

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE



Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. English office: G. M. Jeffries Agency, Hopefield House, Hanwell, London, W. 7. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 450 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright, 1927, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

## Contents for June, 1927

- Cover Design** ----- **C. C. Senf**  
*Illustrating a scene in "A Suitor From the Shades"*
- A Suitor From the Shades** ----- **Greya La Spina 726**  
*A human, touching ghost-story about a lover who returned from the grave to blight his sweetheart's happiness*
- The Dark Chrysalis (Part 1)** ----- **Eli Colter 747**  
*Here we have, at last, the epic of the microbe-hunters—a three-part scientific thrill-tale about cancer*
- The Fourth Dimension** ----- **Charles Ford 767**  
*Strange was Ripley's experience when his racing canoe turned over—a five-minute ghost-story*
- The Arctic Death** ----- **Wilford Allen 769**  
*Out of the North it came, that dread death that touched every living thing with a killing cold*

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

- Fog-Faces** ----- **Robert S. Carr** 780  
*Verse*
- Out of the Grave** ----- **Eldridge Morton** 781  
*Dr. Roousek had a weird plan to thwart his rival, but underwent an experience of stark terror in consequence*
- The Left Eye** ----- **Henry S. Whitehead** 789  
*A powerful story of crime and retribution—a tale of immense spiders and a gruesome murder*
- The Man Who Was Damned** --- **Charlton Lawrence Edholm** 801  
*Vulture of Vulture's Rock, Geier von Geierstein suffered eery torments from the man he had murdered*
- The Choking of Allison Grey** ----- **Guy Pain** 805  
*No white man was suffered to look upon the God of Windina and live, for the Mandingo people considered this a sacrilege*
- Explorers Into Infinity (Conclusion)** ----- **Ray Cummings** 813  
*A three-part weird-scientific serial about a madcap adventure and a voyage through space—and what a voyage!*
- Ghost Lore** ----- **Gertrude Wright** 824  
*Verse*
- The Dream That Came True** ----- **Victor Rousseau** 825  
*The tenth in a series of stories, each complete in itself, dealing with Dr. Ivan Brodsky, "The Surgeon of Souls"*
- Advice** ----- **Frank Belknap Long, Jr.** 831  
*Verse*
- The Land of Creeping Death** ----- **Edna Bell Seward** 832  
*A tale of wild and desperate adventures among a race of head-hunting savages in India*
- Sorcery Past and Present** ----- **Marguerite Lynch Addis** 840  
*Cagliostro, St. Germain, Murrell and other famous sorcerers are depicted in this enlightening article*
- Weird Story Reprint**  
**The Song of Triumphant Love** ----- **Ivan Turgenieff** 844  
*The exotic mystery of the Orient breathes through this eery tale of Italy of the Middle Ages*
- The Eyrie** ----- **857**  
*A chat with the readers*

---

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply Direct to

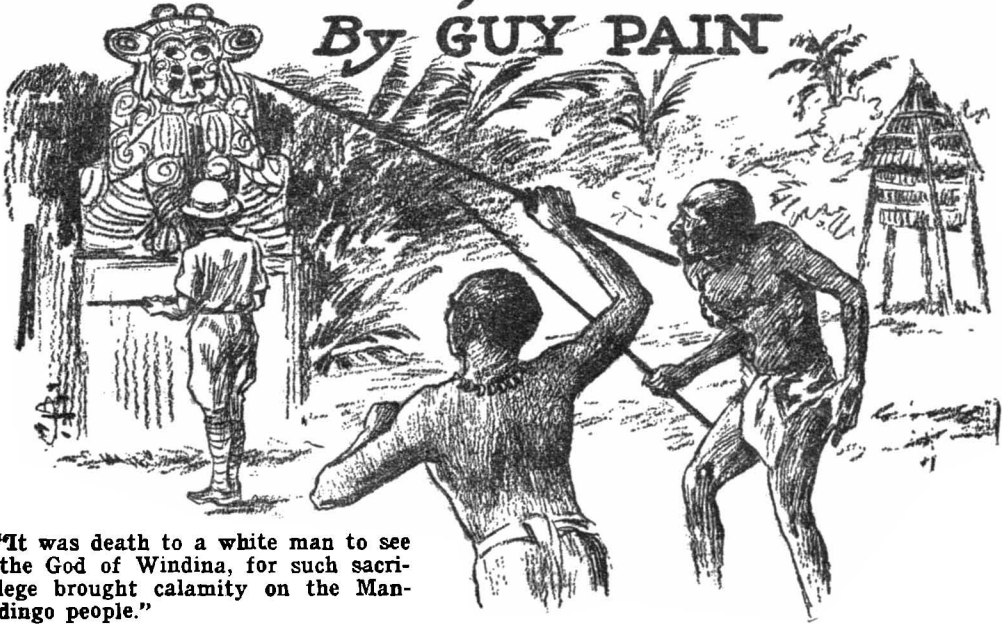
### WEIRD TALES

Western Advertising Office:  
WEIRD TALES  
450 E. Ohio Street  
Chicago, Ill.  
Phone, Superior 5556

Eastern Advertising Office:  
GEORGE W. STEARNS, Mgr.  
Flatiron Building  
New York, N. Y.  
Phone, Ashland 7329

# THE CHOKING of ALLISON GREY

By GUY PAIN



"It was death to a white man to see the God of Windina, for such sacrilege brought calamity on the Mandingo people."

THE smoking room of the Travelers Club was emptying rapidly. Many of the members were leaving for the theaters, and others preferred the billiard room, or the library. The obsequious waiters were still hurrying about carrying coffees, black and white, liqueurs and cigars, and over the whole premises brooded an air of quiet serenity.

There were four members of the Travelers Club in the smoking room, and each had drawn up a huge arm-chair so that they formed a semicircle before the cheery fire.

These four men were travelers all, and would have been introduced as Sir Henry Faber, K. C. M. G. K. B. E. F. R. G. S., to the right of the fire. Next him sat Sir Welldon Mainwaring, K. C. B., K. C. S. I. K. N. S., F. R. H. S. G. S., while Joseph Wilson, B. C. H. F. R. C. P., F. R. S. E., was the third man.

In the fourth chair sat the Hon. Stanley Bellchambers.

"By Jove," drawled Sir Henry Faber, "d'you know it is just five years this week since we have all met at the same time in the club? Then, however, we had a fifth. Where is he? Still shooting at lions and hitting monkeys? Old Grey always was a bad shot. I shall not forget the time when he shot a keeper in the leg. It cost £50."

"Yes, where is Allison Grey, Bellchambers?" asked Wilson. "He was a good sort, but he always was a muddler."

Bellchambers, the man appealed to, did not join in the laughter which escaped from the lips of the other three.

"Poor old Allison Grey has gone West," he said quietly.

Immediately the faces of the others assumed a solemn look.

"You mean to say!" said Mainwaring. "I'm sorry. How did it happen?"

"It is the first I have heard about this," said Faber. "The last I heard about him was that he was sailing for Liberia. Did he die out there? Or was he——" He made an eloquent gesture which spoke for itself.

"Allison Grey is not alive, and that is all I can tell you. He didn't die naturally, and he certainly was not killed."

"That, if I may say so," joined in Mainwaring, "sounds like a paradox. But how do you know?"

"Because," answered Bellechambers, "I was with him when his spirit left this earth. I will tell you the story." He paused, and then he sat up suddenly, and leaning over to Sir Welldon Mainwaring he said sharply, "Mainwaring, do you believe in mesmerism?"

Before he answered, Mainwaring thought for a few seconds. "If you ask me whether I really believe that one person can mesmerize another, with my experience of the Indian natives I say emphatically 'yes.' In my belief the so-called wonderful Indian rope trick is nothing but a hypnotic suggestion to the audience, who imagine something that never happens."

"Your two words, 'hypnotic suggestion,' Mainwaring, are the two words I have been hunting for. Listen and I will tell you of the passing of Allison Grey."

The men leant back comfortably in their chairs, and as a waiter came in answer to their ring, Wilson ordered a fresh supply of liqueurs. They soon arrived, and then the three of these men listened to a tale that enthralled even hardened travelers such as they. As the tale unfolded, their cigars died out, and the liqueurs remained untouched.

"IT WAS about eighteen months ago," started Bellechambers, "that I determined to make a trip into the interior of Liberia. As a matter of fact, my reason for making this trip was that during my previous travels in Liberia I had heard that in a certain village not far from the Niger, in the Mandingo country, the natives had a new fetish which was causing an extraordinary amount of interest, not only to the village itself and its neighbors, but for many, many miles around. As the majority of villages have their own particular fetishes, and their own witch doctors, it occurred to me that it must indeed be something out of the ordinary to excite such a commotion. It was said that there were pilgrimages being made every week from villages as far distant as fifty miles to see the wonderful fetish.

"In due course I had all preparations completed, and having hired twenty Vai men as porters I made a start. Of course it took me quite a time to get near my destination, but I noticed that the nearer I got to Windina, the name of the village at which the fetish resided, the quieter and the more secretive were the natives. Neither could my Vai boys get any information as to what the fetish was.

"One day I happened to strike the Epwesi village of Kinko, and having duly presented the chief with a present I was shown to the guest house, and here I lay down and went to sleep.

"In the middle of the night I was awakened by one of my Vai boys, who reported that one of the villagers wanted urgently to speak to me. I saw the villager, and learnt that Nogoni, the chief, was dying and had sent for me to save him.

"I went to see Nogoni, and found his face screwed up in pain.

"'Oh, Master,' he groaned when he saw me, 'I am dying of sickness.

Chief, save me, and I will do all you ask me.'

"I soon diagnosed his trouble and found that all he wanted was a dose of castor oil, which I always carry about with me for cases of this sort, which are frequent. This I administered, and told him he would not die before dawn, and that I would see him just one hour after the *siyi* (cock) had crowed.

"I kept my promise, and of course his pain had gone.

"'Chief,' he said, 'you have saved me with your nasty abominations. I will keep my word. Command me, and you shall have all my seven daughters as your wives.'

"I hastily explained that I did not wish his seven daughters as my wives, as I did not feel inclined to marry, but he could oblige me by giving me some information concerning the new fetish of Windina.

"His face fell when I asked him this, but he kept his word.

"'Oh, Master!' he began; 'five moons ago, I and N'Gesgi, the witch doctor, and some of the elders of the village made a pilgrimage to Windina to offer up prayer to the new God, and take presents. Oh, Chief! I may not tell you of what I saw, for it is death to any white man to see the God, for it is said that when a white man sees the God of Windina, then shall terrible calamity descend on the Mandingo people.'

"'Can you not tell me, Nogoni, what the God is like, whether it is small or large.'

"'Oh, Master! I should die if I told you, for M'Bena, the witch doctor of Windina, would order me to die.'

"At this I pondered to myself, for I could see that I could extract no more information from Nogoni. I must unconsciously have been thinking aloud, for while I was wondering whether they would dare kill a white

man for seeing the fetish, Nogoni broke in on my thought.

"'Master, they would indeed kill any white man who saw the God, for already one white man is waiting death, which will come when the new moon begins. He but touched the house in which dwells the new God.'

"'What say you, Nogoni? Have they dared set hands on a *nu-kule* (white man)?'

"'My face must have betrayed my anger, for Nogoni looked frightened.

"'Master, that is what I have heard.'

"'Under these circumstances it devolved upon me to rescue the white man, whoever he might be.

"FOR some days I traveled through the bush, and then crossing through an extremely thick belt of forest I approached Windina. I sent one of my Vai boys forward with some handsome presents for the chief, and also a present for the fetish. He soon returned with the insolent message that I must not enter the village but that Bebioni would condescend to come to meet me. Presently arrived some Windina boys with reciprocal presents, and a message to the effect that Bebioni was on his way. He arrived a few minutes later with a retinue of warriors and wives, and the elders of the villages. On seeing my party they halted. I stepped forward and Bebioni did the same.

"'Chief,' I said, 'wherefore am I bidden not to enter your village when I come on a peaceful errand, and have sent you presents?'

"'Master,' he replied, 'you know of the new God of Windina, and you would set eyes on the God, but the good God has communicated to M'Bena that no white man may defile its presence.'

"'And wherefore to good M'Bena, the witch doctor, comes this madness

that he bids the white man begone? Oh, Bebioni, you know the power of the white man, and if you kill one, then will come many hundreds of others with sticks of fire which go pop-pop-pop, and will kill many score with a streak of lightning. Then your Good God would blame Bebioni for their deaths.'

"He was visibly impressed by my rating of the powers of the European, and least of all did he like the mention of the blame being put on his shoulders by the Good God. Seeing this I pursued my advantage still farther.

" 'Bebioni, the stick of fire which goes pop-pop-pop has whispered into my ears that there lies in your village a white man.'

"His eyes fell before mine, and he shifted uneasily from one foot to another.

" 'Master, I know not of what you speak.'

" 'Bebioni, that stick of fire which goes pop-pop-pop has whispered into my ears that when the new moon begins, that white man will be sacrificed to the Good God because the white man began to lay his hands on the building of the Good God. Furthermore, if that white man die, then will come many white men and the gun will go pop-pop-pop, and many lives will be lost.'

" 'Master,' he replied in a weak voice, 'the gun which goes pop-pop-pop has told you wrongly.'

" 'Bebioni, already I hear the popping of the gun and see many natives dying, I see many white men seizing Bebioni, and they throw a rope over the tree, and Bebioni is hanging by the neck.'

" 'Master, he shall be released.'

" 'Bebioni will invite me into the village.'

" 'Master, Bebioni wishes you to stay in Windina.'

IN DUE course and with proper solemnity I marched into the village with my twenty Vai boys. We were greeted with scowls, but were not molested, and I was shown to the Guest House. Soon a messenger arrived asking me to meet Bebioni.

"I followed the messenger and we arrived at a meeting of the villagers. Seated in a big chair was Bebioni, who was surrounded by his wives, and elders of the village. At his right hand was the chief witch doctor, who, I judged, and rightly, as I afterward found, to be M'Bena. Squatting in a semicircle round the chair were the natives of the village.

" 'Oh, Master,' cried Bebioni when he saw me approaching, 'I have invited you hither in order that you might tell the gun that goes pop-pop-pop that the white man is to be released. Fetch the white man!'

"I was watching M'Bena's face as Bebioni said this, and if ever I saw a face containing a look of cruel vindictiveness and cunning it was then. I trembled for the white man. There was a stir as some of the natives returned with the captive. I did not recognize the dirty face and the unkempt appearance till the prisoner gave a cheery laugh, and then I knew I was face to face with Allison Grey."

The speaker paused and there was a quietness in the smoking room. Not a sound was heard, until Mainwaring found his cigar was out, and struck a match to relight it. Wilson, suddenly discovering a waiter at his side, saying, "Did you ring, sir?" knew then that it was the fourth time the question had been asked, but the other three times it had not reached his consciousness.

"No," he said irritably and waved him away, but a voice came from behind the four: "Yes, John, a Curaçoa." The four looked up, and to their surprize found several of the members had come in during the

story and had drawn up to listen. "Go on, Bellechambers, don't mind us, we won't interrupt," said one of the newcomers, and he went on: "But you were all so absorbed that you did not notice me, and I was so interested I took the liberty of listening."

"That's all right," said Bellechambers with a far-away look in his eyes. Presently he continued.

"You can imagine what a surprize I had when I found that the white man I had rescued was our old friend Allison Grey.

"'Hullo, old chap!' he yelled over to me in English, 'you didn't expect to find me here, did you? Say, though, who won the Derby?'

"You all know the kind of ass Grey was, but he was no coward. I think he would have made a joke with his executioner had he ever been hung.

"Bebioni now spoke. 'White man,' he said to Grey, 'you, who put hands on the sacred building of the Good God, you should have died. Ay, and you would have died on the first night of the New Moon as *Ndyara* (the lion) uttered his first hunting call, if Chief Bellechambers had not told me of the gun which goes pop-pop-pop. Had you set eyes on the Good God nothing would have saved you, for the Good God would have protected us from the pop-pop-pop gun.'

"All would have been well now, for Grey was free, and Bebioni in a good temper. We could have left at once, and Grey would have lived to have told this tale, but like the cheerful idiot he always was, as usual he put his foot in it.

"'Pah!' he cried, and snapped his fingers, 'I don't care that much for your blessed old God! It can't harm me!'

"Pandemonium broke loose, for the natives rose up with a shrill yell and in another moment they would have rushed us both, and neither of us would have lived another second, but

Bebioni and M'Bena halted them just in time.

"'Peace!' called out Bebioni in a huge voice. 'I have granted the white man his liberty.'

"The natives sullenly squatted once more, but many were the scowls that Grey received.

"Then M'Bena spoke. 'Listen, white man,' he said in quiet tones, 'listen, you who put hands on the house of the Good God, and look at me.'

"Grey looked him in the eyes, his lips and nose sneering. M'Bena's glance caught and fixed his eyes to his own, and Grey stood there bound by a stronger will than his to look into M'Bena's eyes, while M'Bena in slow monotonous tones recited the following: 'Listen, oh doomed white man, listen to the edict of M'Bena, the witch doctor, the devil doctor, the right hand of Bebioni, the chosen of the Windina, and servant of the Good God, listen to me, I say: by the grace of Bebioni, chief of the Windina in the Mandingo country, you, who have mocked the Good God, shall suffer. No native hands shall touch you, for we fear the pop-pop-pop gun, but you shall die. Yes, you shall choke to death. On the first night shall you fear much and sleep not, on the second night less fear shall you feel, and on the third be quite easy, and mock the Good God once more. But on the fourth night you shall dream of being choked, and wake to find it but a dream. Then shall you rejoice. On the fifth night once more you shall dream and once more wake still to feel the fingers choking. On the sixth night no sleep shall you get for the fear which will consume you, and on the seventh night, when the new moon rises for the first time, then shall the unseen fingers of the Good God strangle you till breath ceases, and you will know the power of the Good God. Chief Bellechambers shall live, for he respects the Good God,

and the Good God is pleased with the presents which the chief sent. Thus says M'Bena, the witch doctor, the devil doctor, the right hand of Be-bioni, the chosen of the Windina, the servant of the Good God.'

"The chant came to an end and Grey shivered, and I could see the sweat pouring from his forehead. Slowly he turned away, and in his eyes I saw a great fear.

"We left Windina soon afterward, and made for the coast again. Poor Grey never said a word for hours. The Vai boys also were quiet and every now and again would give a pitying glance at Grey.

"NIGHT came at last and we camped. Grey's nerve had gone and he could scarcely eat, and he would keep on casting frightened glances over his shoulder as if fearing an attack. The fire could not be made hot enough for him. Huddled in his blankets he sat there moaning. I tried to buck him up, but when I spoke he only looked at me blankly as if he did not understand what I was saying. It was some time before I fell asleep, and he was still awake then.

"The next morning he was better, more like his old self, and when breakfast was over he was laughing and joking with his old abandon. He tried to shoot a bubal hartebeeste which we saw, and with his old clumsiness hit something which squeaked quite ten yards away from the object. He kept lively during the day, but as evening approached he became quieter.

"Once more we camped, and he exhibited the same symptoms as on the previous evening, but to a lesser degree, and I had the satisfaction of seeing him fall asleep before I, too, joined him in the paradise of rest.

"I need say nothing about the next day, or even the next night, for he was just as you all knew him, a jolly

carefree devil, as brave as you make them, and as careless as a *yasiri* (hippopotamus). By this time he was ridiculing all that had happened in Windina, and treating it all as a huge joke, just as M'Bena had said he would. I must admit, however, that I, too, really did not feel any real alarm, because I did not see how a man could be strangled without the aid of a human agency, and it was only natural that the queer effect which the witch doctor's recitation had had on us should wear off with the passing of time. Therefore on the third night Allison Grey mocked the Good God and defied it to do its worst.

"On the fourth day we reached Nogoni's village again. His surprise at seeing Allison Grey still alive was only exceeded by his admiration for me for having effected the release of the white man.

"As it was after 3 o'clock and we had been traveling continuously for seven days, I decided to stop the night in the village, so we lay down on blankets in the guest house, which I will admit was kept decidedly cleaner than the majority of such places. The rest of the day we strolled round the village and talked to the villagers.

"When I went to bed I had a comfortable feeling that the episode of the Windina village was completely over.

"It seemed as though I had scarcely closed my eyes when I felt a rough shaking at my shoulder, and sprang up to find it was Grey waking me.

"Not in the best of humor at this summary awakening, I asked him what the devil he wanted, in a somewhat angry voice, but when I looked at his eyes, what I saw there made me soften, for there was the fear of death in them.

"'My God, Bellechambers!' he shouted, and there was an awful ring



in his voice. 'Who's been in this place?'

"I struck a match, and by its flickering light found that with the exception of our two selves the room was empty. 'No one,' I replied, and thus questioned him in turn: 'What ails you, man?'

"Having satisfied himself that the hut really was empty and that no one, apparently, had entered, he calmed down and went on to tell me that soon after he had fallen asleep he dreamt that M'Bena had entered the hut, and putting his knees on his (Grey's) chest had clutched him by the throat and commenced throttling him.

"I persuaded him that it was nothing but a dream and at length he fell asleep again.

"The next day we bid Nogoni adieu, and I really believe he was sorry we were going, for he had taken a liking to me. He was not a bad sort, either, and his sense of humor was undoubtedly strong, even for the natives, who are as a whole decidedly humorous, although perhaps some of their more subtle humor would not appeal to the European taste. Nogoni advised me to sleep at a village at which his sister's husband was chief, and as it was comparatively on my way, I decided to do so, and one of Nogoni's men came with us.

"During the march Grey several times referred to his dream of the previous night, and in some uncanny way it depressed him, for his spirits were very low; although why a bad dream should depress a person for the following twenty-four hours is beyond my comprehension.

"**H**AVING found Nogoni's sister's husband, we slept at his village.

"Grey seemed a bit afraid to go to sleep, but after some persuasion I made him realize that no one could get in without my hearing, and to ap-

pease him I set one of my Vai boys on guard outside the door.

"Several hours afterward I was awakened by terrible screams. Jumping up hurriedly, I lit a torch and rushed over to Grey.

"'Drag him off, Stanley!' he yelled; 'the beggar's choking me! I can't breathe!'

"His voice sank to a husky whisper while his hands clawed at his throat. I rubbed my eyes, but there was no one to be seen. I shook Grey by the shoulders and his antics ceased, and sanity returned into his eyes. He grasped hold of my hand as a drowning man would grasp a straw, and sobbed.

"'Stanley,' he moaned, 'why didn't you kill him?'

"'Who?' I asked.

"'M'Bena. He was on my chest choking me.'

"I examined him for signs of malaria but could find no trace of fever. 'My dear old Allison,' I said to him gently, 'no one has been in this house since we both came together,' and I called the Vai boy, who corroborated my statement.

"I decided that we had been marching too much, and the heat was affecting Grey's brain, so I made up my mind to stop for three days at the village we were in—I forget its name at the moment. Grey seemed rather glad.

"The following morning he was even more depressed than the day before, and he just sat and shivered the whole day long. When night came he begged of me not to go to sleep, and to oblige him I said I wouldn't, but my flesh or brain was stronger than my will-power, and I fell asleep. Nothing awakened me, however, but when I awoke in the morning I found Grey had not slept a wink, the whole night through, and his eyes had sunk in and his cheeks were hollow.

"He clung to me like a little child, and when the Vai boy brought some

breakfast in, he scarcely had strength to lift the spoon to his mouth, and half of the food slopped over the side and messed down his trousers.

"In vain I tried to cheer him up and tell him we would soon reach the coast, and then England. Nothing could move him, and he just clung to me and moaned and sobbed.

"Don't let him come tonight, Stanley! Shoot him if he comes near. For God's sake protect me!" And that is how he kept on the whole day long. I offered him a native-made cigarette, made by one of my Vai boys out of native tobacco, but he turned it round and round in his fingers and looked at it as if he had never before seen a cigarette. When I placed it in his mouth and lit it he puffed at it two or three times and then threw it away.

"The long day dragged painfully on and on. The midday meal was brought in, and this time Grey would not touch it. As the afternoon drew on his mind partly broke, and he took me for M'Bena, and seized my throat. I struggled in vain; with the strength of a madman he treated me like a baby, and had it not been for some of my boys entering at the sound of the struggle my life would have been ended there and then. This I treated as a lesson, and so I arranged for six of my boys to stay up and look after him during the night.

"As darkness fell he recovered his sanity, and also his fears, and he cowered in a corner, covering his face with his arms.

"The night dragged on slowly. All the surrounding jungle was awake, and I could hear the animals uttering their different hunting cries. Instinctively I waited for the roars of the lion. Once I heard him giving a long wailing cry as he called for his cubs and mates to follow him, and I looked sharply over to Grey, but nothing happened.

"Then suddenly, arising above all other sounds of the jungle, I heard the roars of His Majesty as he hunted, and it sounded like the deep reverberating rolls of distant thunder.

"My God! my throat! He is at my throat!" Grey yelled out, and a faint beam of the New Moon shone through a crack in the door. He threw himself on the floor, rolled about in wild paroxysms, and clawed at his own throat.

"Get hold of his arms!" I shouted to the terrified boys. They did so, and it required all our combined strength to hold him down. There was a gurgle in his throat, and his eyes rolled fearfully. Then as the loud roar of the lion died away I heard the death rattle in Allison's throat.

"I struck a match, and on the skin were two purple blotches just as if Grey were strangled to death."

"A JOLLY fine yarn, but a pure coincidence," said one of the members who had been listening.

"Perhaps," answered Bellchambers slowly.

