THE IDEALIST

BY

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SCRUB and bush and rock, and from the top of every rise a spreading panorama of hill-country, uncouthly carved and torn into spires and buttresses of stone and earth. Through such a landscape Carew led his carriers inland from the Portuguese coast, and had long since passed the line at which the languid administration stops. He was in wild country now, where no law runs but the law of the stronger arm and the rifle. It was drooping to the close of a still afternoon. Vehement heat held all nature crouched voiceless, and as he trudged, winding in and out between boulder and thorn, the acrid red dust puffed up in clouds below his tread and joined itself to the fog raised by the boys. These — mute, lean, black men — jogged in single file behind him, dumb beasts of burden, loaded with bulging bundles and boxes and some of Carew's guns. There was thirst and weariness in the aspect of the party; it is no light thing to break camp at daylight and trek by compass and guess eleven hours to the next water.

"By what I've heard," mused Carew anxiously, "there's a white man living somewhere round here."

They were flagging up a narrow natural path to the top of a shoulder now, Carew bending wearily forward and plodding doggedly, the Kafirs straggling unevenly behind him. Tall aloes, crowned with long cockades of blood-red, were on each side of him, dusty green and motionless, casting no shade, and he came out from between them at the head of the path to a clear view of a mighty valley below and in front of him.

"At last!" he said, and paused to take breath.

Far away, trembling delicately in the heat-haze, beyond a dozen spurs of grassed hillock, there were huts to be seen, four huts in a semicircle. No Kafir builds so. Despite the quiver of the heat-loaded air, they were to be seen as clearly as a toy near at hand. Carew could mark the shade beside them and the black dots that stood for their doors. With some strain of staring, he could even see a wisp of smoke shredding itself from among them, where some one would be busy at the world-wide work of pot-watching. The view came to him like a warm word. In that wild country, one comes upon a white man, no matter who or what, with claims and duties. The color of one's skin is one's passport to help and hospitality.

Carew called to the leading-boys.

"Lapa lo kia," he said cheerily, pointing them the distant huts. "Lo kia k'umlungu. There is the house of a white man."

He led off briskly again, and they, after a gape at the huts, nonchalantly hoisted the loads of which they had eased themselves, and followed without a word. Their instinct was to accept circumstances, and good luck in the matter of a near destination was no more to be exclaimed at than bad luck in having to travel at all. The Kafir takes fate lying down, a thing to know when one is adjusting fates. They tailed after Carew downhill, and commenced the punishing tramp of six miles which remained of the day's task.

It was in the velvet of evening that they came round the knee of a hill to the huts. The smell of a fire scented the air, and a white man came out to meet them. He was an elderly man, powerfully built, with a ragged beard streaked with age, and he lacked something of filling his clothes. He walked with a slouch, and greeted Carew without surprise.

"How are you?" he asked. "Saw you trekkin' in this afternoon. You're Billy Carew, ain't you? P'r'aps you don't remember me; I'm old Frank Brown — Mazoe Brown, you know. But come along in. My boys'll see to your niggers. They'll be all right."

He led the way toward the biggest of the huts.

"Mazoe Brown!" exclaimed Carew. "Yes, I remember you; but I thought you'd been wiped out by old N'komo. Somebody told me you had, anyhow. But how'd you get here, of all places?"

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The owner of the huts smiled faintly, and took Carew into the big domed *skoff kia*, the hut set apart for meals. A lamp on the rough table in the center lighted it up strongly. A meal was spread, and a bottle stood conspicuous among a few mugs. Everything in the hut betrayed its origin. The seats were short logs standing on end; a cupboard was plain soap-box. The table itself was a makeshift. There was nothing to indicate that the establishment was in communication with the coast and civilization. Any man trekking to the interior could have camped in the same style.

"I got a *kia* ready for you," said Brown. "You can have a sluice down right away. But you'll have a drink first, eh? This is whisky."

He had the bottle in his hand, and made the offer with a sort of pleased pride. Carew accepted the drink gratefully, and took a liberal tot.

"I don't keep a great deal of it by me," remarked Brown; "I don't ever manage to get a lot in, somehow. But it's good stuff, eh?"

"First-class," said Carew, looking at him curiously. Brown's eyes, and his parted lips, under his heavy mustache, were touchingly childlike. "First-class," repeated Carew emphatically. "I'll ask you for some more later on. I guess I'll go and dig some of the dust off me now, and after *skoff* we'll have a yarn. What do you say?"

"Yes, we'll have a yarn," agreed Brown. "You'll find a light in your *kia*. If you want anything, just sing out."

When Carew returned, comfortable and cool in cotton pajamas and canvas shoes, they sat down to their meal. Like the furniture, the food was all one with the place. There were no tinned luxuries, not even jam, and the *pâté de foie gras*, limp asparagus, and brick-red salmon of the conventional up-country table were entirely lacking. Instead, there was fresh venison and guinea-fowl, with oranges and bananas, and little cakes of mealie-meal in place of bread. It was almost as wholesome and satisfying a meal as one could well have, but it was unusual, and on a par with other things that excited Carew's curiosity.

They rose from the table together, and went to sit in the open, where the ashes of the cooking-fire still glowed redly. Carew cast himself on the ground with a yawn of content, and propped himself on his elbows to cut a fill for his pipe. Brown sat upright a few feet from him, and scooped out the bowl of his brier.

"Going to try my baccy?" asked Carew. "It's just common plug."

"Thanks," said the other gratefully, and commenced to shred the black weed into his pipe. "Tobacco's what I miss, living out here. I've been smoking Kafir stuff now for about two months, and it don't seem to get a hold on you like this does. It don't bite, somehow — just burns your tongue an' makes you thirsty."

He poked among the wood ashes before him, deftly shoveled a fragment of glowing wood on to the filled bowl, and drew strongly at the pipe.

"Thanks," he said, as he passed back the plug. He drew up his knees and clasped his hands around them, smoking contentedly.

"You haven't told me what you're after round here," remarked Carew at length, with closed eyes.

Mazoe Brown was looking up at the night and the great white stars. As Carew spoke his eyes came back to the dull fire.

"Me! Oh, I'm just pokin' along," he replied. Carew noticed in his voice an undefinable plaintive quality, an undertone of resignation. "I've been washing for gold a bit," he continued. "I've got a box or two in a stream that's hereabouts, and there's a bag of dust in my *kia*. There ain't much in it, you know. It's all right for me, 'cause I'm satisfied to stop here, but it wouldn't be the game, now, for you. An' then, I grow a bit of mealie an' some Kafir-corn, an' I shoot a bit, an' — all that kind of thing, you know. There ain't much in it, but it's all right for me."

"Didn't you have a farm or something at Mazoe?" asked Carew.

"A farm? Yes, I had a farm," answered the other, arranging the bowl of his pipe with a practised thumb. "But farming's no kind o' game in Rhodesia. Still, I'd 'a' bin all right there, only N'komo come and cleared me out. That's what's made blokes think I was dead. But I'm not."

He blew a volume of smoke in mild demonstration.

"What did he do?" asked Carew. "He's a beast, if he gets hold of a man."

"Oh, he caught me one night, and got the wife and the kid along with me. I don't know what he done to them, but he put the rat on me. I haven't heard of the wife or the kid since that night, so I guess he killed them."

Carew uttered an oath of sympathy. The brigand of whom they spoke was infamous for murder and a devilish ingenuity in torture. The idea of a white woman in his hands was sufficient to rouse any man to fury.

"But didn't you do anything?" he cried, and paused, baffled by the patient serenity of his companion.

"I didn't get a chance to do anything," answered Brown resignedly. "They got me

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before I woke. And in the morning they put the rat on me. That was a rotten thing, that was." He shook his head gravely over the thought. "A rotten thing," he repeated. "Downright rotten."

"What's putting the rat on you mean?" inquired Carew, interested.

"Ain't you heard about that?" said the other, with the mildest surprise. "I had a rat, you know, in a cage, to amuse the kid. It was a big rat, a fine rat. I never see such a sleek, gentle rat as that one. I caught 'im in a corn-bin when he was a youngster, an' fixed 'im up with a cage, an' fed 'im. He was as tame as a dog, and he used to sit on my shoulder and climb over me when I took him out. The kid was right down fond of him, an' named him Jumbo, after a picture in a book she had. I've seen them two on the floor lookin' at the pictures together, an' old Jumbo gnawing the corners of the pages. Well, N'komo's chaps stretched me out on my back, stark starin' naked, in the yard, an' pegged me down like that. Then they put one of those three-legged pots upside down on my stomach, an' stuck old Jumbo under it. He was as quiet as a lamb, sittin' there on me, till they took an' put hot coals on the bottom of the pot an' made it too hot for him."

Brown paused and looked inquiringly at his hearer. "You never been bitten by a rat?" he asked mildly.

"Never," answered Carew.

"Well, a plain bite's bad enough; but when old Jumbo got too hot he started to dig his way out. Bitin' was nothin' to it. He'd bit me before in playing about, but nothing to talk of. I was lookin' round to see if they'd got the wife and kid there, to make 'em watch me; but I couldn't see 'em anywhere, an' then old Jumbo started to claw and bite his way through me, an' — an' — I began to yell. I did, honest."

"God! enough to make a man yell!" said Carew, shuddering.

"Yes, it was bad. Jumbo was a fine, strong rat, an' we'd fed him up like a lord. He was just divin' down into my bowels when old Dave an' Mills an' that lot come along."

He paused, and added simply: "I was glad to see them."

Carew vented a dry sputter of laughter.

"I was very glad," said Brown. "They came just in time to take the pot off, an' old Jumbo jumped and ran to his cage before Dave could land him. I'd got a hole in my guts, but it's all right now — bar the marks. I'll show you when we go in."

"But didn't you try to find your wife?" asked Carew.

"Oh, yes, we tried. There wasn't a sign of anything about the place — not even blood. We followed N'komo's lot, and got some of 'em, but we couldn't make 'em tell. I never heard of 'em again — the wife an' kid. N'komo's got a trick of buryin' people alive. Have you heard of that?"

"I didn't know just what he did to them," said Carew. "I knew it was something awful."

"Yes, he puts 'em in a hole and shovels the earth in — while they're alive. But my wife was a pretty woman; perhaps he kept her."

Carew rose to a sitting position, and took the pipe from his mouth.

"How the devil can you talk about the thing like that?" he demanded. "Why, man, can't you see that the only thing on this earth that's left for you to do is to get a grip on N'komo's throat, if it kills you? God!" he cried, warming, "I wonder you can even think of the thing!"

Brown looked up as Carew commenced to speak, but lapsed again to his dreamy musing over the fire before the last sentence was spoken.

"It makes my blood run cold to even hear about it," Carew concluded.

"Yes, I used to be that way, too," said the other patiently; "but somehow I got used to it. I bin thinking a lot about it, and I must ha' got used to it; all the same ——"

"What?" demanded Carew, after waiting for him to finish.

"All the same, p'r'aps it'll be me an' N'komo for it yet," said Brown, quietly as ever. "This is N'komo's own country," he went on. "Maybe he'll be coming through here again, some day. Me an' Jumbo'll be glad to see him."

"Now, you don't mean to tell me," shouted Carew, "that you've actually got the blessed rat here?"

"Jumbo? Oh, yes, Jumbo's here," answered Brown. "He's a fine rat — Jumbo. You never seen a fatter one. I'll show him to you, poor old Jumbo!"

"Well, I'll be hanged!" ejaculated Carew.

When they returned to the *skoff kia* for a drink before turning in, Brown brought forward a paraffin-tin, the top of which was covered with wire netting, and laid it on the table.

"This is Jumbo," he said. "You look at him an' tell me if he ain't a fine rat!"

The beast was huddled on some dry grass at the bottom of the tin, and turned up his bright, beady eyes as Carew looked in. It was a huge, sleek rat, very fat, and the man sickened inwardly as he looked down at the complacent silken creature and thought of Mazoe Brown screaming on the ground as it tore its way through his flesh.

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"Put the blasted thing away," he said, drawing back from it.

"All right," replied Brown submissively. "But he's a fine rat, isn't he?" he asked.

"A big brute," Carew allowed, and his host replaced the cage in its box.

"And there are the marks," he continued, fumbling at his belt.

"Don't bother!" protested Carew hastily. "I don't want to see them. I hate looking at scars."

Brown had the belt loose, but he sighed resignedly and buckled up again.

"I know they ain't pretty," he confessed; "but," he added, with a sort of brightening, "they ain't common. There isn't many chaps with marks like that."

Carew had intended to camp for a couple of days at least near or at the huts, but next morning he got his boys together and, bidding farewell to Mazoe Brown, pushed on. He was firmly convinced that his host was mad, and, while apprehending no harm from him, he had that shrinking distaste for one mentally afflicted which some natures discover toward sick people. The big rat had munched through his slumbers and got on his nerves, and accordingly he marched off, leaving Brown watching his departure wistfully but without pressing on him a request to remain.

Carew traveled on for nearly a week without any incident which deserves chronicle. The commonplace labors of the journey engaged him to the exclusion of all else until he reached the borders of a thickly populated Kafir country, when the first news of disturbance presented itself. N'komo, it seemed, was troubling the skirts of the neighborhood with a small following, and frightened natives were flocking in to the bigger kraals in hundreds. There was a tale of a murder or two, of robbery and hut-burning, and now that N'komo was about, the Kafirs were chary of incurring his anger by helping or at all dealing with the white man. They would not sell fowls or milk or grain. Everything had to be taken with a show of force, and, since direct robbery is never in the end profitable, exorbitant payment must be made. Carew advanced warily, leading his thoroughly scared carriers when he could, driving them with threats and a loaded rifle when they would follow no longer. His days were laborious and unthankful, and his nights must be given over to precaution and lonely watching; for the Kafir is the least reliable of all sentries. And there was always present the imminent gross danger of violent death to hamper his plans and circumscribe his wishes.

It was not until he had actually come into touch with N'komo's force that he decided to fall back. In the half-light of early morning, while he was yet breaking camp, a Martini spoke from the rocks a thousand yards away, and one of the shivering carriers who was cording his load pitched forward upon it with a grunt and a quick flutter of hands to his shattered throat.

"The devil!" cried Carew, and ran forward with his rifle, while the boys dived to the nearest cover and lay prone and still behind stones. He browned the rocks from which the shot had come for a vicious half-hour, wasting precious cartridges upon the slenderest chance of bagging a lurking brigand who was probably well covered by the granite boulders from anything less extreme than shrapnel. Then he rose and proceeded to organize his retreat, and, after much time wasted in coercing his boys into resisting what they evidently considered a manifest destiny, he got going.

The difficulties of that return are not easy to describe. Imagine a convoy protected and commanded by one man, the only one able to use weapons and willing to fight, filtering through the bitter hostility of a strange country and opposed to the most mobile force of any in the world. Food was only to be gained at the muzzle of a gun, and, when paid for, the payment must cover alike the value of the stuff and a horrid risk to the life of the seller. Imagine, too, that one man responsible for every detail of the retreat, the sole source of authority and intelligence — at once, in his single person, leader, scout, fighting force, commissariat, and cause. But for him, the boys would quickly have merged themselves among the surrounding natives; the whole affair, the danger and the strife, revolved about his narrow interests. For many days and nights on end he neither slept nor rested. Lives were in his keeping, and upon his meticulous care of them depended the safety of his own life.

By forced and devious marches he pushed his way back toward Mazoe Brown, selecting him as his base. On each side of him the country flamed like rank grass lighted in autumn. Old N'komo was back in his own country, pillaging his subjects with an alacrity and zest that his three years' warfare with the Mounted Police had nowise diminished. Again and yet again Carew exchanged shots with his force, and once tumbled an armed man handily over a kranz with a long shot in the eye of the sun. He was now nearing the point toward which he moved; but day and night it became clearer that he was converging upon N'komo's men, and that he stood an even chance of colliding with them before his rifle was supplemented by Mazoe Brown's.

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"By Jove!" he said aloud to himself, as he searched the landscape with his eyes one noon, "I'll come back this way with twenty armed Zulus one of these days, and I'll hang old N'komo as high as Haman. As sure as my name's Carew, if he doesn't bag me this trip, I'll bag him the next."

He was within half a day's march of Brown's huts when they stopped him dead in his path. Shots came from bushes right ahead; another carrier was killed, and the rest dropped their loads and scurried to safety. Carew climbed among some stones wearily enough, and commenced to fire cautiously at the flash of the rifles. He spent his cartridges carefully, never shooting without a definite target, and by the time the afternoon had worn to evening he had the satisfaction of having extinguished one industrious flash and held his enemy at long range. What the night would bring was beyond his guess; but he kicked his carriers to their loads and went into camp cheerlessly on the top of a wind-swept kopje, where water was not to be had and a fire was not to be thought of. And here, while the Kafirs got to their blankets and hid from the terrors of the day in sleep, he sat, his rifle across his knees, between them and surprise and an inevitable and horrible death.

He was heavy with physical weariness and want of sleep, and his nerves were worn raw by the omnipresent danger. Below him the bush whispered and rustled; he sighted half a score of times on the blackness of an aloe or the ghostly gray of a mimosa. The night was full of menace. Sitting there, finger on trigger, fighting against sleep and boring at the darkness, he realized how very faint was his chance of coming through to the morning unhurt and alive, if N'komo only chose to assault the hill. His rifle would do what it could for perhaps five minutes, and twenty rifles would search him out and still it. Then would come the butchery of the carriers and the looting of the loads, and the sun would find hacked corpses on the hill and N'komo victorious.

In the very pit of night after a spurt of rain the attack came. He was roused to fresh caution by the jar of a falling stone, and fired swiftly at a vague moving shape. At once the slopes were alive with enemies. Answering shots came from all sides, and they were upon him. The carriers squealed in their blankets as a bullet lobbed in among them, and the victim screamed with his pain. Carew tucked his long body in the lee of a big stone, and fired deftly wherever the blackness moved. But the rush was past staying, and before three cartridges had been spent the assagais were in the camp. He rolled over and tumbled a few yards down the hill, where he lay still, listening to the yells as the lithe Shangaan warriors obliterated his little force. It came upon him then that his responsibility was ended, and that now, for the first time, he should think swiftly of his own case. With the rifle in one hand, he scrambled in alternate recklessness and anxious caution down the hill, stumbling over bushes and stones and blundering in and out of thorn-trees. Ten minutes of it brought him to the level, and he waited in the shadow to reconnoiter. He heard somebody breathing near by, and the crackle of dry grass under a confident step. Soon he saw the man, a skin-cloaked Kafir, who came toward him alone, a bundle of assagais in his hand. He experienced a white fury of hatred toward this savage who walked so securely through the night, and, without afterthought, he stepped from his hiding-place and faced him. For an instant they fronted each other, motionless; then Carew, with all his force and his great necessity to back his arm, dashed the shod butt of his rifle in the face of the Kafir.

The man tumbled instantly, and Carew leaped on him with busy clutching fingers, to throttle him if he cried out. The man's body heaved slowly under him; he gripped the throat and shook it, and it was still. Thrusting his face close to the black face on the ground, he was able to see its contour, and marked a tuft of gray beard on the chin, and heavy low brows, bushy and white.

"By God!" he cried aloud; "N'komo, of all men!"

He rose to his feet and thrust the muzzle of the rifle forward to cover the man.

"Get up!" he commanded in a tense whisper, emphasized with a kick. "Get up, or I'll kill you where you lie!"

The Kafir sat up, groaning, and Carew silenced him with another kick.

"Stand up!" he ordered, speaking swiftly in Kafir. "N'komo, you dog, if you play any tricks, I'll blow your head in! Stand up!"

He booted the man to his feet and gripped him by the arm.

"N'komo," he said, "you're my prisoner, and you're coming with me. If you talk or stumble or halt, the vultures will have you. Go straight on toward the white man's huts by the stream, and remember that if we meet any of your men *you'll* die, whatever happens afterward. Now, march!"

The Kafir led on, and, with the muzzle pointed still forward, Carew followed close at his heels, grimly reckless but curiously exultant. He meant exactly what he had said: the life of the Kafir in front of him was forfeit at the least

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approach of further danger, at the most venial disobedience or the smallest treachery. Whatever happened now, N'komo was as good as dead.

"Get on," he ordered.

The Kafir led him through the night without a word, and Carew knew that this robber king would never find himself capable of sacrificing his own life to procure the murder of his captor. So long as N'komo was covered by the rifle, N'komo was no king. Once or twice only he dared to flinch or to pretend that he stumbled; but each movement brought the muzzle of the rifle into the hollow of his back, and a grim order sent him marching again. They passed on through the bushes away from the hill, and the noise in the camp diminished behind them. Carew knew well that all his Kafirs were dead long since; the shouts that came fitfully to his ears were those of the Shangaans spoiling his loads. The plunder would keep them busy for a safe while, and his chance of bringing N'komo alive to Mazoe Brown was a good one.

"Get on!" he snapped, and the silent man before him quickened his steps.

At dawn a score of small valleys and a wilderness of broken hills lay between Carew and his late camp. He called halt in a hollow, backed his prisoner against a boulder, and sat down to rest, the threatful rifle still pointing toward the chest of the chief. Even as he sat under the very heel of triumph, his weariness nearly overpowered him. Had N'komo not moved he would assuredly have slept, and this tale would have ended then. But the Kafir shifted too soon, and Carew started bolt upright and glowered at him.

"Do that again!" he cried. "Do it once again, and your wives will be widows!"

The famous brigand flinched under his fierce eyes and trembled.

"I never saw a robber king before," Carew said to himself, speaking in English and aloud, "and now I've got one here. Just a common, low, cowardly Kafir, too scared to move. A mine-boy, by God! who has murdered more white men than I can count on my hands and feet. And women, too — white women. N'komo, if I were you I'd invite a shot."

"Baas?" whined the Kafir, cringing.

He was a tall old man, rugged and massively built. His limbs were knotted with muscle, and his head was like a grand carving in ebony. One could imagine dignity and terrible power in such a man; one could see a Napoleon in the rough, an Alaric *en herbe;* one recognized the general that had made playthings of half a hundred resolute garrisons. All this was to be found in his face, in the energy and beauty of his superb body; but first and chief there was apparent the failing of the Kafir, the instinct of servility and acquiescence to the developments of superior force. Once he was cornered, once his back was to the wall, he had no reserves, no reinforcement of inherent power. He cringed and rubbed his calf with his foot like any cook-boy as Carew held him covered. He had led an impi through Rhodesia and Portuguese territory, burning, plundering, and slaying; had murdered and raped from the Limpopo to the Zambesi: but he could not dash on the one rifle that held him a prisoner at last.

"Get on!" came the order, and on he went. His very gait was changed. He shuffled now as a working Kafir shuffles along a street.

Mazoe Brown, slouching dreamily, his hands thrust in his belt, met them near the huts when the sun was high. There was no curiosity in his face; he accepted the return of Carew quite passively.

"That your nigger?" he asked dully, looking at N'komo.

Carew leaned on his rifle, utterly weary.

"Yes, he is mine," he answered. "If ever a nigger was mine, that one is. But you can have him. He's — don't you recognize him?"

Brown surveyed N'komo slowly, and a light came into his eyes.

"Well, I think it's N'komo," he said simply.

"Yes," answered Carew, "that's him. So I better shoot him right here. He's broken up my trip, killed my boys, looted my stuff, and given me the damnedest time I ever had in my life. And then, there's your business. So we'll make carrion of him."

He raised his rifle as he spoke.

"No," interrupted Brown hurriedly. "No; don't shoot him here. I don't want him shot now."

"Why not?" demanded the younger man in astonishment.

"Oh, there's plenty o' time," said Brown nervously. "There's no hurry. Let's tie him up for a bit, an' — an' — have some *skoff*. You look as if you wanted some *skoff*."

"My God! I do that," yawned Carew. "I'll do as you please. Get on, you!"

N'komo was disposed in a hut to himself, and Carew personally passed the lashings which secured him. His thumbs were tied together behind his back, his big toes similarly bound, and an additional lanyard went round his neck and the pole of the hut. An earthquake could not have released him, but three of Brown's sturdy Kafirs were placed on guard with murderous knobkerries as an additional precaution. Not until his escape was rendered inaccessible to all but miraculous circumstances did Carew sit and rest.

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He rose from the table staggering, with half-closed eyes, reeled to his hut, and turned in all standing. His need for sleep was peremptory and almighty, and he slept for eighteen hours without stirring. Mazoe Brown slouched in once or twice to look at him, went out again, and visited the prisoner. N'komo, Kafir that he was, had contrived to find himself comfortable in his bonds, and was nowise disturbed at the fate that awaited him. He did not recognize Brown, of course, and only blinked humbly at him when he entered and stood dreamily looking down at the chief. His survey was altogether unemotional and impersonal; only the mildest curiosity, the most commonplace interest, brought him to the hut.

"Do you want food?" he asked, as he watched the chief idly. The query was merely to "make conversation."

"Ya, Baas," replied N'komo.

Food was brought to him, and Brown cut the lashings on his thumbs, that he might eat.

N'komo devoured his meal with enjoyment, while Brown watched him, leaning against a pole of the hut. In half an hour Brown was sitting on the floor opposite the captive, and they were talking animatedly of old times. The question of their previous meeting was not allowed to arise, and they conversed on the best of terms.

When Carew awoke, he bathed and changed into clothes of Brown's, and issued forth in quest of more food. His host was ready for him, and a meal awaited him in the *skoff kia*.

"You'll be wondering how it all happened," he remarked, as he attacked the simple food with a strong relish. "I tell you, Brown, I wouldn't go through the last fortnight again for all the gold in the rivers. I've had a lively hell of a time, and landed back here with nothing but what I stood in — and N'komo. I'm almost content when I think of N'komo, if it wasn't for my poor boys, all murdered back there."

"N'komo says you were looting kraals," observed Brown impartially.

"Does he? by Jove! You've been talking to him, then? Did you find out anything about your wife?"

Brown shook his head, and colored a little. He spoke uneasily.

"Oh, I couldn't go bringing that up," he answered.

Carew stared at him in blank astonishment.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

"He's — he's — pretty done up," stammered the other, fidgeting. "I don't think he remembers me. When I showed him Jumbo, it didn't seem to remind him of nothing. He just stroked him and said how fat he was."

"You didn't ask him about your wife? You haven't killed him while I was asleep, have you? 'Cause you needn't beat about the bush, if you have. I don't mind."

"No, I didn't kill him," replied Brown; "I didn't do anything to him. I don't want to kill him."

Carew looked across the table at his host with an expression in which strong disgust was tempered with some pity.

"You don't want to kill him?" he repeated in a hard voice. "Well, I do, and I'm going to."

He resumed his meal, and Brown sighed. He looked wistfully at his guest, who refrained from meeting his eyes. When the meal was at an end, Carew fetched his rifle and went to the hut in which N'komo was. Brown followed him in silence.

The Kafir's hands were still loose, at which Carew frowned. As the white men entered, the big rat was seated on the prisoner's knees, and its small eyes glittered craftily at them.

"Cut him loose," ordered Carew, and one of the sentinel Kafirs laid down his brass-studded knobkerrie and cut the lashings.

Carew stood aside from the door.

"Get up!" he commanded. "Get up and walk out, N'komo. I'm going to shoot you. Want to ask him anything first, Brown?"

Brown shook his head and murmured inarticulately.

"Very good. Now, dog, get out!"

N'komo shuffled blinking into the sunlight, and walked a few paces in the open. He yawned, with his arms stretched behind his head. Carew stepped into the doorway and brought up his rifle to shoulder, to blot the brigand out of the list of living things.

The same instant, Mazoe Brown raised from the floor the heavy knobkerrie which the sentinel had laid down, and tumbled Carew to the earth with a crashing blow on the head. Even as he fell, above the thunder of blood in his ears Carew heard him shouting, "Run, N'komo, run!"

When he came to himself he was on his bed, and Brown was with him. He opened heavy eyes and looked, as a sick man looks, at his host. He realized with an effort that Brown was explaining things.

"He wanted to assagai you while you were lying in the door," Brown was saying; "but, o' course, I wouldn't let him do *that!*"

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GREAT AMERICAN FORTUNES AND THEIR MAKING

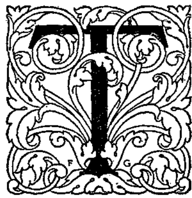
STREET-RAILWAY FINANCIERS—II

BY

BURTON J. HENDRICK

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF LIFE-INSURANCE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



HE medium through which Whitney, Ryan, Widener, and their associates have made millions in the transit system of New York has been the Metropolitan Street Railway. They organized this corporation in 1893; they have always controlled it, and, in the earlier years, they actually owned the larger part of its capital stock. Ostensibly the Metropolitan Company was organized for the purpose of managing and operating the transit system of New York; actually it was organized for the purpose of furnishing the necessary legal machinery for the exploitation of the New York City transit service to the personal profit of the inside syndicate. It was the means by which this inside syndicate manufactured millions of securities and through which they sold these same securities to the investing public.

Elihu Root and the Metropolitan

When they organized the Metropolitan Company, Whitney and Ryan added to their working equipment two remarkable men, both of whom have made large contributions to their financial success. In Elihu Root, now Secretary of State in President Roosevelt's Cabinet, they found the legal acumen which was so essential to their plans. By education, experience, and natural ability Mr. Root was exceptionally fitted to serve as Whitney's counsel. He had spent nearly thirty years in practice at the New York bar, and, in that time, had become probably the greatest corporation lawyer in the United States. He had also become well known politically as a reformer, an irreconcilable platform enemy of Tammany Hall, a leader in all causes making for good government and civic decency. Under the administration of President Arthur he had served efficiently and honorably as United States district attorney in New York; in his practice as a lawyer and in his career as a political leader he had already manifested those mental qualities which afterward caused President Roosevelt to describe him as "the greatest man that has appeared in the public life of any country, in any position, on either side of the ocean, in my time." His associates in New York, indeed, regarded Mr. Root as all intellect; he was quiet, cool, subtle, thorough, indefatigable — a beautifully adjusted legal machine. This quality probably explains the fact that Mr. Root has always shown interest rather in the legal than the ethical side of his cases. His attitude toward his profession was clearly illustrated in the litigation that first brought his name into prominent public notice. In 1873, when only twenty-eight years old, he served as one of the junior counsel in the defense of William M. Tweed, the great Tammany embezzler. Mr. Root fought so loyally in his client's behalf on this occasion that Judge Noah Davis, who presided at the trial, summoned him before his bar for contempt of court. With him appeared, under the same charge, Mr. Willard Bartlett, who has recently been elected associate judge of the Court of Appeals in New York State. Because of their youth Judge Davis excused Mr. Root and Mr. Bartlett with a reprimand and a few words of advice, cautioning them to remember that "good faith to a client never can justify or require bad faith to your conscience, and that, however good a thing it may be to be known as successful and great lawyers, it is even a better thing to be known as honest men." Mr. Root,

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