

THE UNKNOWN LAND.

Some years ago I was shooting in tropical East Africa; it was my second visit to the country, so I knew the ropes pretty well, and was no longer considered a tenderfoot by my men. While I was fitting out at the coast, my head man, Nassoro, a very privileged person, asked me if I would take his "brother" (a generic term applied to all coloured men of the same tribe) in these parts with me as gun-bearer. The post of gun-bearer is the most important of all in a shooting caravan. Many sportsmen ^{choose} prefer Somalis for this honoured position; but those who have travelled with and tested the good old Swahili - a blend of Arab father with native mother - generally prefer him in this capacity. He has many attractive and useful qualities - first, and by far the most important, he is essentially a good-tempered creature: he has a large sense of humour, and whatever difficulty may arise is ended if you can raise a laugh among your Swahilis. Secondly, he is capable of real devotion, and elects to suffer himself if by so doing he can save his master. He is faithful, and seldom cowardly - that is, if you stand, he stands; though if you turn tail he will probably follow suit. His chief idea is the preservation of his master at all hazards, for having been for many decades a slave, he always counts his master first. If you are attacked by a wounded animal, and in such a position that you cannot defend yourself, he will come to close quarters - such close quarters that he runs no risk of shooting you - and will pump lead into the beast until it is either dead or has transferred its attentions from

you to him. He is obedient, hard-working (though he seldom works well unless he is making a noise over it) and very clean. Gregarious and talkative, he takes an acute interest in all your personal affairs, and presumes that you reciprocate this interest. In sickness he tends you devotedly, for you are his Father and Mother. He is as clay in the potter's hands - his master makes or mars him.

When Nassoro advised the engaging of his alleged brother I was quite ready to do so, provided I took to the man and he knew his job. Nassoro assured me that his efficacy was beyond doubt; he had been with Stanley, Lugard, and a variety of lesser lights; he knew the country from the coast to the Congo and the Nile; and, what was more, he knew the game and was a good shot as well as a good tracker. I told Nassoro to bring him to see me. Within a few moments he appeared, and our first look at one another decided me to engage him. On entering the room he salaamed, and when, as a brother of Nassoro's, I gave him my hand, he bent over it and kissed it with true Arab courtesy and grace. He then drew himself up and remained standing at a respectful distance, his eyes fixed on me. He was of course summing me up and deciding in that rapid yet comprehensive survey, a survey in which coloured people excel, whether he could take me as a master. His decision was quickly made, and flattering to myself - I saw he was satisfied before he dropped his eyes and waited for me to address him. I now realized that I did not even know his name, and my first question was to ask him this. He replied: "They call me Simba, (the Lion) Master." This seemed such a good omen that I mentally engaged him at that moment. He knew my decision was taken as quickly as I made it, and a smile of real pleasure crossed his

face. We talked for about a quarter of an hour, and he showed me all his written credentials; these were of the best - "brave, capable, honest, and devoted", appeared in them all. One "chit", discoloured with age, the ink much faded and the writing feeble and irregular, struck me particularly. On deciphering the signature I saw it was de Quetteville, and the date was 1879. This struck me as a curious coincidence, for Henry de Quetteville's uncle died in Africa in that year, and Henry de Quetteville himself was my oldest friend. I retained this "chit" in my hand, giving the others back to Simba, and, still looking at it, I asked him to tell me of this one among his many masters. As I put the question I glanced up and was amazed at the change in Simba's face - he wore truly a tragic mask, and sorrow was stamped on every feature. With bowed head and his arms folded across his breast, he said in a voice broken with emotion: "He was my Lord and Master, the beloved of my inmost heart; he is dead in body, but ever-living in my soul, unforgotten as on the day I first saw him, ever-present in my thoughts and prayers." So much moved was he that I silently handed him back the yellowed paper, and with a sign dismissed him.

I felt more than ever satisfied that I had engaged Simba, for apart from his lucky name he had been the devoted servant of Henry de Quetteville's famous uncle. My curiosity was fully aroused, and I made up my mind that Simba should, at no very distant date, tell me of that wonderful journey of de Quetteville's, of which so little was definitely known. It was not, however, till many months later that I heard the tale, and then it was prefaced by a curious and unexpected incident.

At the time I write of we were in little-known country about 400 miles from the coast, and well to the north of the railway line. We were after elephants, and had been following a herd for some days. The herd was going fast, and though we were within sight of it, and I had made out with my glasses that a really big bull was leading, ~~it~~ we had not succeeded in getting within shooting distance. The going was bad; we were fighting our way through the bamboo forest which covered the upper heights of a ridge of hills bisecting the plains. A mist, which seldom lifted, hung over us like a heavy, damp blanket, and the cold at night and in the early morning was intense. The men were beginning to feel the strain both of the cold and of the altitude, for they were never dry and seldom warm, and to be cold and damp at 11,000 ft. is a poor game. Bamboos even when dry are about the worst fire-wood on God's earth.

We were literally following in the foot-steps of the herd, and it was difficult to tell where they were leading us. One morning we had started with the first hint of daylight: immovable white mists blotted out everything, and we slipped and stumbled along, a string of dreary ghosts. We had been going for about a couple of hours - two hours of unmitigated discomfort for us all - when without any warning the mists broke away, rolling off to either side like the ^{curtains} ~~drop-scene~~ in a theatre. Before and below us, bathed in brilliant sunshine, lay a vast plain, a reed-edged lake across it. Our herd of elephants was knee-deep in the sedge, busily engaged in squirting great trunk-fuls of water over themselves, snorting and grunting with pleasure as they bathed. Here was indeed an unanticipated chance! The elephants were pretty certain to remain near the

lake for some time, and the approach was excellent. The big bull was a little apart from the rest of the herd; the cows had finished bathing their calves and were driving them off to a patch of scrub well up wind from me and the caravan.

Simba and I, after a hurried consultation, crept off into a thickly wooded tongue of land which ran almost out to the lake. From the point of this tongue we should be near enough to the bull to shoot, and we should actually be under cover. The wind was perfect, and I felt the elephant was mine. Descending with the utmost caution - not even the crackle of a twig betrayed ^{our} ~~out~~ whereabouts - we had almost reached the point from which I meant to fire. The bull already loomed large in front of us, absolutely unconscious of our nearness, lolling luxuriously in the mud, and lazily sending occasional jets of water over his back. His great ears flapped backwards and forwards like huge swinging shutters; the only sounds the water as it spurted against his sides and back, and the sucking of the mud as he raised or lowered a leg. He was certainly not more than thirty-five yards from us, and standing with my rifle resting in the fork of a tree he was a safe shot. I was in the act of pulling the trigger when, like a whirlwind, a rhino, its small calf tottering behind it, charged out of a thick clump of bushes just behind us. It was on me before I could jump to one side, and I was borne to the ground, my rifle going off as I fell. The charge was so rapid and unsuspected that I had no time to think or feel. What I next realized was Simba bending anxiously over me, his face convulsed with pain. He had forced some whisky down my throat from the flask I always carried, and had propped me up against the trunk of a

tree. The rhino was nowhere to be seen, and the big bull was making off across the plain, the herd following him. My first sensation was of acute disappointment, but I quickly realized I ought to be immensely thankful. The rhino had struck me with her shoulder, knocking me flat but not injuring me in any way. She had apparently given a few vicious prods at the ground with her horn, and had then made off, with her ^{call} ~~baby~~ behind her. It was an amazing escape. Simba seeing that I was unhurt - I had only been stunned for a few seconds with the blow of my fall - was almost beside himself with joy. He fervently praised Allah, and kissing my hand repeatedly said: "Ah, Master, I feared you were dead. In just such a manner the gentle brother of the great Magician was killed, and while you were lying inert I lived again through those dreadful days of agony." Confused and sore as I was I did not grasp Simba's meaning, but that evening when I was sitting at the camp fire, a fire made with great logs of wood, glowing and warmth-giving, I called to Simba who was, as usual, engaged with my guns, and said to him: "Tell me of the Magician and his brother."

Simba, who like most coloured men was a born narrator, hesitated for a moment; then, coming over to me, squatted sideways by the fire and unfolded the following tale. I give it as nearly as possible in his own words:

"It is a hard task to speak of what lies nearest to the heart. Words stumble and halt in telling of what is a great pain. For years the Mighty One, whom we called the Magician, and his two brothers, Gentle-Heart and the Hunter, have been buried deep in my heart. Only to lift a corner of the curtain which was covered and shielded them

from prying eyes causes my wounds to bleed afresh; for though my sorrow is hidden it is ever_living. For you, who might be a son of my master, the Magician, I will lift the covering from the dead, I will tear the bandage from my unhealed wound. From the moment you held the yellowed letter of my master in your hand a common cord of knowledge bound me to you - it was written we should speak together of these matters. The silence which till now has held my tongue tied was accounted to me a fault. Your escape to-day has ordered me to speak - it was the finger of a dead hand pointing out my way. Master, I obey your command.

Of the Magician's early visits to this country I need not speak. Suffice it to say he had come and gone until he was well-known to and well-beloved by all. He had hunted much, but hunting was not that which he loved best. He loved to wander on untrodden paths, and to meet with unknown men; he was ever led onward and onward to that far beyond, which, though one may place one's foot on its threshold, recedes as one advances. Ever beckoning, it lures one forward, ever promising, it delays in fulfilment. The great desire for the Unknown runs in the blood of men, no matter what their colour may be; it is a call which must be obeyed, and its end is death.

On each return the Magician wandered farther and farther along the untrod road, and before he came with his brothers he had penetrated so far that he was within sight of his own death. From savages wild and wicked, though meek and humble before his eagle-like eye and his fearless bearing, he learnt of a place where the very stones and rocks were of gold, where the river ran with gold, where the natives regarded gold as earth beneath their feet. These same savages showed him their ornaments, bracelets, neck-laces, and belts,

all made of gold - and behold it was good in the Magician's eyes. We had, at that time, been travelling for many months; the porters were weary with over-much going, and the strain of the Unknown was telling on them. My Master's clothes, boots, and even his ammunition, were almost gone, and food was scarce, for the rains had not fallen in their season. It fretted the Magician to turn back, but to go on was not possible. He therefore made a solemn pact with the savages of the golden ornaments, telling them he would return in fifteen moons, that they must guide him to the Land of Gold, and that he would for this service pay them all they asked. We then set our faces towards the sea, and turned neither to the right nor to the left on the whole journey. We travelled fast, pressed forward by the great desire burning within the breast of the Magician, a desire which allowed of no delays. For myself, knowing the tales and the wiles of savages, my heart was heavy within me. What should prevent these wild men, having lured my Master back to their barren and unfriendly country, from slaying or making a captive of him? What could we know of the truth of their tales of gold? That they wore golden ornaments proved not their words. Their vile and cunning looks leered at me by day and slept with me at night.

We reached the coast in safety; the sight of mosques and minarets, palm-trees and mangoes, happy faces and bright garments, weaned my thoughts from the dangers we had passed, and my heart rejoiced within me once more. My Master, who had hoped to stay but a few weeks, spending his time in making ready for the great journey to the Land of Gold, found letters calling him to his home, and sadly he obeyed the call. Before he left he told us, his children, that he went but to return, and that he hoped we should all be ready and

willing to follow him on his search for the longed-for gold. To me he said he would write, the letter to reach me one month before he himself arrived: I was to call together his men so that everything would be ready for an immediate start. The delay irked him as a pain which cannot be soothed; he lived but to be back again, the call was strong in his blood. Much as I loved the Magician, I prayed earnestly to Allah that, infidel though my Master was, He would permit some white woman to ensnare him, and to keep him bound in his own country. Presages of evil hovered round me, and I felt the death, which the search for wealth so often brings, flapping its great wings over my beloved Master. Rather would I never look upon his face again than look and find death.

Allah heard not my prayers, for, true to his word, my Master wrote to me, and one month later he was among us again. This time however he came not alone, but brought with him two brothers. Were they his blood brothers, brothers of the same Father and Mother? I know not; but brothers in heart, courage, and mind they assuredly were, and though the Magician was high above them as he was above all men, they were nevertheless men to be loved and obeyed.

Although our caravan had to be increased it did not take many days for us to collect the extra men, and when all was ready, the Magician called me to him to receive his final instructions. My heart was heavy when he had finished talking, though he talked to me as a trusted friend, showing me his inmost thoughts. Instead of being with my Master, guarding him, tending him, working for him, I was now to perform these services for his youngest and much-loved brother, Gentle-Heart. The Magician explained to me with patience, and I thought also with sorrow, that Gentle-Heart was as a child, that he had no thoughts for danger, that his own gentle and happy

disposition led him to believe that others felt even as he did. For him there was no evil - he himself was pure and knew no guile. Therefore he must be carefully guarded. It was to be my work to shield him from danger, to be his constant and watchful companion. I confess, without shame, that the tears rose to my eyes and even overflowed. Pride I felt in my Master's trust in me, but bitter jealousy for the services he would receive from one other than myself, and a sorrow I find impossible to express that I should no longer spend my days close to him. To remonstrate I did not dare; though words, eloquent words, rose to my lips, I could only bow my head in submission and accept this new unsought burden. When the bitterness of feeling had somewhat lessened, I ventured to ask my Master who was to take my empty place with himself. He assured me he was quite indifferent, and left the choice of his personal servant to me. At the same time he added: " My new guardian and companion I have here", and pointed to a small red dog which was sleeping close to his feet.

I must tell you of this small dog, for she was indeed a human being shaped as a dog. She was long in body, with short and crooked legs, and a tail that told of her courage, for it never hung between her legs. Her head was beautiful, even as her body was mis-shapen and ugly, and her eyes were those of some great, kind spirit. My Master talked to her as to his brothers, and she understood his every word - nay, she was more than human, for words unspoken she understood. In silence did she and my Master commune, thought running with thought, wish with wish. Love interpreted all, that love so seldom met with - never-failing and undimmed - which makes no demands, which seeks for no excuses. To many my words of this love

between my Master and his dog would savour of madness, to those others who count, the truth of these words is known. Heart to heart dwelt these twain, and though the dog was kind and polite to others her love was only for my Master. Him she never left day or night. Her name was Venus, meaning, my Master told me, that which is most beautiful.

our caravan started before daylight, and when the sun burst upon us, we were already half way through our day's march. In those times there was no road of iron, no carriages drawn with fire and smoke - caravans all followed the small beaten foot-path, a path just wide enough for a loaded man to pass unbrushed by the bush and scrub, a path wandering and twisting across plains, through forests, over mountains and rivers, on and on, with no end. No man has lived to find where this path ends, no record is kept of the feet which have beaten it into the bosom of the Great Unknown. Of how it was first made or why there is no knowledge - you follow it, and it leads you whither you would go; you leave it and death seizes you.

As the sun rose, a dark object lying in the path became visible - it was the body of a dead hyaena, barring our way so that we were all obliged to move to one side to pass it. It lay, swollen and evil-smelling, its head pointing in the direction we were going. Seeing this beast of evil augury lying in dead possession of our path, my heart was filled with dismay. To a black man a dead beast in his path is such bad luck that he will delay his journeyings; for a journey started when luck is out must lead to disaster. During a moment's space I ventured to leave Gentle-Heart, and approaching my Master I begged him not to proceed. I can even now see before my eyes his face as he turned it smiling towards me. "What, Lion," he

said, "you afraid of a hyaena, and one that is dead!"

"Living, I fear no beast," I answered, "but over the dead we have no control. This vile animal is a sure sign of impending evil. Those who have disdained the signs vouchsafed them have seldom lived to record their disdain. I pray of you, Master, turn aside from this path, and delay while there is yet time."

The Magician listened not to my words, and tried to re-assure me and the porters by saying that these signs were not made for white men. And so convincing were his words - of his magic we had all had experience - that we allowed ourselves to be persuaded, and continued our march. We camped at a water hole, and no sooner had the camping ground been chosen than the Hunter went off to hunt. Some hours later he returned in high good humour with both buck and birds. The Magician and Gentle-Heart were seated under a thorn-tree; I was cleaning guns near by, as the Hunter approached. Up he came laughing and taking off his helmet pulled out of it a small-sized chameleon. Now to white men this is but a small and somewhat ugly reptile, but to black men it is terror - it slays if they but touch it, and it brings in its train both evil and disaster. I sat aghast that this second evil sign had fallen upon us. The reptile, which the Hunter held in his hand, crawled slowly and deliberately forward, raising its ape-like hands with precision, and rolling its dreadful all-seeing eyes in every direction. I gazed fascinated, unable to move. My staring caused the Hunter to notice me, and he, still laughing, held his arm towards me and asked me if I would like the creature as a pet. My Master, well knowing our dread for these reptiles, explained to the Hunter, and begged him not to attempt any jokes on the subject. For myself, I was grief-stricken. From the very first

when the Magician heard of the gold my inmost shadow-self felt that it was of evil purport. Dark clouds lay thick round my heart, and for the first time the Unknown filled me with dread. Now two further signs - the dead hyaena barring our ~~face~~^{road}, and the chameleon - had been added. Yet what could I do? Disaster was branded upon our path, but I knew the Magician would not harken to these portents. Why, I ask why, will white men travel in the countries of black men and try to travel as in their own countries? White is for white, and black is for black, yet the foreshadowing of evil and calamity is for all. Many brave white men have unnecessarily given their lives through not seeing that where black permeates it cannot be ignored. The white is the master mind, but the evil spirits of the black country must have their payment.

One further disaster occurred. That very night the Hunter slept with the dread chameleon in his tent. It must have climbed on his bed without his knowing, and in his sleep he lay on it. When his boy came to fasten up his bed in the morning, he found the chameleon flattened and dead, its great tongue forced from its mouth. In death it was even more sinister of aspect than in life, for its eyes, though sightless, were open, and expressed such black evil that I could not bear to look on it.

Everything seemed against us, but knowing my Master's unconquerable will, and above all being anxious to shield and help him, I accepted these warnings yet put them as much as possible from my mind, and prepared, as best I could, to fight, and, if it might be, vanquish what lay in the future. Slowly my fears sank out of sight; they dropped and lay buried in the deepest waters of my mind. Above them the waters were quiet and unruffled, for our journey continued

from day to day uneventfully and happily. We pushed forward hopefully - our eyes were set towards that remote and beckoning land which lured us all. Days were of no account, and except that the Magician always halted for one day and one night on the seventh day we should have kept no record of time. This day of rest was a great boon to the porters: they mended and washed their clothes, repaired their tents, polished their cooking-pots, and generally set themselves and their property in order for the coming week. The brothers also enjoyed a day without a set march. The Hunter spent his day from before dawn till sunset hunting. He had succeeded in buying a pony from a passing Arab caravan and therefore only took his own gun-bearer with him on these excursions. Carrying his small-bore rifle himself, he set out riding his pony, his gun-bearer carrying his heavy rifle. Having shot his game, they loaded the pony with the meat, and both returned on foot. As the gun-bearer always received backsheesh for the work on the seventh day he was content. with the arrangement, Gentle-Heart was wont to spend his day making pictures, and I and three other men always went with him. He had clean paper and a box with many colours in it. With a small bundle of hairs he transferred these colours to the paper, and in so doing was quite happy. Pictures he made of the sky, the river, the trees, and even of black men - it was as magic to us, but he and his brothers thought little of it. I sat near him as he wrought with his colours, a rifle across my knees, watchful while he worked. The other men were never allowed to approach him till his picture was finished, and they squatted, chattering or sleeping, a short distance away. I loved Gentle-Heart, but even so this seventh day was always one of restlessness for me. On other journeyings it had been

my privilege to spend this day in close communion with my Master, and my heart ached to see him set out, Venus close at his heels, and one other than myself bearing his gun and following him. The Magician seldom shot or hunted now, and when he did, it was only for the sake of Venus who loved to hunt. Her nose guided her over the most difficult trail, and once told to follow a wounded beast she never gave in and never failed to come to quarters with her quarry. She would follow a wounded lion or rhinoceros without fear. I have seen her catch a charging lion by the tail, swung right off her legs by his angry swishing, and never letting go her hold. Thus hanging she remained, distracting the great brute from her approaching master and so giving him time and opportunity to fire the death shot unhurriedly. In this way she could hold the strongest animal, for her extra weight added to his wounds made progress impossible, and he expended all his strength in trying to swing and twist her off. Once the beast was down, she was on his throat like a flash, and would remain thus till the Magician told her to let go.

We had been travelling for about two months when, through careless walking before it was light, I stepped on a poisonous thorn. The pain was sharp at the time and became worse and worse as we proceeded. Barely could I keep up with Gentle-Heart till we reached camp, and as soon as the tents were pitched I went to my Master for medicine. By this time my foot was so inflamed and swollen that I could hardly put it to the ground. The Magician having bathed it and extracted the broken thorn, bound it up, telling me I must remain quite quiet lest my leg also should swell. Fortunately the next day was rest day, and I thus had an opportunity of keeping quiet without delaying the caravan. All night the burning pain in my foot

drove sleep from me, but towards morning it abated, and I found that the swelling was almost gone. When therefore I saw Gentle-Heart making ready with his paper and colours I got my rifle and prepared to follow him. As we were about to start my Master came out of his tent, and seeing me called me to him. He forbade me to go with Gentle-Heart and sent his own gun-bearer in my place. I was reluctant to remain behind, and felt uneasy that Gentle-Heart should go without me; but my Master's word was law, and to hear was to obey. // I watched the five of them, Gentle-Heart in front, set off, and only ceased watching when they disappeared over the edge of some sloping ground a few hundred yards distant. A strange feeling, as of a light put out, held me. Without knowing it, I must have been expecting something to happen, for when about half an hour later two shots were fired, quickly one after the other, I set off running in the direction in which Gentle-Heart and his men had gone, not realizing what I was doing. The Magician and Venus passed me in a few minutes, and before we had any of us reached the top of the slope one of Gentle-Heart's men came running to meet us. I saw him stop and speak a few words to the Magician, and then set off, faster than ever for camp. So something ~ the dreadful something, had happened. I called to the porter as he ran, but he made no reply, only pointing in the direction from whence he had come. // I stumbled on as fast as I could, and on reaching the crest of the slope I saw before me, though at some little distance, a thick clump of trees and bushes, and by it a small group of figures. It was impossible to see what was happening, and it was only when I had nearly reached the group that I made out the figure of Gentle-Heart stretched on the ground, the Magician bending over him and the men standing silently round. Fearfully I approached. Gentle-Heart lay silent and pale, as if already

dead. The Magician had cut away his clothes, and on the white flesh of his thigh a red wound gaped and bled. My Master had bound a cord above the wound, and now waited for his box of medicines to bind the wound itself. The moments hung like years of leaden pain until men and medicine came from the camp and Gentle-Heart was carried away. As I limped behind the hammock, the Magician's gun-bearer dropped back beside me and in whispers told me what had happened. Gentle-Heart had chosen to make his picture from close to the clump of bushes, and, as was his wont, told the men to go to some little distance and sit down - he would not even permit the gun-bearer to sit near him, as I always did. The men chose another clump of trees to sit under, and had been there but a few moments when a sudden noise of snorting and stamping brought them to their feet with a start. They instinctively ran towards Gentle-Heart, but before they could reach him a rhinoceros was upon him. It had come up behind him, fallen upon him and thrust his great thorn through his thigh, and made off again, a small calf trotting in its wake. As was evident, for we examined the place thoroughly afterwards and proved the whole thing, the rhinoceros, a female with a very young calf, had been asleep in one of the many patches of bush. She had wakened with the voices of the men, and Gentle-Heart, being just in the wind, had fallen a victim to her charge. Horrible indeed was the thought - the kind and gentle one, who would not hurt the least of living creatures, sitting there quietly with death at his very side. Death it was, for though Gentle-Heart lived and suffered for one week, death had marked him as her own, and wrung by dreadful suffering his soul, only too gladly, left his tortured body when his hour had struck. He and we sorrowed only for that week of pain - he grieved

for us, and we for him. Till the last he thought but of others, and bore his agony smiling. My Master never left the bed-side, and tended Gentle-Heart as a mother her child - he did not sleep, and snatched but a few mouthfuls of food brought by me to the tent door. The power had gone from his magic, and he, the Magician, who earned his name because of the hundreds of sick cured by his medicine was powerless to heal his own brother.

We buried Gentle-Heart on the seventh day - another day of rest - and even when he was deep in the hard ground, a great pile of stones and thorns over him, we could not believe he had gone from us to return no more. My Master was as one stricken, his head was bowed upon his mighty breast, and his face was as the face of an old, old man. Burnt were his eyes with bitter unshed tears and sleepless nights, and whitened was his hair. His sorrow was the sorrow of the great, torn and bleeding was his heart, but no word passed his lips. Silently he suffered; he nursed his grief alone, hiding his pain from others.

We left this place of the dead the morning after we had buried Gentle-Heart. My Master bade the caravan start, he himself remaining behind to visit once more the grave of his well-beloved brother. I had already, and unbidden, taken upon me the service of the Magician, therefore when the caravan departed I remained waiting for him by the ford of the river until he had said his last ^{farewell} ~~good-bye~~ to his dear dead. He strode down to the river and crossed it; his eyes were fixed, they were with the dead and gone, and he did not even see me, though I stooped to pick up Venus and carried her across, fearing the crocodiles. The further side gained, my Master turned and gazed once more on the small heap of stones, his brother's grave, which

could be distinctly seen from the rising ground. After a moment he dropped his eyes, still unseeing, on Venus and myself, and without a word picked up the trail and marched off. Thus for five hours did we march keeping well behind the caravan, and not one word passed between the three of us. Venus, instead of jumping about in the grass and chasing birds as was her wont, trotted soberly at her Master's heels; I followed behind her.// on reaching camp we found the Hunter had already eaten and was away shooting. My Master entered his tent and dropped on his bed, his head between his hands. Venus could bear his silence no longer and jumped up beside him. Standing with her fore paws on his shoulder, she pushed her long nose between his hands, and gently separating them began licking his tired face, crying softly as she did so. I was seated near the doorway watching, my eyes hot with unshed tears, my heart aching with my Master's grief. As Venus licked and cried, my Master's spirit, which had still been hovering round the newly made grave, returned to his body - his eyes came back to earth and life. Pulling Venus into his arms he caressed her anxious faithful face. He spoke to her in a soft hoarse voice, and she, looking lovingly at him and nestling close to him, appeared satisfied and relieved. A few minutes later the Magician called me to him, bidding me go and eat. I told him I could not eat unless he did, and begged to be allowed to bring food for him and Venus. To this he consented, and I waited with him till he had eaten. From this day on we never spoke of Gentle-Heart - his memory was ever with us, but the gates of our hearts were sealed with silence. I knew my Master partly blamed himself for the accident, and I myself felt ever as if I had failed in a trust. To ourselves we both knew, however, that it was written that Gentle-Heart should

thus die, though the love we bore him made us feel we might have saved him.

The Magician became himself again, but he had aged by half his own years - he was more silent than of yore, and only Venus could bring a smile to his face. He and the Hunter went their separate ways, living in harmony when they were together, but neither needing the other; the Hunter lived but to hunt, the Magician had outlived his desire to chase and kill.

I must now tell of the further disaster which befel us. The horror of Gentle-Heart's death was slowly fading; we thought of him but in shadow thoughts, and to us he always seemed happy. The interest in our great journey and its quest was to the fore, and the porters talked among themselves of the gold they would find and the rich, gay lives they would lead when they returned to the coast laden with solid wealth. Many weeks had passed since the making of the lonely grave - weeks the days of which were so like one to another that they had slid past us unnoticed. We were within a week of the boundaries of those same wild savages who were to lead us to the Land of Gold. The country we were in was a dreary, stony waste, though scattered, stunted thorn-trees grew in some profusion. A chain of water-holes, in a land where water was very scarce, made it a perfect hunting ground, for the beasts which drank at the holes never wandered very far away from them and were wonderfully tame. The Hunter had come on Greater Kudu, and though he had not been able to shoot, he had marked down their grazing place. On the day we left the water-holes he started off before the caravan saying that he would join us at the next camp. As usual he was riding; he carried food in his saddle-bags, and he had his gun-bearer only with him. I well remem-