

THEY THAT SIT IN DARKNESS

BY JOHN MACKIE

Next morning by daylight we were all up and stirring. Savile boiled the billy, the black boys rounded up the horses, while Jack and I went down to the creek and had a swim. It was Savile's intention to push through the gap which we saw to the south and explore the country which lay beyond and to the west. He thought it was not unlikely that the squatter, on his way



He checked his horse and pointed to a distant rocky height.

back from the table land, might pass in that direction. In fact, he said, it was probable that we might meet him within the next three days. We had saddled up the horses and gone on again. Just as we were leaving camp Snowball checked his horse, and pointing to a distant rocky height some three or four miles off, he cried: "My word, black fellow sit down along a mountain. That fellow make 'n fire, tell him 'nother fellow look out white fellow!"

And there, surely enough, rose a tall, thin, white column of smoke, which broke into a series of rings as it ascended into that pale blue sky. It was one of those signal fires by which black fellows communicate to one another at a distance the fact that something unusual is approaching.

But we were all too carelessly happy to trouble about such things. Thanks to the light cool breeze, which argued that we were getting into somewhat higher latitudes, we felt an exhilaration and buoyancy of spirits that made us think but little of any contingency as our party being attacked by blacks.

We came to a place where the river ran through a rather awkward gorge, but as the cliffs on either side were high and overhanging we had little to fear from any hostile savages throwing their spears down upon us. Suddenly, however, it took a turn. Then, as if we had passed through a gateway, it stopped abruptly, and we passed, as it were, into another world. We were in a great valley. We stood in the arena of a vast natural amphitheater. At first it seemed to me that some great landlocked arm of the sea could have been, by any possibility, dried up and its bed grassed and timbered. It would have presented a somewhat similar appearance, only it would have wanted the many curious basaltic and sandstone figures which were scattered around everywhere, crowning its rugged heights. We had passed, as it were, through Sydney heads and indeed stood in the deep bed of what once was a great natural harbor, in which the blue waves of old ocean had danced and shimmered in the sunlight, far above our heads, in the misty bygone ages.

CHAPTER XIV.

A WOMAN'S PLUCK.

After traveling some few miles we began to explore the numerous caverns and gullies of this ancient seaboard, where, at the foot of the cliff on the strip of yellow sand, we gathered shells the like of which none of us had ever seen before. On some of the terraces were long rows of extinct fires, indicating that large mobs of savages had frequently camped there. When I expressed surprise that the blacks should find the example of the cliff dwellers of the North American continent, it was the squatter's daughter who showed it was a matter of necessity, not of choice, and she pointed to the forked limbs of a tree several feet from the ground, where rested a bunch of drift wood.

"In the wet season," she explained, "this valley must all be flooded. The gorge, being so narrow, can't carry off all the water that pours into it, and so the blacks have to take to the cliffs for safety. Pleasant, isn't it?"

I saw many signs of the truth of what she said. She read the face of nature as if it were an open book. For



Affection

Exhales from children as fragrance from flowers. The little lips are always puckered to give or take a kiss. In homes where there are children, love reaches its fairest and sweetest proportions. To childrenless homes the kiss of wife and husband grows formal, and presently is neglected; the springs of love in the heart become choked with weeds of care and exercise. Childlessness is a great sorrow to many women. It is like a curse from Nature, who bids all creatures to be fruitful. It is not a curse but a misfortune. Often the conditions which cause childlessness are removable. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription has brought joy to many a woman by giving her the happiness of motherhood. It gives to the womanly organs vigor and vitality, removes local obstructions, and practically does away with the pains and pangs of maternity.

There is no alcohol or narcotic in "Favorite Prescription." I have never written you how grateful I am to your help in securing good health and one of the sweetest, dearest, thirteen young girls that ever came into a home, writes Mrs. M. Vastine, of 609 South Fifth St., St. Paul, Minn. "I took six bottles of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, and four vials of 'Pleasant Pellets.' Before I had taken four bottles of the 'Favorite Prescription' I was a new woman. I cannot make pen describe my heart-felt gratitude." To keep the bowels regular use Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets.

instance, in one cave there were some rude drawings in colored clays or chalks upon the smooth walls, and I heard her remark to some one how they represented the elementary efforts of the savage to express himself by means of symbols. Primitive man writing before he had attained to the dignity of pithoi and lingers. It was a strange instinct that made men anxious to perpetuate themselves, even in this fashion, and to dread being utterly forgotten. On that rough surface there was a most important event recorded in the history of these savages—the coming of the whites.

And then to our surprise she interpreted the hieroglyphics, the black boys nodding their heads with approval as if indorsing what she said. I looked wonderingly at the girl. She had interpreted the rude sketches of these savages as easily as if she had been reading out of a book. Though at first sight the figures to us were disjointed and entirely without meaning, under her they assumed a natural order and transparency. With a ludicrous representation of the manner of a showman, she pointed to figures after figures with her riding whip, at the same time garishing her remarks with a running commentary regarding the artistic qualities of the pictures, which indeed violated every canon of art.

At length we came to where there were some fresh tracks of blacks. At first we paid little attention to the fact, but soon they became so numerous that Gordon became anxious. Even the black boys showed surprise.

"My word," declared Snowball, "big fellow mob black fellow bin yan this way yesterday!"

Neither of the black boys seemed to like the aspect of affairs. Notwithstanding, we sought out a large cool cavern, into which we ascended from one of the terraces, some 15 feet from the ground, and began to prepare dinner. We left the pack saddles with what provisions we did not require just then at the foot of the cliff. Our horses we turned loose without even hobbling, as the grass there was good, and we knew they would not stray far. A spring bubbled out from the face of the cliff in a narrow gully to our right, which was connected with the river by a narrow passage.

After dinner I converted my saddle into a pillow and lolled lazily back with my pipe between my lips. I must have been fast relapsing into that condition when sleep overtook me, for I was but vaguely conscious of Savile talking to Samson, as that intelligent quagga stood upon its hind legs and gravely regarded its master. I could hear the voice of Norah Mackenzie as she talked to Gordon, telling him something about the horses being uneasy. I say there was only a vague consciousness of this in my brain at the time, for I must have been half asleep. These things passed before me much as a dream might have done and without any awakening of my reasoning faculties or volition in regard to action on my part. Then suddenly there came a hollow drumming sound, as of horses galloping, and it seemed to me that I could distinguish Gordon among the boulders and trees some hundred yards away peering all about.

And then a coo-ee was shrilled out, making me jump to my feet and bringing me to my senses in a second. It was Norah Mackenzie, who had called as she stood by my side. She was evidently not a little excited and beckoned to Gordon to come back. In a second all the camp was astir. The girl watched apprehensively the figure of Gordon, who came slowly back to camp, lingering and looking around as if he wondered why he was being so energetically recalled.

"Look!" cried the quick-eyed Australian girl. "Don't you see? There they are—blacks—dozens of them! If Gordon doesn't look sharp, some of them may sneak on him and have him yet! Oh, why doesn't he hurry up?" I looked, but for the life of me could see nothing to alarm any one. Only Snowball and Yarry uttered exclamations of surprise and consternation. "My word!" they chorused. "Big mob black follow!"

And now, as if it were the stage of a puppet show and a string had been pulled, a semicircle of dusky figures sprang from the grass, from behind trees and from behind rocks. How such a large number of human beings could have sneaked upon us without being seen, and how they managed to conceal themselves, only those who have had some experience of savage life can understand. In another second a shower of spears was sent after the astonished Gordon, making him face about. Picking up my Winchester—which, luckily, I never kept far from me—and without a thought, I sprang from the ledge. A thick golden wattle bush broke my rush leap; otherwise it might have gone badly with me. In another minute I was alongside Gordon. The blacks made an ugly rush upon us, but I stopped short the onward career of two of them, and Gordon stopped another. We had a few minutes' respite, in which we backed slowly toward the cave.

I never saw a man take anything so coolly as that Highlander. "Dash them!" he cried, relapsing into his native Doric. "Are we to be beaten back by a parcel of blackmoors? Come on, Parker, smother the lions! The de'il tak e'en o'ganies!"

And, smiting his actions to his words, he did charge. Of course I followed him, but we reckoned without our hosts, for the savages stood firm, sending such a shower of spears and boom-erangs at us that Gordon got a spear in his left arm and I received a blow on the cheek from a spear booming that drew blood and made me feel sick and dizzy. In another minute Savile, Jack and Daly were alongside. Surely now that there were five of us we could turn the blacks. But, no; they were not the blacks of Victoria, New South Wales or even of southern Queensland. They were as different from the puny specimen that is generally accepted as typical of the Australian black fellow as a Bengal tiger is from a cat. They were the aboriginal highlanders of the Carpentarian gulf, resembling the stalwart inhabitants of Arnhem's Land—savages pure and simple, unsoftened by civilization, perhaps with a tinge of Malay or Papuan blood in their veins, for one could see that some of them were not black but copper colored.

We fired together and attempted another rush, but the effect was disastrous. Gordon dropped with a spear protruding from his right side.

(To be Continued.)

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The Family Skeleton.

"I suppose you'll be telling people that I'm a fool." "No, dear. There are some things we must keep to ourselves."—Chicago News.

The Bright Side.
"Oh, how beautiful she is!" cried Marie.

"But very likely she is a wicked adventuress," urged Kathryn. "And then who knows but she is padded?" Marie looked up wistfully. "How I wish I had you!" she said, looking always on the bright side of things," she exclaimed, heaving a great sigh.—Detroit Journal.

Proof to Her.
"I am quite certain that poor man has seen better times," said Mrs. Gazzam, after giving breakfast to a tramp. "No doubt," added Mr. Gazzam dryly. "They all have."

"But this poor fellow didn't ask me for broken victuals. He said it grieved him to be obliged to apply for a collation."—Detroit Free Press.

Verbs From Proper Nouns.
We say "to mesmerize," "to galvanize," "to guillotine," "to macadamize," "to gerrymander." If the heroes of the Homeric epics were real persons, we may add "to Hector" and "to Pandar." Pamphylia, a Greek lady who compiled a history of the world in 35 little books, has given her name to "pamphlet" and "pamphletier." "To pasquinade" is due to Pasquino, a cobbler at Rome, in whose ugly face the Romans detected a resemblance to the statue of an ancient gladiator which was erected near the Piazza Navona, on whose pedestal it was the practice to post lampoons. "To sandwich" is derived indirectly from the Earl of Sandwich, who invented a repast which enabled him to dispense with regular meals when at cards.—Notes and Queries.

A Frank Confession.
"When beauty is not skin deep, it becomes a sort of skin game," observed the wise young woman as she transferred her creamy complexion from the powder box to her face.

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After the husband had been in the cellar hammering the windows down for winter he took a long, hard look at his wife, this being his method of inducing her to show the first flickering of temper.

"Now what's the matter?" she looked just as dangerous as he. "I have been counting the jars of canned, jammed, preserved and pickled stuff in the cellar. Were you under the temporary delusion that we are planning a hotel? Do you take us for a couple that can consume the product of all kinds of orchards and two or three truck farms? Is it your theory that we live to eat? Now, my first wife."

"Cut that out, Mr. Henry William Jones. I've listened to all this first wife talk I'm going to. I don't care a rap if she never cooked a can or pickled a pickle. I don't care whether she tried to starve you or not or whether you were such a poor provider as to drive her to an early grave. I'm your wife now, and because you have published a warning against giving me credit or the house has been burned down."

"But, dearie, don't you know that we can buy all that sort of thing for a good deal less than it costs to prepare it at home?" "Don't 'dearie' me. You come in here looking as savage as a Chinese Boxer, and you can't soft soap me now. In the first place, I like to put up fruit and vegetables. I know how to do it, and it thrives better for a few hundred cans to carry over from one winter to another we are that much to the good if you fail or get sick. In the second place, I know how to preserve those things. I must stick to the good old pound-for-pound rule in fruits and season to the taste in vegetables. I give you better than you could buy at a million dollars a can, and if you don't know enough to appreciate it I'll have no difficulty in returning to the home from which you enticed me."

By this time she was in tears, and he was busy with both arms striving to soothe her while she was assuring him that the more she canned, preserved, jammed and pickled the more he loved her.—Detroit Free Press.

Boni's Reproof.
"Boni," said Anna Castellane thoughtfully as she looked up from a stack of bills and tapped her large front teeth with a ivory graven pencil, "there is a candlestick in this brick-brac bill that is set down at \$2,000, and I know the price they asked for it was only \$600."

"Alas, Anna," said Boni, and he looked down at her with eyes from which teardrops as big as marbles were bursting. "What is it?" cried Anna in alarm.

"Little did I think," replied Boni in a broken voice, "that you would ever harbor your faith in the honesty of human nature for a paltry \$1,940!"

And he turned aside to conceal his manly grief.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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