

THEY THAT SIT IN DARKNESS

STORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NEVER-NEVER

BY JOHN MACKIE

AUTHOR OF "THE DEVILS PLAYGROUND" AND "SINNERS' TRAVEL"

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"Stand them off, boys, until I pick them up!" I cried. In another second I had him fairly balanced over my right shoulder and was running with him toward the cave. The others covered my retreat, but I saw something that gave me a bad scare before getting there, for clambering up the terrace toward the two women were a couple of black fellows. One of them had just gained the ledge, carrying a spear in his teeth, when I saw Norah Mackenzie rise as if from the floor of the terrace. In her right hand she held a revolver. In another second she had fired right in the face of the savage, who staggered for a moment, then fell backward head first. The other savage was so much taken aback at the "white Mary's" summary action that he changed his mind about entering the cave and dropped to the ground again.

"This way!" the girl cried to me. "Don't hurry, but make a dash of your footings. You're lots of time."

The very sound of her voice gave me that courage which I had been far from feeling the minute before.



She fired in the face of the savage, who fell backward head first.

"Mr. Parker," she said, "carry Gordon back into the cave. He has only fainted, and we'll see what damage the spearhead has done. Elsie, my dear, your crying can only make matters worse. Go back into the cave and lie down. We will look after your brother."

I carried Gordon into the cave and ripped open his shirt with my knife. In another minute, with the help of the girl, I had made a cut in the flesh over the ribs, forced through the barbed spearhead and withdrawn it. Having completed the operation and given Gordon a drink of water, I noticed that now, womanlike, the girl had turned deadly pale beneath her sun-browned skin. But she declared it was only the fresh air that she wanted when I handed her a pannikin of water, and with a sigh, as if of relief, she went to the mouth of the cave.

We had now time to realize our position. There were five of us—me, one laid off, however—and all well armed, but my heart sank within me when I saw the mob of blacks. There must have been 200 of them swarming round the cave, forming a half circle and dodging behind the rocks and trees. They had evidently made a great muster; probably a couple of friendly tribes had joined to make a last vigorous effort to wipe out the white man.

For a few minutes there was a lull in the hostilities, during which the blacks carried on an excited discussion among themselves. Jack and Daly knelt with their rifles ready so as to offer a smaller front to the enemy's spears. Saville's black eyes roamed curiously from side to side trying to pierce the scrub, as if that bloodthirsty mob had gotten amused him. However, as if Gordon showed the dauntless stoniness pluck of his countrymen, Saville showed a supreme confidence and coolness that bordered on the sublime. Everything had come about so quickly that the whole affair resembled more a series of scenes from a dream than anything else. And what gave them all the more the character of a dream was Saville's whisper to his dog: "Hello, there, Samson! Look out, old fellow! Rats!" And then he gave a low whistle and a "Hiss!" for the edification of his canine friend.

But the most serious feature of the situation was that we had lost our horses, one of which had been speared, while the others had stampeded.

Rain or Shine,

The station agent is on duty. On his exact communication of train orders depends thousands of lives, and millions of dollars in property, each day. In his haste he runs out in the rain or the snow helpless and unprotected. Then comes the sequel—a broken-down, shivering, chills, or some other disease of the respiratory organs. The most effective remedy for bronchial or pulmonary disease is Doctor Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. Almost all remedies prescribed for such diseases are chronic and deprecated. Doctors failed to reach my case and advised me to try a higher art, but, fortunately for me, a friend advised me to try Dr. Pierce's medicine. I commenced using his "Golden Medical Discovery," and by the time I had taken the first bottle I was better, and after taking four bottles my cough was entirely gone. I have found no necessity for seeking another climate."

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate the stomach, liver and bowels.

But we were not to be left long idle. We could see a surging and swaying mass of blacks, who with hoarse guttural and wild, strident cries, which for all the world resembled those of a pack of wild animals, came toward us and surrounded the mouth of the cave. An old fellow whose head and beard were as white as driven snow was evidently leader. An immense feather, piercing the cartilage of his nose, stuck out on either side of his face, giving him a peculiarly fierce and sinister expression. He had been, and was still, a remarkably powerful man. Carrying an armful of spears behind him, and uttering words of encouragement, was a huge girl whose arms were so long that she bore a striking resemblance to a giant ape. Most of the warriors were smeared with white and red clays in a grotesque and hideous fashion. We noticed that there were many aged amazons who, like the chief's wife, followed up their respective warriors, carrying bundles of spears and urging them on to the fight.

Suddenly there was a wild cry, and Jack sang out:

"Here they come! Now then, boys, let the beggars have it! Don't waste a shot!"

Just at that moment, however, as if at a given signal, the savages stopped short, and a tall warrior advanced alone, holding out two spears with the shafts crossed.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Jack, his face lighting up with anticipation. "The beggar wants to settle the business by fighting a duel. What luck! I'm your man, old Hahababab. Here goes!"

But before he could leave the terrace the squatter's daughter blocked his way.

"You're not going!" she cried. "Do you suppose for a second they'd give you fair play? Stay where you are!"

My mate looked at the girl, surprise and some other emotion I could not fathom showed on his face. "Do you really care?" he asked.

"What a question to ask?" But if my senses did not deceive me there was a hint of resentment in her voice.

"Anyhow you're too late, for here they come again. The ball has begun. Duck your heads! They're going to throw spears!"

CHAPTER XV.
DEARER THAN LIFE ITSELF.

The persistency of the blacks was appalling. When they got within 20 or 40 yards of us, they discharged a volley of spears and stones. We had knelt down on the terrace, and the ledge being higher than the floor they either rattled harmlessly against the roof of the cavern or else struck against the ledge that skirted the terrace.

For a minute after this there was a deadly stillness, during which I could actually hear the bubbling and splash of the water at the spring, the cricking of a cicada and the labored breathing of wounded Gordon in the cave.

"Fire!"

And we sent a well directed volley into them that carried death with it. I believe every bullet did good work that day. I saw the old chief spring into the air and fall back stone dead. In another minute he was borne away. Then there was a tremendous rush up that inclined terrace. Some black fellows dead as they had begun to ascend. In another minute it was a hand to hand fight—a bloody, fierce, devilish struggle. I saw Saville, when he had emptied the magazine of his carbine, throw it behind him, snatch a great ironwood club from the hands of a black fellow and dash in among them, clearing that platform in a way which only a giant like himself could have done. At every sweep of his brawny arm a nigger's head cracked like a glass bottle, and the owner collapsed all of a heap like a poleaxed bullock. Jack, Daly and I bent double into the mob that pressed them on from behind. To my surprise and just when I was looking back with fearful eyes to see if any of the blacks had passed by into the cave I saw something that startled me. Kneeling on the ground and firing with cool deliberation, Norah was defending the narrow crevasse or passage that led to the spring, which in our excitement we had overlooked. It gave me a bad turn at the time to note that the warm olive of the girl's cheek bore a crimson stain. Still, she was as methodical and collected as if she had been steadily practicing day after day on a target, as we had often seen her do.

One might have thought that Elsie Gordon would be rather in the way than otherwise in an experience of this kind, but it would have been a mistake. She had snatched up Saville's rifle and, taking from her pocket several brass cartridges, forced them into the slot. Then just as the savages were making a final rush and Saville's club flew from his hands as a blow from a booming mortar momentarily paralyzed his arm Elsie Gordon, darting to his side, put the loaded rifle into his hands. This turned the tide of that fierce onslaught. Saville did not even put the rifle to his shoulder, but as the Americans say, literally "pumped the lead" into the mass of bodies in front of him. The blacks wavered, broke, seized their dead and wounded and made back to the cover of the trees and boulders some couple of hundred yards away. If we could only have had our horses just then and followed up our victory, I have no doubt



He snatched a great ironwood club from one of the savages.

but that we could have effectively dispersed the blacks and saved ourselves. As we were situated, however, it would have been madness to leave left the shelter of the cave. Gordon was in such a weak and helpless condition that he could not have traveled. Suddenly something occurred to me—I ran down the terrace to the spring and there found a couple of blacks making away from the narrow crevasse that opened

from it into the cave and which Norah Mackenzie had defended. I promptly squared accounts with them.

One noteworthy feature of the fight was the behavior of Samson. On one occasion when Saville had been hard pressed by a huge black this four footed tactician, coming behind the latter, snatched his teeth into his shins. The terror and agony of the savage at this unexpected attack were only equalled by the look of mortal terror on his face as Saville, recovering himself, swung his great club around his head and cracked his skull.

(To be Continued.)

Unprecedented.
Hardup—I'm suspicious of that man Eozymark.
Confound it—Why?
Hardup—Well, he loaned me \$5 with out taking an I O U or asking when I would pay it back.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Bartez.
"I should like to subscribe to your paper. Would you be willing to take it over a trade?"
Editor—Guess so; what's your business?
"I'm the undertaker."—Brooklyn Life.

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(To be Continued.)

JINGLES AND JESTS.

On With the Old Love.
Put away the caps and mittens;
Fold the sweaters and the stockings;
They're not needed any more;
Take the cushions from the diamond;
Put the balls and bats away;
Wipe the bases from the bases;
They are only common clay.

They who late with fashion glances
Set the grand stand hearts in throes,
Now, ununiformed, are roaming
In the great world hunting jobs.
And the "summer girl" so fickle
Sighs her old time idol's shrine,
Tossing her hair from the brows;
Writes "eleven" over "nine."

Put away the caps and mittens;
Shelve the grand old national game;
Loose the "even with the pigskin,
Did you risk and read and make.
We will part by till springtime
Shall the waning nine restore,
When the fans will grow fanatic
And with roots root once more!
—Louis Leige in Denver Republican.

Mrs. J's Comment.
After taking his last mint julep for the evening Mr. Jagway abscondingly put the straw in his pocket.
It was this straw—this last straw—which Mrs. Jagway found when looking through his pockets next morning for the purpose no doubt of mending the holes in them.

"Tha!" she exclaimed as she noted the faint aroma it exhaled. "This shows the way in which he blows his money!"

Polite.
Mr. Porcupine—Oh, Mr. Bunny, please excuse my lack.—New York Journal.

Camels in Water.
Camels cannot swim. They are very buoyant, but ill balanced, and their heads go under water. They can, however, be taught to swim rivers with the aid of goatskins or jars fastened under their necks. During the Baluchistan expedition of 1898 the camels were lowered into the sea from the ships, and their drivers, plunging overboard, clambered on to the backs of their charges, causing the animals' heads to come up, and thus assisted they were successfully piloted ashore.

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7:45 a m.—Mixed for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston and points north via Gibson Branch. Leaves St. Marys, N.B., 8 a. m.

9:30 a m.—Accommodation for Fredericton Junction, connecting with Short Line Express for Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, and with the Pacific Express from Montreal for the west, Northwest and Pacific Coast, also with Pullman express for Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc. St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton and Woodstock.

Palmer sleeper Fredericton Junction to Montreal.
Pullman sleeper Fredericton Junction to Boston.

7:25 p m.—Express for St. John, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock, and points north; Bangor, Portland and Boston.
8:50 a m.—From St. John, McAdam Junction, etc.
11:50 a m.—From Bangor, Montreal, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Woodstock and Houlton.

5:30 p m.—Mixed from Woodstock and points north via Gibson Branch.
7:00 p m.—From St. John and east.
9:15 p m.—From Bangor, Portland, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Woodstock, Houlton, etc. All above trains run week days only.

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