
Famous
FANTASTIC
Mysteries

(Combined with Fantastic Novels Magazine)

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No. 4

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A Princess of a fabulous race, she came to him

Out of the Desert

By L. PATRICK GREENE

ORDINARILY I shun the side shows that always may be found in close proximity to the Big Top whenever the circus comes to town. Last summer I broke my rule; one of the posters was responsible. Its garish colors offended the artistic eye, and the printed words it bore were an everready testimony that fiction is stranger than truth. It was the picture of a dwarf, purporting to be a bushman, in the act of swallowing a huge python which was curled around his body.

THE ONLY BUSHMAN IN CAPTIVITY

Brought to America at Enormous Expense
By the Famous Explorer, Captain Stanhope

THE RIDDLE OF THE AGES

Proclaimed by Famous Scientists to be

THE MISSING LINK

As shown Before all the Crowned Heads
of Europe

I read with amused wonder—then gleefully marched up to the booth, paid my quarter, and entered the tent. I was convinced that I should see no bushman, for as a race the bushman is all but extinct, and surely no one could be successful in bringing one of the "little people" away from his haunts in Africa. Resolved, then, to have some fun at the expense of the pseudo bushman, I was glad to find, on entering the tent, that the rest of the spectators were grouped around the barker who was extolling the wonders of the Princess Radada, the far-famed snake-charmer.

The bushman was given the place of honor between Marvella the Sword-Swallower, and Venus the Tattooed Lady. As I drew near to him I gave a little start of surprise. If he was a fake, then he was a very good one. Barely five feet in height

he bore all the earmarks of the real bushman; the head covered with little knots of twisted hair somewhat longer than that of the negro; the discolored and pointed teeth; the thin, scraggly goatee beard on an otherwise smooth face; the lobeless ears. Last and most striking proof was the round, distended stomach, gray of color, which is always to be noticed on the true bushman. Certain tribes call them the "gray bellies."

Yet, despite all this I was not convinced, and drawing near I said to him abruptly, "Well, what do you get out of this faking?" He made no sign that he heard me. Then I addressed him in a sort of bastard Bechuana dialect used by certain bushmen who have for several generations been held as slaves by the Bechuanas. He looked up in interest at this, as one who hears something with which he is dimly familiar.

Then a sudden realization swept over me that here was no fake; and determined to find out who had charge of the bushman that I might have a talk with him, I turned round to find myself facing a man who carried me back to other days, and to another land.

"Why, hello, Armitage! What on earth are you doing here? The world is a small place after all."

"Hush. Captain Stanhope is my *nom de Circus*."

In further explanation he added, "I'm with the bushman. And I might ask what are *you* doing here? A lot of water has passed under the bridge since I stayed at your camp on the Zambezi."

"Can't you get away from here? I want to ask you a hundred questions."

"Wait a minute. It's time for me to deliver my spiel. I'll make it short."

Mounting his stand he barked—that is the correct term—at the bushman, who immediately rose to his feet and uttered ear-piercing yells which had the effect of bringing the sightseers around his stand. Armitage spoke to the dwarf again and he was silent.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Armitage began, “you see before you the only bushman in captivity—”

As he spoke I pondered over the strangeness of this meeting, contrasting it with our other one on the banks of the mighty Zambezi. Armitage was a typical prospector, following the life for the fun of it, always waiving the cash in hand for the bare possibility of amassing enormous wealth by some lucky stroke.

One of the earliest of the Rhodesian pioneers, he had fought through the Matabele campaign and before that through the Zulu rebellion. Possessing no little book knowledge he was everywhere quoted as an authority on native customs and language, speaking fluently many dialects. To the natives he was a man set apart as one who knew all things.

Though he was nearly sixty years of age he looked still in the prime of life. He had that lean, wiry frame which never tires. His gray-flecked mustache, waxed at the ends, turned jauntily upward; his face, baked by the African sun, was of the color and consistency of leather. The gray eyes—steel-gray—overhung with thick, bushy eyebrows, were the eyes of one accustomed to peering over the limitless distances of the sun-scorched veldt.

A murmur of amazement brought my attention back to the immediate present.

“So, ladies and gentlemen,” Armitage was saying, “if any of you wish to give the little bushman a treat come again tonight and bring a can of worms with you. They are his favorite food. He eats them alive. Now the little bushman cannot speak a word of English, but he will be glad to sell you photos of himself. The price is one dime. I thank you.”

WHEN Armitage rejoined me we made our way to a near-by cafe and ordered dinner.

“Well, here’s how,” he said. “Um-m! That knocks Cape brandy into a cocked hat. Do you remember the last peg we had together? Dop, warm dop, diluted with warm, muddy water and the temperature one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade. But my, how we guzzled it down. That’s Africa. How does that chap, Cullen Gouldsberry, put it?

‘A book on cattle sickness and a cow,
A flask of dop, a tin of bully beef, and thou
Beside me swearing at the wilderness,
That is the real Rhodesia—here and now.’

“Yet I tell you, boy, it is God’s own country just the same, and I’m going back there very soon.”

“With the bushman?”

“H—, yes, of course. And curious to know all about him, aren’t you?” he said, with a merry twinkle in his eye. “After I left you that day on the Zambezi, I went up into the Belgian Congo and made a lucky strike. Feeling a desire to get back to civilization, I sold my claim and went down to Johannesburg, determined to have a regular hot spree. However, I got in with a poker crowd and lost all my money the first night I reached the big city. They must have stacked the cards on me.” He lapsed into mournful silence.

“Fill up,” said I; “let’s drink to the bushman.”

“Ah, yes, the bushman. The next day I went to see Doc Johnson, one of the pioneers. I knew the doc would stake me. He did, and what was more, put me in the way of a little easy money—at least, so it seemed.

“‘You are just the man I have been looking for, Bill,’ he said. ‘One of my patients, a rich American, has commissioned me to find a man who will get a regular bushman for him. No Bechuana half-caste, you understand, but the real article. Says he wants to study their language, but isn’t able to visit them in their own country. Do you want the job?’

“‘I’m game,’ says I. ‘When do I start?’

“‘Not so fast, Bill. Don’t you want to know what price he’s paying?’

“Well, it appeared that the professor was willing to pay one thousand pounds and

expenses to the man that brings him a bushman. Doc advanced me five hundred pounds and I started without losing any time on the man-hunt. Making my way by easy stages—but not so damned easy at that, I arrived about a month later at Namies on the very edge of the great thirst land—the Kalahari Desert.

“At Namies I found a little colony of trek Boers and stayed with them until the grazing was no longer good and they struck camp and made for richer pastures. Among their servants I met an old hunting acquaintance named Hendricks. Hendricks was a half caste, half Hottentot, half bushman. I tried to persuade him to accompany me on my trip, but he shook his grizzled head vehemently.

“‘Ikona, Baas. No, there I will not go with you. It is the land of many evil things. Also I am under contract to the Baas du Tbit.’

“Still Hendricks was able to give me a lot of useful information. Two days hard trekking from Namies, he said, was Gamoeep and there I would find a permanent waterhole and a plentiful supply of fodder for such animals as I had with me. Hendricks advised me to stay there for two or three days and then striking southwest, three or possibly four days’ trekking, with a waterhole on the second day, I would strike the ‘thunder hills,’ where he had been told there was always plenty of water and a small colony of bushmen had their camp. Hendricks also assured me that my knowledge of the bushman language was good.

“Well, I’ll not admit myself second to any native when it comes to plain trekking on the veldt, but the desert stuff was new to me, and I’ll tell you, boy, I felt some qualms of uneasiness when I bid the Boers good-by. They thought I was mad, and as I see it now I don’t know that I blame them.

“My outfit consisted of two pack mules, each carrying a water-keg, and the rest of my stuff divided up between them. Blankets, flour, and—oh, you know the little a prospector can get along with. Give him water and he will exist. I rode a small Basuto pony, I called him Prince—you know the type, wiry and as hard as nails.

“The first day’s trek was fairly easy, and I began to congratulate myself on having found a soft thing. I should have known better. The second day saw the start of my troubles. Hot? You have my word for it. At times I walked to give the horse a rest, and the sand, even through my heavy boots, seemed hot enough to roast a joint. It was light and powdery, so that my foot sank into it, ankle-deep, at every step.

“Night fell and I was still far from the water-hole that Hendricks had spoken of, but I could see in the near distance the lion-shaped ridge of rock which marked the pool. Darkness fell, but I trusted to the animals who were now thrusting forward at an ever-increasing pace toward water.

“In the final mad rush which I was powerless to stop, even had I tried, one of the water-kegs broke loose from its moorings and, falling on a rock, was staved in. That night I built a fire, not for warmth, but in protection from the scorpions and snakes. The fire attracted hundreds, it seemed, of tarantulas—red, hairy horrors of hell. Some were as large as field-mice and the only security from them was to perch on a small rock in the middle of the pool. Here I stayed in a cramped-up position until the night became too cold for them—the thermometer must have dropped to eighty degrees—and they’ returned to their lairs among the rocks.

“**E**ARLY the next morning I had the good fortune to shoot a spring-buck not far from the water-hole—he was one of a big herd—and the rest of that day was occupied in preparing biltong.

“Four days I stayed at the water-hole, tortured by the tremendous heat in the day time and the red horrors at night; but there was water, some shade, and for the animals fairly good grazing. But, poor devils, except that they carried no load, it was almost as hard on them as trekking. All through the day they performed a sort of dance, lifting their feet constantly, attempting to cool them.

“On the fifth day I started out once more, and hard work it was to get the mules away from the water-hole; they seemed to know what fate had in store for

them. The loss of the water-keg made it possible for me to give the mules a lighter load, but even so, I decided to cache some of my stuff lest they break down under the pack. I, too, hesitated about going on, for with only one water-keg I was taking a long chance—not allowing for any unlooked-for happenings.

“Soon after leaving the water-hole behind I struck the Kanya veldt, just as Hendricks had said. Kanya, you know, means ‘round stone,’ and here the desert was paved with stones measuring about six inches in diameter. They were packed so close together that they nearly touched, while about two-thirds of their bulk was buried in the sand. This made for slow traveling.

“Every step had to be carefully picked; a misstep would mean a sprained fetlock or ankle. And here, too, the heat seemed to be greater than ever. We pushed right on, though, and far into the night, taking my bearing by the stars. Now and again I would halt to take a miserly swig of water and pull up some plants, growing between the stones, resembling a turnip, which I fed to the animals. The roots must have contained much water, for the beasts enjoyed them. I tasted them, but the flavor was sickly and unpalatable.

“By noon of the following day a heavy breeze sprang up and the air was filled with fine particles of sand, making breathing a torture. Sand spouts appeared here and there and the desert sounded its sullen note of warning—the low drone that presages a sand-storm. In feverish haste I made Prince lie down, and after hobbling the mules, threw them.

“Then I crouched down beside Prince, whose head I had covered with a blanket. The drone increased in volume, the sand spouts merged into one enormous funnel; with a shriek the desert monster was upon us. Several hours later the storm suddenly ceased. Shaking off the thick blanket of sand which covered me, I helped Prince to his feet, and then went to the mules. They were completely covered, but apparently suffered no ill effects.

“Pressing on at a good rate, for by this we had left the ‘tunya veldt’ behind us,

we reached the second water-hole about four in the afternoon. Then it seemed that the desert was indeed fighting in protection of its people. The water-hole was dried up! At first I could not believe my eyes, and thought perhaps the sand storm had covered it up.

“I dug frantically therefore at a depression between the rocks where I judged the water had been. When I unearthed the skeleton of a human being, I gave up hope. My water-keg was almost empty, perhaps a pint left, for I had been very prodigal of my supply after the storm, sharing it with the animals. I was so secure in my knowledge that we were near water. It never occurred to me that it would be dried up. Two courses were now open to me: to return to certain water at Gamoep, provided I could live to reach it; to go forward and tempt fate. Two days’ trek to a certainty, one forward to the unknown.

“In the distance I could see the hills that promised water, ‘only a day’s trek,’ I thought; ‘I can make it by sundown tomorrow,’ and went forward. Another night on the hot sand, and on our way again in the early morning. What little food I tried to take all but choked me. My water was completely gone, and, well—a few hours would tell. The sun beat on my spine with ever-increasing heat and it seemed as though a thousand red-hot needles were sticking into it. My eyeballs ached, and my tongue was like a piece of blotting-paper. I bit my lips, but no blood flowed. I put a pebble into my mouth, hoping that would cause the saliva to flow, but it was red-hot, and I hastily let it drop out.

“The mountains were getting nearer, and when they seemed barely a mile away I had reached the limit of human endurance. Putting my spurs into Prince I urged him to a gallop. Poor beast, it was hard on him, but he responded. Then he suddenly floundered and fell, pitching me on my head; for a while I remembered no more.

“I was a boy once more, walking through grassy meadows on my way to the swimming-pool. Quickly I undressed and stood poised for a moment on the bank. Then I dived, and in some miraculous manner the

pool dried up and I hit my head on a rock.

"Coming to with a start I was conscious that some one was bathing my face and lips with water. I opened my mouth and several drops trickled in and was painfully swallowed. Slowly opening my eyes, half fearing that this, too, was a dream, I saw a bushman sitting beside me, a gourd of water in his hand. I tried to speak, but my tongue refused to articulate. Then I tried to take the gourd from him, but he shook his head.

"'A little ye may drink as I give it thee.' So he gave it to me drop by drop. My brain cleared, and my tongue softened.

"'Whence come ye?' I asked.

"'That ye shall see later. Art able to ride now?'"

"I nodded.

"'Then follow me.'

LUCKILY Prince had not suffered any harm from the fall, and after mounting him with difficulty I followed my mysterious rescuer.

"Arrived at the foot of the hills we made our way along their base until we came to a cleft. This we entered and I perceived we were in a narrow gorge. Down this we went for about a mile. It suddenly opened into a sort of amphitheater, and there before us was a large pool surrounded by almost tropical foliage. The mules who had bolted ahead were already wallowing in it, and Prince, taking the bit between his teeth, bolted after them with me on his back. When he reached the water I slid off him and lay in the pool absorbing moisture through every pore of my body. I remember hearing the bushman yell to me not to drink the water, then once more the light went out.

"I was sick, they tell me, for three months, a sort of brain fever, I take it. I have no recollections of my sickness, nothing definite at any rate. I had some lucid moments, of course, but was never strong enough to ponder too deeply into matters. I seemed dimly aware on one or two occasions that a woman was standing beside me—a white woman.

"It could have been only a dream I thought; yet when the day came that I

was able to converse with my bushman attendants—it appeared that two had been appointed to guard and care for me—I asked for the 'white woman.' Instead of answering my question they looked strangely at each other.

"'Of a certainty this is the man, the Son of the Wind,' said one.

"'Yea, brother, it is even so; for look, he asks for the Woman of the Moon.'

"'What talk is all this of spirits?' said I. 'Tell the white woman I would have speech with her.'

"'Nay, stranger. That time has not yet come. First thou must regain thy strength, then shall ye have all things made known to thee.'

"From that day started the long and weary process of building up my wasted strength. And yet it was not without its compensations, for I was able to learn a great deal about the 'little people,' and there was much of interest in my immediate surroundings. The cave in which I lived was large and cool, always cool, even in the day time. Its walls were covered with wonderful bushman paintings—paintings that far excelled any I had previously seen.

"There was a greater variety of objects depicted, and what was most amazing was the fact that many of the pictures of human beings wore a sort of robe and had long, flowing hair. From my attendants, who were named Cagn and Cogas, I learned that there were over two hundred people in the colony, all of whom lived in caves, similar to mine, hewn out of the solid rock.

"This tribe was known as the 'people of the moon,' and considered themselves far superior to the veldt bushmen, as indeed they were. They looked on me, I gathered, as a spirit whose advent meant great prosperity. More they would not tell me, and though I pondered often on the matter I could not solve the riddle. There were many things I could not do. I was not allowed to leave my cave, for instance, after sundown, or go into any other cave at any time; neither could I hold speech with the other inhabitants of the colony. Indeed that was an impossibility. My approach was the signal for all to disappear.

"Food was plentiful of a sort, a kind of

coarse meal with wild honey, and occasionally some venison. Wherever I went, Cagn and Cogas were in close attendance. (Me they called Na-ka-ti!) Evidently I was a prisoner, though they need have had no fear that I would attempt to escape. For the time I had had my fill of the desert.

"There came a day when I was allowed to go out of the gorge with a hunting party. A herd of zebra was in the vicinity, and the 'little people' were planning on a big kill. It felt good to get onto Prince's back, my rifle slung across my back.

"As we emerged from the gorge, Cagn and Cogas in close attention, I saw several bushmen, each enclosed in a sort of framework covered with the skin and feathers of an ostrich. I had heard of this manner of stalking game and was excited at the prospect of witnessing such a hunt. For two or three hours we trekked, the disguised bushmen strutting on in front of me, imitating, to the life, the peculiar gait of the ostrich. Finally we made a shelter from the rays of the sun in the side of the sand-dune. Here we waited patiently.

"The hunters strutted up and down evidently having the time of their lives. Other bushmen, Cagn told me, had gone to drive the zebra toward us. It was their business to allow the zebra to get their scent gradually, so as not to stampede them, and force them our way. The sun was in its zenith when Cagn said:

"'Zebra come.'

"He was disgusted, I think, that I could not see them. As a matter of fact, it was fully half an hour after he spoke that I caught my first glimpse of them. It was a small herd, about twenty of them, and they were coming at an easy pace in the direction of the disguised bushmen. When the zebra were within fifty feet of them they hesitated—perhaps they caught our scent; then seeing the supposed ostriches they apparently came to the conclusion that there was nothing to fear and slowly advanced.

"The hunters remained motionless until the zebra were a bare arm's length from them. Then four bow-cords twanged and four zebras fell to the ground. The rest stampeded, but not before I got in two shots, the second killing a zebra. The first

I missed because the cartridge had been for a long time in the hot chamber of the rifle, and the powder had become too lively. Though I was disgusted at my failure to make such an easy shot as it was, I soon discovered that I had caused a great sensation. All of the bushmen were down on their knees before me, terrified.

"That night was a time of great merriment, feasting, dancing, and the drinking of fermented honey. My praises, and the wonders of the 'stick that spits out fire' were sung aloud. I was treated with an even greater respect than usual, and my attendants told me that on the morrow I would see the Moon Woman.

"NEXT day I was ready for anything, but yet not ready for what happened. It was nearly sundown when Cagn came to me bidding me get ready. It did not take long to spruce up. A dip in the pool—that was all there was to it. Then Cagn and Cogas escorted me to the entrance of a large cave, which was in the center of the amphitheater. All of the little people were there, though they kept at a respectful distance from me. And soon Cagn and Cogas, after bidding me remain where I was, joined their fellows.

"I was conscious that they were waiting for the sun to set, and I not knowing what would happen then took stock of my surroundings, seeking an avenue of escape, should evil come my way. But there was no way out. Many conjectures passed through my head. The one that persisted with great frequency was that these people were given to devil worship and that I was to be the sacrifice.

"I noticed that a curtain of cloth covered the entrance to the cave before which I stood. That in itself was astounding—for the bushman is the most primitive of all people, and has no knowledge of making cloth—and when a closer scrutiny revealed that pictures of gold had been woven into it I was dumbfounded. Whence came this?

"The sun was setting. A shout went up from a watcher perched on the top of the gorge that the sun had sunk behind the horizon; and at that moment the people

began to sing a low-throbbing chant:

“O lady of the night, come forth.
Our tongues are parched; the land is dry.
Behold, Na-ka-ti, Son of the Wind.
Come forth and greet thy spouse
That from thee may spring the rains that
soothe and recreate.’

From the cave a voice replied:

‘I come, ye people.’”

“Behind me I heard the noise of running feet, and turning beheld the little people running to their caves. A half thought came to me to join them, but the desire to see the thing through was strong, and I turned once again and faced the cave.

“The curtains were parted and there stepped out on the narrow platform a woman—it was the woman of my dreams. But now I saw that she was not white, but of a light copper tint. Of the characteristics of the bush people she had none. She was tall and slender, her nose slightly curved, the lips perfectly formed.

“I can best describe her to you by saying that she looked like an Egyptian princess. Yes, that’s it, Egyptian. She wore a long, flowing robe, once white, discolored and worn with the age of centuries. A girdle of gold was about her waist, and she wore bracelets on her arms of the same metal. And there she stood with arms outstretched as if I were a long-lost brother. As for me, I bade her ‘good afternoon’ in English, and stood there grinning like a fool. She answered in the bushman dialect.

“‘Greetings, O my spouse to be. I have waited long for thee.’

“‘What mean these words? And who are ye?’

“‘What, dost not know? Enter and rest.’

“I followed her into the cave, which was about twice the size of mine. Her bed I noticed was cut out of the rock about three feet from the floor. And there were many strange ornaments that reminded me of some Egyptian pottery I had seen in a museum. This is what she told me, but not connectedly as I am telling you:

“‘Long, long ago, the desert was once a fertile valley and our people, yours and mine, for we were as one, were numerous and happy. Everywhere could be heard the

song of birds and running water, and the sound of happiness filled the land. To this land came two white ones—man and woman—who were spirits. My people named them Son of the Wind, and Moon Woman.

“‘Long they dwelt in the land, and in all things the people obeyed them. This place, even here, was the place of their abode, here they dwelt, they and their children. Moshesh, a chief of the people, cast evil eyes on the spouse of the Son of the Wind, and by his craft killed the Son of the Wind, whose spirit called out as it left his body:

I go in the wind, and evil shall befall this people. But I will come again in a like manner, then shall ye, O Moshesh, feel my vengeance.

“‘On that day a mighty wind sprang up laden with sand from the great desert that is to the north. Many moons the wind blew carrying the sand, so that the rivers were filled up and many people died of the thirst. The spirits of evil walked hand-in-hand with the storm. Moshesh with the Moon Woman remained in this place, and many of the people also took refuge in the valley. When the Moon Woman died she, too, made a prophecy:

‘I shall come yet again to thee, my people, and wait for my spouse, the Son of the Wind. For three years will I wait for him after I have reached the age of marrying, then if he comes not I will wed one of the people, that in dying I may be born yet again.

“‘Many times have I returned to wait for thee, O Nak-ka-ti! But now thou art here, and the time of thirst is at an end.’

“Many other things concerning the tradition the Moon Woman told me, speaking with a kind of childish dignity. I learned that Moshesh had been turned out of the tribe after the death of the Moon Woman, and that he had been their bitter enemy ever since.

“When I returned to my cave my brain reeled at the things I had heard. And yet she had made much clear to me. It explained why I had been so well taken care of instead of being left to die on the desert. As to her story I tried to explain it this way. This woman was evidently a throw-back to some degenerate white man, or per-

haps her ancestry could be traced back to an Egyptian noble. Or perhaps a priest of Isis, false to his vows, fleeing with his love from the wrath of the high priests, had been captured by a band of bushmen. The rest, the prophecy and so forth, had been handed down the ages, each generation adding something, until it had become a tradition. Oh, I know it's a far-fetched explanation—but have you a better?

IN THE morning Cagn and Cogas brought me a long robe similar to the one worn by the princess and bade me put it on.

“‘This, lord,’ said they, ‘is the robe of thy betrothal. Tell us when thou wilt take her to thy cave, that we may tell it to the people.’

“You know, boy, that I have always had nothing but contempt for the man that goes ‘black,’ and it was far from my intention to enter into any sort of marriage contract with the princess. In spite of the fact that she herself had none of the earmarks of the little people, I knew that her father and mother were bush people, and that she herself was a bushwoman in everything but appearance.

“Blood, customs, mentality, it was all native, and the lowest order of humanity. Death would be preferable. Even if I did marry her it is quite sure that the rest of the prophecy would not have been fulfilled. And then what would happen? A slow death by torture for failing to turn the wilderness into a bloomin’ paradise!

“Still I was in no hurry to rush matters. It’s been my experience that given time, the unexpected always happens. So with this in mind, and at the same time seeking to act in character with my supposed godship, I replied:

“‘On the night of the full moon, tell the people, Na-ka-ti, the Son of the Wind, will take his spouse.’

“I watched them closely as they pondered over my reply, and heaved a sigh of relief when they threw themselves at my feet, saying:

“‘Give us leave to depart, O Great One, that preparations may be made for the feast.’

“Rising to their feet they ran down the gorge, calling out gleefully:

“‘The Son of the Wind hath spoken. On the night of the full moon the prophecy will be fulfilled and we shall be once more a great people and this land shall be fruitful.’

“As for me I determined to enjoy myself as best I could in the twenty days left me. Every day I spent hunting with the men folk out on the desert. Game was plentiful; this the little people attributed to my presence. Though I had nothing but admiration for the bushmen as hunters and for their intimate knowledge of nature, yet they disgusted me in many ways.

“They were but little removed from the beasts. And the princess, despite her superior appearance, was no better than the rest. One day we killed several large buck near the gorge and the whole colony came out and camped near the carcasses, and feasted. They ate the meat practically raw. I noticed that they left nothing for the jackals. The parts that we throw away as unclean were looked upon as a great delicacy and given to the princess. She greedily devoured it, all unwashed, as it was, and nearly raw! This and the sight of her eating a very ancient ostrich-egg doubled my determination to die rather than marry her. I could picture myself sinking to her level; it would have been impossible to raise her to mine.

“Although the nights were spent in alternate gorging, sleeping, and dancing a close guard was kept on the entrance to the gorge. When I questioned Cagn about this he told me that there was another tribe of bushmen, enemies of the moon people, who lived on the opposite side of the hills. They were under the leadership of Moshesh, the crafty one, a descendant, the Moon Woman told me, of that other Moshesh! Several times Moshesh had endeavored to raid the gorge, and it was to prevent a surprise attack that the guards were posted.

“It wanted, I think, about four days to the full moon. The feast had been conducted with an even wilder abandon than usual. The wild cries of the dancers vetoed all thoughts of sleep. After a time they, too, completely exhausted by their revels,

retired to the caves and all was quiet, and then I slept.

"I was awakened by the noise of wailing women, and the shouts of enraged men. Taking up my rifle and cartridge-belt I went outside the cave. Cagn was running toward me, bow and arrows in hand.

"What is the matter, Cagn?" I said.

"Moshesh and his people are attacking us, O Son of the Wind. By craft he overcame the guard at the entrance to the gorge, and now he and all his people are inside—killing. Help us, for they are many!"

"Taking shelter behind a rock, for I did not wish to exhibit myself to the poisoned arrows of the invaders, I called out, 'O ye people of the moon, hasten to thy caves and there remain until the morning. I, and the "stick of thunder," will settle with these evil ones.'

"From below came the cry, 'We hear, and we obey, O Great One.'

"Other voices mocked them. 'Yea, ye moon people, remain in thy caves like jackals. In the morning we will smoke thee out and kill thee. Thy women shall be our slaves.'

"Then there was silence, but I could see my friends hastening to their caves, and the invaders, evidently well content, seated themselves round the fires and began to make merry.

"Giving the moon people plenty of time to get to their caves before starting to open fire, and also waiting until the moon got a little higher, I found myself wondering if the princess were safe. As though in answer to my thought, I heard her say:

"I am here, lord. Cogas brought me."

"She looked very desirable there in the moonlight. I was all but carried away with the glamour, and I found myself thinking that, after all, she was much more to be desired than death. Oh, that blasted African moon! However, it was now directly overhead, and the raiders were below, a present peril to be reckoned with. Then my rifle spoke. It was slaughter, I know, but there was no other way.

"Six men toppled over before the rest realized what was happening. Then they scattered, in all directions, some of them getting close to the rocks below us, where

I could not reach them without exposing myself to their arrows. One of them, Moshesh the chief, made his way up the cliff face and onto the ledge. A cry from Cagn told me of the danger. 'It is Moshesh, the crafty one!' Covering him, I said, hoping to end the slaughter:

"See, O Moshesh, thy life is in my hands. Wilt thou give thyself up to me?"

"Nay, thou art in error,' he sneered; 'thy life is in my hands, and now I take it.' As he spoke he loosed the arrow from his bow. The princess threw herself before me and then collapsed. That same moment Moshesh dropped with a bullet through his heart.

"Picking the princess up in my arms I saw that the arrow was sticking in her cheek. The wound in itself was nothing, a mere scratch, but so powerful was the poison that she was already beyond help. She opened her eyes and smiled at me.

"I go from thee this time, my lord. But I will come again. Thou—thou wilt wait for me?"

"I nodded. Could I have done less?"

"AT daybreak the survivors of the people of Moshesh were rounded up, and at my orders were admitted into the tribe of the moon people.

"We buried the princess, the Moon Woman, in a shallow grave at the entrance to the gorge—her face to the rising sun. Several of the tribe that had been killed during the night's fight were buried near her, that their spirits might keep guard over hers. The tribe, I among them, filed slowly by the grave, each dropping a large stone on it, chanting the while:

"Remember us from the place where you are, thou hast gone to a high abode. Cause us to prosper."

"When it was all over I made a big speech to the people, reminding them of the prophecy and of the event which had led up to the death of the Moon Woman.

"Therefore, O ye people,' I concluded, 'I may stay no more in this place. The Spirit of the Moon has gone and I also must leave thee. But I will come again. Cagn and Cogas shall come with me. They, too, shall return after a little while, having

learned great wisdom.' It was a bold move, but to my surprise it worked.

"There is no need to tell you how I crossed the desert again, this time with Cagn and Cogas, save this perhaps. When we reached the dried-up water-hole Cagn began to dig deep down into the sand. In answer to my remark that there was no water there, and that we had better return to the gorge, he said:

"'Wait, O great one, have patience.' Soon he came to a large, flat rock, which he told me to examine closely. I did so and noticed that it had a hole in it which had been plugged. Cagn knocked the plug out and a stream of water flowed from the hole. On another occasion when we halted for a rest after a long, dry stretch, Cagn again dug into the sand and brought to light some eleven or twelve ostrich eggshells filled with water.

"When we came in sight of Namies, Cogas refused to go any further. He took alarm at the canvas-topped wagons of the trek Boers, who had returned to their old grazing grounds. Said that they were surely inhabited by evil spirits. Cagn, too, wanted to return, but I won him over by promising to teach him how to use a rifle. So I bade 'good-by' to Cogas, making him very happy by giving him a hunting-knife.

"We stayed a week or so with the trek Boers at Namies and then made our way to Johannesburg. I leave you to imagine what a time I had with Cagn. Several times he got me in wrong with the authorities, and I had to watch him very closely. When I tell you that I was forced to travel in the native coach with him, you will understand how I was treated by the officials—at least, those who didn't know me.

"Arriving at Johannesburg, I went at once to see doc.

"'Why, Bill,' he said, 'we had given you up for lost. The professor got tired of waiting for you. Said that you were dead, or else a fraud and had never intended going after a bushman. I had some words with him about that. He was very ill. He returned to America last month.'

"Well, I got the professor's address and borrowed enough money from doc to bring me over here. You see, I wanted to fulfill my contract and I had a good use for the five thousand dollars.

"Of the trip over—we came over in a wind-jammer, and you can take it from me that I wished myself back in the desert many times. As for Cagn—

"When we reached New York I left Cagn in charge of the mate and went to the address that doc had given me, only to find that the professor had died soon after reaching America. And my troubles started all over again.

"Cagn escaped from the mate, and I lost him for two days.

"Then I saw his picture in the paper and a paragraph to the effect that he had been arrested for stealing a leg of lamb from a store! Of course I hot-footed it down to the police-station and explained matters. But do you think they believed me? Thought it was some new publicity stunt. However, they released Cagn, and we sought lodgings.

"Every hand seemed against us. Cagn's idiosyncracies were too much for the lodging-house keepers. Sometime I'll tell you of my adventures with Cagn in New York.

"Well, there came a time when my money was all but exhausted. I couldn't get a job because it was impossible to leave Cagn. In a fit of desperation I offered him to the Zoo people as a specimen of the missing link. You would have thought that they would have jumped at the chance. Instead they tried to have me arrested for trying to get money on false pretences!

"The publicity I got out of this brought me to the attention of the agent of this circus, and he made me an offer, which I accepted. It's a rotten life, but Cagn enjoys it, and I'm making money. Soon I'll have five thousand dollars, and expenses, salted away. Then we return—

"Man! Is it so late? I've got to get back. Are you coming with me?"

"You've said it, Bill. All the way if you'll have me."

Coming in the December Issue of this magazine on sale Oct. 10 "The Afterglow"
A great novel by George Allan England.