzberty Gibbet reflected herself in the glassy calm of the sea. Not a soul was visible under her awnings, and he saw the white boat was missing from alongside. The Tahitians had evidently gone shooting fish up the Balesuna. He was all alone in his high place above this trouble, while his world slumbered peacefully under the breathless tropic noon.

Nobody replied, and he repeated his demand, more of mastery in his voice this time and a hint of growing anger.

The blacks moved uneasily, like a herd of cattle, at the sound of his voice. But not one spoke. Directly beneath him he caught sight of the muzzle of a rifle, barely projecting between two black bodies, that was slowly elevating toward him. It was held at the hip by a man in the second row.

"What name you?" Sheldon suddenly shouted, pointing directly at the man who held the gun.

Sheldon still held the whip hand, and he intended to keep it.

"Clear out, all you fella boys!" he ordered. "Clear out and walk along salt water. Savvee?"

"Me talk," spoke up a fat and filthy savage, whose hairy chest was caked with the unwashed dirt of years.

"Oh, is that you, Telepasse?" the white man queried genially. "You tell 'm boys clear out, and you stop and talk along me."

"Him good fella boy," was the reply. "Him stop along."

"Well, what do you want?" Sheldon asked, striving to hide under assumed carelessness the weakness of concession.

"That fella boy belong along me." The old chief pointed out Gogoomy, whom Sheldon recognized.

"White Mary belong you too much no good," Telepasse went on. "Bang 'm head belong Gogoomy. Gogoomy, all the same chief. Bime by me finish, Gogoomy big fella chief. White Mary bang 'm head. No good. You pay me plenty tobacco, plenty powder, plenty calico."

"You old scoundrel," was Sheldon's comment. An hour before he had been chuckling over Joan's recital of the episode, and here, an hour later, was Telepasse himself come to collect damages.

"Gogoomy," Sheldon ordered, "what name you walk about here? You get along quarters plenty quick."

"Me stop," was the defiant answer. "White Mary belong you bang 'm head," old Telepasse began again. "My word, plenty big fella trouble you no pay."

"You talk along boys," Sheldon said, with increasing irritation. "You tell 'm get to b—along beach. Then I talk with you."

Sheldon felt a slight vibration of the veranda and knew that Joan had come out and was standing by his side. But he did not dare glance at her. There were too many rifles down below there, and rifles had a way of going off from the hip.

Again the veranda vibrated with her moving weight, and he knew that Joan had gone into the house. A minute later she was back beside him. He had never seen her smoke, and it struck him as peculiar that she should be smoking now. Then he guessed the reason. With a quick glance he noted the hand at her side and in it the familiar paper wrapped dynamite. He noted also the end of fuse, split properly, into which had been inserted the head of a wax match.

"Telepasse, you old reprobate, tell 'm boys clear out along beach. My word, I no gammon along you."

"Me want 'm pay white Mary bang 'm head belong Gogoomy."

"I'll come down there and bang 'm head belong you," Sheldon replied, leaning toward the railing as if about to leap over.

An angry murmur arose, and the blacks surged restlessly. The muzzles of many guns were rising from

"Me want 'm tobacco plenty fella tobacco; me want 'm calico, me want 'm porpoise teeth; me want 'm one fella bell."

She looked at him humorously, expecting to see a smile or at least a grin, on his face. The rest of the boys had crowded up at his back in a solid wall. Some one of them giggled, but the remainder regarded her in morose and intent silence.

"Well?" she asked. "What for you want plenty fella things?"

"Me take 'm medicine," quoth Aroa. "You pay 'm."

"You go along quarters," she said, starting to turn on her heel to enter the gate.

"You pay me," said the boy. "Aroa, you all the same one big fool. I no pay you. Now you go."

But the black was unmoved. She felt that he was regarding her almost insolently as he repeated:

"I take 'm medicine. You pay me. You pay me now."

Then it was that she lost her temper and cuffed his ears so soundly as to drive him back among his fellows. But they did not break up. Another boy stepped forward.

"Me Gogoomy," he said. "Bawo brother belong me."

Bawo, she remembered, was the sick boy who had died.

"Go on," she commanded. "Bawo take 'm medicine. Bawo finish. Bawo my brother. You pay me. Father belong me one big fella chief along Port Adams. You pay me."

Joan laughed.

"Gogoomy, you just the same as Aroa, one big fool. My word, who pay me for medicine?"

She dismissed the matter by passing through the gate and closing it. But Gogoomy pressed up against it and said impudently:

"Father belong me one big fella chief. You no bang 'm head belong me. My word, you fright too much."

"Me fright?" she demanded, while anger tingled all through her.

"Too much fright bang 'm head belong me," Gogoomy said proudly.

And then she reached for him across the gate and got him. It was a sweeping, broad handed slap, so heavy that he staggered sideways and nearly fell. He sprang for the gate as if to force it open, while the crowd surged forward against the fence. Joan thought rapidly. Her revolver was hanging on the wall of her grass house. Yet one cry would bring her sailors, and she knew she was safe. So she did not cry for help. Instead, she whistled for Satan, at the same time calling him by name. She knew he was shut up in the living room, but the blacks did not wait to see. They fled with wild yells through the darkness, followed reluctantly by Gogoomy, while she entered the bungalow, laughing at first, but finally vexed to the verge of tears by what had taken place. She had sat up a whole night with the boy who had died, and yet his brother demanded to be paid for his life.

"Ugh! The ungrateful beast!" she muttered, while she debated whether or not she would confess the incident to Sheldon.

"And so it was all settled easily enough," Sheldon was saying. He was on the veranda, drinking coffee. The wholeboat was being carried into its shed. "Boucher was a bit timid at first to carry off the situation—with a strong hand, but he did very well once we got started. We made a play at holding a court, and Telepasse, the old scoundrel, accepted the findings. He's a Port Adams chief, a filthy beggar. We fined him ten times the value of the pigs and made him move on with his mob. Oh, they're a sweet lot, I must say, at least sixty of them, in five big canoes, and out for trouble. They've got a dozen Sniders that ought to be confiscated."

"Why didn't you?" Joan asked.

"And have a row on my hands with the commissioner? He's terribly touchy about his black wards, as he calls them. Well, we started them along their way, though they went in on the beach to kat-kat several miles back. They ought to pass here some time today."

Two hours later the canoes arrived. No one saw them come. The house boys were busy in the kitchen at their own breakfast. The plantation hands were similarly occupied in their quarters. Satan lay sound asleep on his back under the billiard table, in his sleep brushing at the flies that pestered him. Joan was rummaging in the storeroom, and Sheldon was taking his siesta in a hammock on the veranda. He awoke gently. In some occult, subtle way a warning that all was not well had penetrated his sleep and roused him. Without moving he glanced down and saw the ground beneath covered with armed savages. They were the same ones he had parted with that morning, though he noted an accession in numbers. There were men he had not seen before.

He slipped from the hammock and with deliberate slowness sauntered to the railing, where he yawned sleepily and looked down on them. It came to him curiously that it was the destiny ever to stand on this high place looking down on unending hordes of black trouble that required control, bullying and cajolery. But while he glanced carelessly over them he was keenly taking stock. The new men were all armed with modern rifles. Ah, he had thought so. There were fifteen of them, undoubtedly the Lunga runaways. In addition a dozen old Sniders were in the hands of the original crowd. These were the very same men who had killed his trader, Oscar, at Uzi.

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"WHAT NAME YOU WALK ABOUT THIS PLACE?"

the hips. Joan was pressing the lighted end of the cigarette to the fuse. A Snider went off with the roar of a bomb gun, and Sheldon heard a pane of window glass crash behind him. At the same moment Joan lunged forward, the fuse hissing and spluttering, into the thick of the blacks. They scattered back in too great haste to do any more shooting, and Sheldon, aroused by the one shot,

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