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BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

120 muttered something in answer to this astonishing statement; I don't know what; and she laughed a little at his confusion, and went on:

"And thou, too, oh, Holly, on thee also will I confer this boon, and then of a truth shalt thou be an evergreen-tree; and this will I do-well, because thou hast pleased me, Holly, for thou art not altogether a fool, like most of the sons of men, and because, though thou hast a school of philosophy as full of nonsense as those of the old days, yet hast thou not forgotten how

to turn a pretty phrase about a lady's eyes." "Hulloa, old fellow!" whispered Leo. with a turn of his old cheerfulness, "have you been paying compliments? I should never have thought it of you."

"I thank thee, oh, Ayesha" I replied, with as much dignity as I could command, "hut if there be such a place as thou dost describe, and if in this strange place there can be found a flery virtue that can hold off Death when he comes to pluck us by the hand, yet would I none of it. For me, oh, Ayesha, the world has not proved so soft a nest that I would lie in it forever. A stony-hearted mother is our earth, and stones are the bread she gives her children for their daily food. Stones to eat and bitter water for their thirst, and stripes for tender nature. Who could endure this for many lives? Who would so laden up his back with memories of lost hours and loves, and of his neighbor's sorrrows that he cannot lesson, and wisdom that brings not consolation? Hard is it to die, because our delicate flesh doth shrink back from the worm it will not feel, and from that unknown which the winding-sheet doth curtain from our view. But harder still, to my fancy, would it be to live on, green in the leaf and fair, but dead and rotten at the core, and feel that other secret worm of recollection gnawing ever at the heart."

"Bethink thee, Holly," she said; "yet doth long life and strength and beauty beyond measure mean power and all things that are dear to man.'

"And that, oh, queen," I answered, "are those thing that are dear to man? Are they not bubbles? Is not ambition but an endless ladder by which no height is ever climbed till the last unreachable rung is mounted? For height leads on to height, and there is no resting-place upon them, and rung doth grow upon rung, and there is no limit to the number. Doth not wealth satiate and become nauseous, and no longer serve to satisfy our pleasure, or to buy an hour's ease of mind? And is there any end to wisdom that we may hope to reach it? Rather the more we learn shall we not thereby be able only to better compass out our ignorance? Did we live ten thousand years, could we hope to solve the secrets of the suns, and of the space beyond the suns, and of the hand that hung them in the heavens? Would not our wisdom be but as a gnawing hunger calling our consciousness day by day to a knowledge of the empty craving of our souls? Would it not be but as a light in a great cavern, that though bright it burn, and brighter yet, doth but the more serve to show the depths of the gloom around it? And what good thing is there beyond that we may gain by length of days?"

"Nay, my Holly, there is love-love which makes all things beautiful, and doth breathe divinity into the very dust we tread. With love shall life roll gloriously on from year to year, like the voice of some great music that hath power to hold the hearer's heart poised on eagle's wings above the sordid shame and folly of the earth.

"And now," went on She, changing her tone and the subject together, "tell me, my Kallikrates, for as yet I know it not, how came ye to seek me here? Yesternight thou didst say that Kallikrates-him whom thou sawest-was thine ancestor. How was it? Tell me-thou dost not speak overmuch."

Thus adjured, Leo told her the wonderful story of the casket and of the potsherd that, written on by his ancestress, the Egyptian Amenartas, had been the means of guiding us to her. Ayesha listened intently, and, when he had finished, spoke

"Did I not tell thee one day, when we did talk of good and evil, oh, Holly-it was when my beloved lay so ill-that out of good came evil, and out of evil good-that they who sowed knew not what the crop should be, nor he who struck, where the blow should fall? See, now: this Egyptian Amenartas, this child of the Nile who hated me, and whom even now I hate, for in a way she did prevail against me-see, now, she herself hath been the very means to bring her lover to mine arms. For her sake I slew him, and now, behold, through her he hath come back to me! She would have done me evil, and sowed her seeds that I might reap tares, and behold she hath given me more than all the world can give, and there is a strange square for thee to fit into thy circle of good and evil. oh, Holly.

"And so," she went on after a pause-"and so she bade her son destroy me if he might, because I slew his father. And thou, my Kallikrates, art the father, as in a sense thou art likewise the son; and wouldst thou avenge thy wrong, and the wrong of that far-off mother of thine, upon me, oh, Kallikrates! See," and she slid to her knees and drew the white corsage still further down her ivory bosom-"see, here beats my heart, and there by thy side is a knife, heavy, and long, and sharp, the very knife to slay an erring woman. Take it now, and be avenged. Strike, and strike home, so shalt thou be satisfied, Kallikrates, and go through life a happy man, because thou hast paid back the wrong, and obeyed the mandate of the past," He looked at her, and then stretched out

als hand and lifted her to her feet. "Rise, Ayesha," he said, sadly: "well thou knowest that I cannot strike thee, no, not even for the sake of her whom thou slewest but last night. I am in thy power and a very slave to thee. How can I kill hee!-sooner should I slay myself."

"Almost dost thou begin to love me, Kallikrates," she answered, smiling. "And now tell me of thy country-'tis a great people, is it not, with an empire like that of Rome? Surely thou wouldst return thither, and it is well, for I mean not that thou shouldst dwell in these caves of Kor. Nay, when once thou art even as I am, we will go hence-fear not I shall find a means—and then shall we cross to this England of thine, and live as it becometh us to live. Two thousand years have I waited for the day when I should see the last of these hateful caves and this gloomy-visaged folk, and now it is at hand, and my heart bounds up to meet it like a child's toward its holiday. For thou shalt rule this England."

"But we have got a queen already," broke

in Lea, hastily. "It is naught, it is naught," said Ayesha; 'she can be overthrown."

At this we both broke out into an exclamaclou of horror, and explained that we should as soon think of overthrowing our-

"But here is a strange thing," said Ayesha, in astonishment; "a'queen whom her people love! Surely the world must have changed since I dwelt in Kor."

Again we explained that it was the character of monarchs that had changed, and that the one under whom we lived was venerated and beloved by all right-thinking people in her vast realms. Also we told her that real power in our country rested in the hands of the people, and that we were in fact ruled by the votes of the lower and least educated classes of the community.

"Ah," she said, "a democracy; then surely there is a tyrant, for I have long since seen that democracies, having no clear will of their own, in the end set up a tyrant, and worship him."

"Yes," I said, "we have our tyrants," "Well," she answered resignedly, "we can at any rate destroy these tyrants, and Kallierates shall rule the land."

I instantly infermed Ayesha that in England blasting was not an amusement that could be indulged in with impunity, that any such attempt would meet with the consideration of the law, and probably end upon a scaffold.

"The law!" she laughed with scorn-"the law! Canst thou not understand, oh, Holly, that I am above the law, and so shall my Kallikrates be also? All human law will be to us as the north wind to a mountain. Does the wind bend the mountain, or the mountain the wind? And now leave me, I pray thee, and thou too, my own Kallikrates, for I would get me ready against our journey; and so must ye both, and your servant also. But bring no great quantity of things with thee, for I trust that we shall be but three days gone. Then shall we return hither, and I will make a plan whereby we can bid farewell forever to these sepulchres of Kor. Yes, surely thou mayst kiss my hand."

So we went, I for one, meditating deeply on the awful nature of the problem that now opened out before us. The terrible She had evidently in ide up her mind to go to England, and it made me absolutely shudler to think want would be the result of her arrival there. What her powers were I knew, and I could not doubt but that she would expreise them to the full. It might be possible to control her for a while, but her proud, ambitious spirit would be certain to break loose and avenge itself for the long centuries of its solitude. She would, if necessary, and if the power of her beauty did not unaided prove equal to the occasion, blast her away to any end she set before her, and as she could not die, and for aught I knew could not even be kelled, what was there to stop for? In the end she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions, and probably over the whole earth, and though I was sure that she would spee ifly make ours the most glorious and prosperous empire that the world has ever seen, it would be at the cost of a terrible sarritios of life.

To be continued.

WINTER IN THE NORTHWEST.

Warren Taylor, an old soldier, was caught in a blizzard in the Musselshell and frightfully frozen in the hands and feet. He died from blood poisoning two days later.

Dan Lovey was lost in the Musselshell range and wandered for six days with nothing to eat in the worst blizzard ever seen. He stepped three feet to blanket a horse, got lost and was picked up by some cowboys a week later.

Tony Wise and a Swede named Martin were at work on mining property on the side of Sheep mountain early in January. A huge avalanche swept down the mountain side and burled the men into eternity without a moment's warning, burying them thousands of feet below.

From Jan. 6 to 11 of this year the degree of cold was something frightful. Mercury thermometers were often congealed and spirit thermometers were kept busy jumping from 40 to 60 below zero. Half a dozen times was the 60 notch touched, and once 62% below zero was scored on the Saskatchewan plains.

Curious phenomena sometimes attend a snowfall in Montana. Near Matt Coleman's ranch, Jan. 28, the flakes were tremendous in size. Some were larger than milk pans, Some flakes measured 15 inches square and 8 inches thick. For miles the ground was covered with such bunches, and they made a remarkable spectacle while falling. A mail carrier

was caught in the same storm and verifies it. The authorities in weather in Montana are the Indians. Once, about thirty years ago, there was a terrible winter. The snow lay six feet deep in the Yellowstone valley, and the Indians congregated about the old trading post snow bound for two moons. This year the snowfall was unprecedented. In some localities it was anywhere from ten to fifty feet deep. On the level, throughout the National park and elsewhere, it was from eight to twelve feet deep.

A number of deaths from cold occurred in Dakota last winter. Charles Schroeder, living near Valley City, started from his house for one 600 feet distant. A blizzard was blowing and the thermometer registered 35 degs. below. Not reaching home, his family and neighbors turned out with lanterns, followed his tracks in the snow all night and found where he had lain down in a straw stack and then gone on. The next day the body was found twelve miles away on the prairie, lying its face, where he had fallen from exhaustion. The body was frozen into a chunk of ice.

Stage drivers had the roughest emperiences of their lives last winter. They were the beroes of Montana. The frightful experience of Fox and Montgomery on the Benton stage, bound for Helena, will go down in history as the worst of the kind. They were without food and drink for forty hours. A stage driver started Feb. 4 from Fort Buford for Glendive. When seventeen miles out the stage was caught in a blizzard and one of the horses frozen to death. The driver barely escaped with his life.

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