

# McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

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## A CUP OF COCOA

BY

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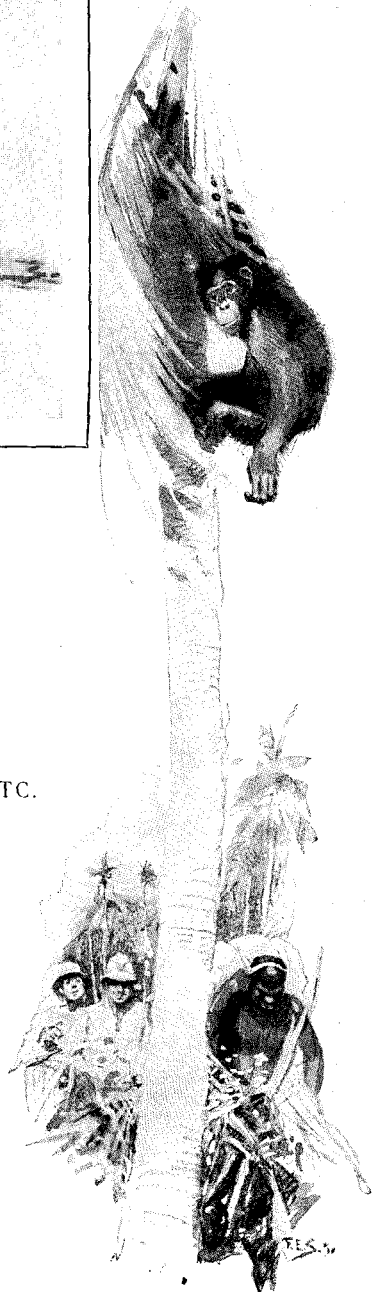
AUTHOR OF "BIBI STEINFELD'S HUNTING," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANK E. SCHOONOVER

*"And to shew Thy pity upon all prisoners and captives."*

ENGLISH LITANY.

**I**T were useless to deny that my joy at being received into the British diplomatic service was somewhat tempered when we heard what post had been assigned to me. Father, Mother, and I were seated in morning sunshine at the breakfast table, from which I scanned the autumn roses in our garden, and beyond it the vine-covered walls of one of our factory buildings. I remember I had chipped open my egg before opening my letter, having still the schoolboy illusion that diplomats are as the high gods—above excitement. "I have been made



diplomatic agent at Tellerey, West Coast of Africa," I said sadly.

"You might as well be a consul on the Styx," Mother declared with bitterness.

But Father disagreed, and took my assignment to this post as a compliment.

"Mother," he said, "if a man win a big stake in life, it's not to be forgotten. Applecourt's chocolate is the best on any market, and the best selling, and it's natural that our lad — being of a cocoa family — should be sent to Tellerey, for it's the largest producer of raw chocolate in the world — bar St. Thomé. He's been brought up on the condition of the cocoa laborers, and I tell you that the world wants to know about them now. My word! a cup of St. Thomé chocolate is made of sweat and tears, and it's a compliment to Applecourt's chocolate to have our lad sent out to a chocolate country."

My father always took disagreeable things as compliments. If people called him evil names, he found jealousy to be at the bottom of their abuse; and if they sickened us with their praises of him, he regarded them as sincere friends without the gift of acceptable expression. He infected the world about him with his sanity, and had risen to be much more than a Quaker confectioner in the eyes of the men and women to whom prosperity had introduced him.

He looked up now from his newspaper.

"Speaking of Tellerey," he cried, "how's this for a coincidence? 'The death of Marco Nosretap, sutler and general provider for many West African provinces, has recently been open to doubt, as he has been heard from in a letter without date but unmistakably of his writing. The matter has been referred to the Foreign Office, whose decision is reserved pending the arrival of a diplomatic agent at Tellerey to replace E. Snedcliffe, deceased.'"

He cut the notice from the *Times* and handed it to me.

After that it was mortifying that the Foreign Office proposed no special interview with me; but I hid this fact from my parents, with whom I had ever lived in closest intimacy, and went up to London from our chocolate metropolis as if I had been sent for. As I lounged in indecision along Bond Street, wondering at what hour I had best present myself to my chief, I met a man I loved to meet, Pieter van der Luyt, himself of a long line of Dutch cocoa people, and the fainéant proprietor of their latter-day company. He appeared suddenly in the murk of that autumn morning, his short, strong body imitatively dressed, and his wide, highly colored face full of welcome, but, as always, without a smile; for he possessed an almost animal gravity,

something of the stern repose of a lion's countenance or the serious immobility of a dog.

"Come home with me to-night," I cried.

"Gladly," he answered; "but what of the inevitable now? I want somewhere to go *now*."

"Come with me to Dowling Street. Did you know? I'm in the diplomatic service at last, and bound for Tellerey."

"Diplomatic agent, eh? Appropriate post for an Applecourt."

"So Father thinks. And how's life with you?"

"Horrid," he replied gravely. "I suppose it's because I can't remember my own mother that I can't see good in any woman but yours, so Paris of all sorts bores me. No one suits me in Amsterdam — they're better business men than I. Truly, I'm lonely as a desert island in mid-ocean. A few gulls have beaten against me — to the extent of broken wings."

"Poor you!" I said in real sympathy, for I knew what he said was true.

There was a nice outer room in the Foreign Office for him to wait about in while I interviewed Lord Rusheown, who was merely a name to me, and one that carried with it a terrifying association of ancestral halls and national service. I found, however, a small blond man in wonderful morning clothes, who seemed to me, after three minutes' talk, to be geography made flesh.

"I hope your appointment isn't a disappointment," he said suddenly.

"I wish to be of use," I replied.

"With your special knowledge you may be, there. Your father has made a phrase which has stirred evangelical England; he has backed it up by refusing to buy African chocolate. Am I right?"

"Quite, sir."

"Is he?"

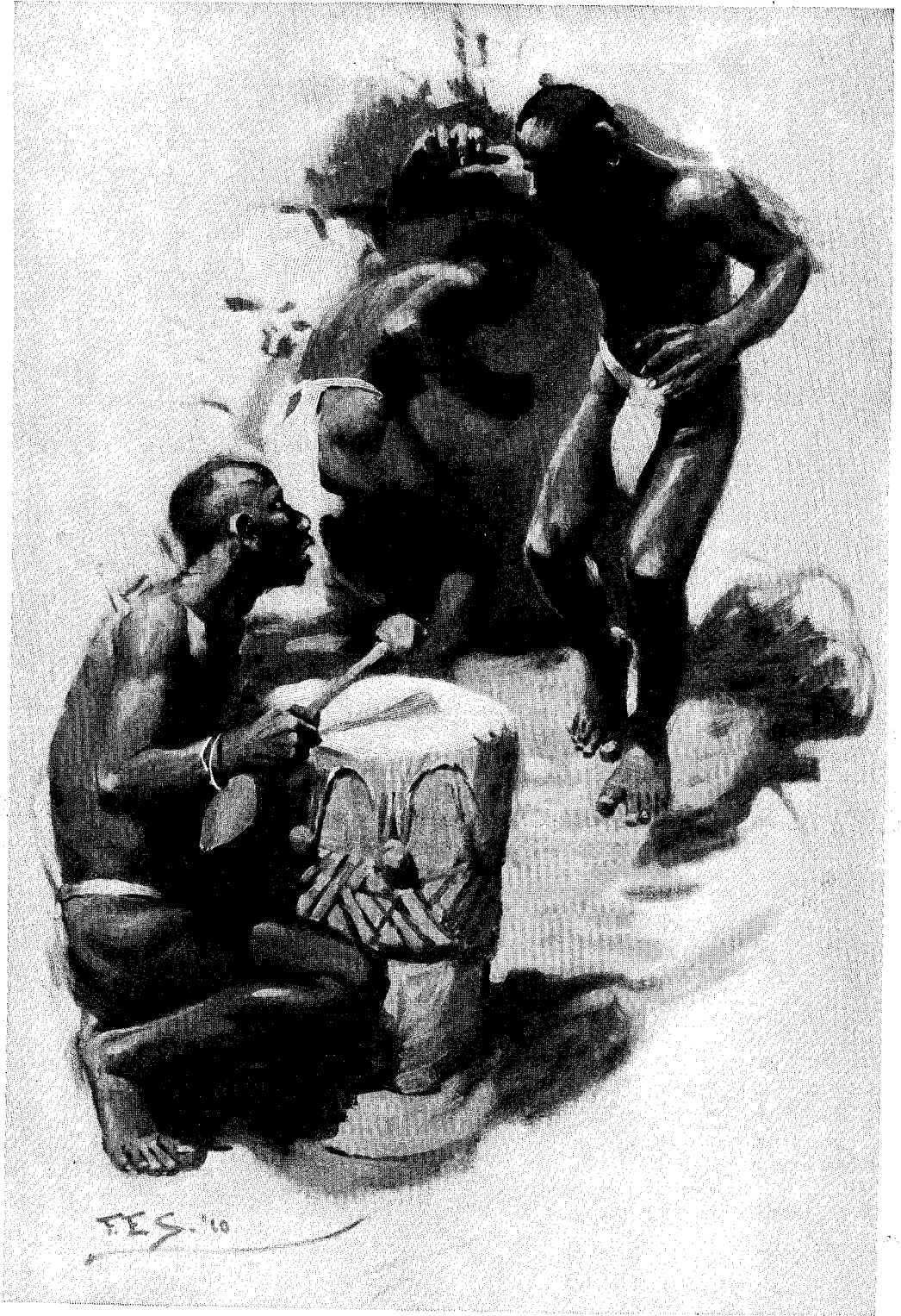
"I think so."

"Prove it. He says a cup of St. Thomé cocoa is made of sweat and tears, and he buys his stuff in South America, Ceylon, anywhere but in Portuguese colonies. The missionaries accuse any one of everything, like personified virtue in grand opera, and we know nothing of the real conditions out there. Get at the root of it, and — I don't have to say to you be discreet; you Quakers are canny enough."

I thanked him, and took my leave, with his wishes for my success. He called me back, and put some papers in my hand.

"You may as well take these with you," he said. "They refer to one Marco Nosretap, an alleged British subject. Just see if he's dead, will you, please? Good by, Applecourt. Remember, Tellerey isn't a life sentence."

At that I grasped his hand.



"WHEN THE FEASTERS WERE SATIATED, THEY RUSHED INTO THE  
CIRCLE OF DANCERS"



"Pieter," I cried, regaining the ante-room, "come with me to Tellerrey. Its products are chocolate and cockroaches; its inhabitants are cannibals; its mean temperature is 84° Fahrenheit, and there are no diversions. But come."

After a long silence he said he would go.

## II

We read the Nosretap papers together, and found that Marco was a Maltese sutler who dealt in Benguela, Tellerrey, or any West African territory, supplying soldiers and penal places with food wholesale. His headquarters were at Lisbon, where his wife had been advised of his death six months before by a Portuguese official. He had long before taken out a worldwide policy in the Fidelità Life Assurance Company, and, on the eve of the widow's benefit from this, a Dutch grocer found a note in a sack of cocoa beans he was about to roast. This note was undated, and purported to be from Nosretap in Tellerrey, saying that he was not dead. The letter was forwarded to the supposed widow, who put it in the hands of the insurance people honestly enough. They said Nosretap was a British subject, and in his youth had been a British soldier in the Indian service, and turned the matter over to our Foreign Office. His personal description declared him to be fifty years of age, of naturally white skin and marked tropical pallor, gray eyes and black hair, and in height five feet eight inches. He was further declared to have an aquiline nose; but, as Pieter's idea of the word aquiline and my interpretation of it were diametrically opposed, we dropped that feature from our consideration.

Dreams of Nosretap's rescue were of great solace to me as we contemplated our visit to Tellerrey. I often pictured him besieged by natives in some inland village — an excuse for me to indulge my desire for travel in the Hinterland — or sick and nostalgic in a far-away mission, kindly cared for by people whose language he did not know. For it was written in my memoranda that he could not speak or understand either German or Dutch.

But Pieter inclined to the belief that he was dead.

"Suppose," he argued, "that the sack in which that letter was found was shut out as cargo from a full steamer at Tellerrey,—that often happens,—then grant that it was over-carried after a transshipment which delayed it at Southampton, and you can have it consume six months between its despatch and its delivery, truly you can."

We talked a good deal about it to keep our

thoughts from home; for, no matter what a man may win abroad, partings such as mine are a heavy price to pay for either wealth or glory. The voyage out was quite without incident until we arrived very nearly at its end at St. Paul de Loanda. There we had to remain for eighteen hours for repairs to our engine, and it was pleasant to think of a meal away from the *Guelph* when we received an invitation to dine at the consulate with Mr. Arthur Hood, the British consul, who called upon us as soon as our ship came to a standstill in the harbor.

At the proper time we started by steam-tram for his house in the upper town, both of us feeling as if the curtain were about to rise on a drama of West Africa. The air of the island, twenty miles from the coast, was delightfully fresh, and the dignity of the town's denuded churches — patient as God himself is patient with the neglect and apathy of tropical moods and manners — soothed me with a sense of the eternal mercy which is inbred in Quakers, and a cheerful heritage. We passed rows of deep windows in houses of Portuguese pretension as to space and Arab obtuseness as to proportion, windows in which shadowy players confided love songs to a swiftly deepening dusk.

An indefinable sense of beginning, of dramatic prelude to we knew not what, held us both. We confided this to each other, and agreed that it was so long since we had been asked to dine that we were unduly excited by it. I was afraid that Pieter looked smarter than I, because he had brought with him his Frisian valet, Albertus, and I was depending on picking up a native for a servant. Presently we shot into a quarter of modern pretentious villas, where flowering creepers trailed from post to post, darkly pink or yellow beneath the softly fallen cloak of night.

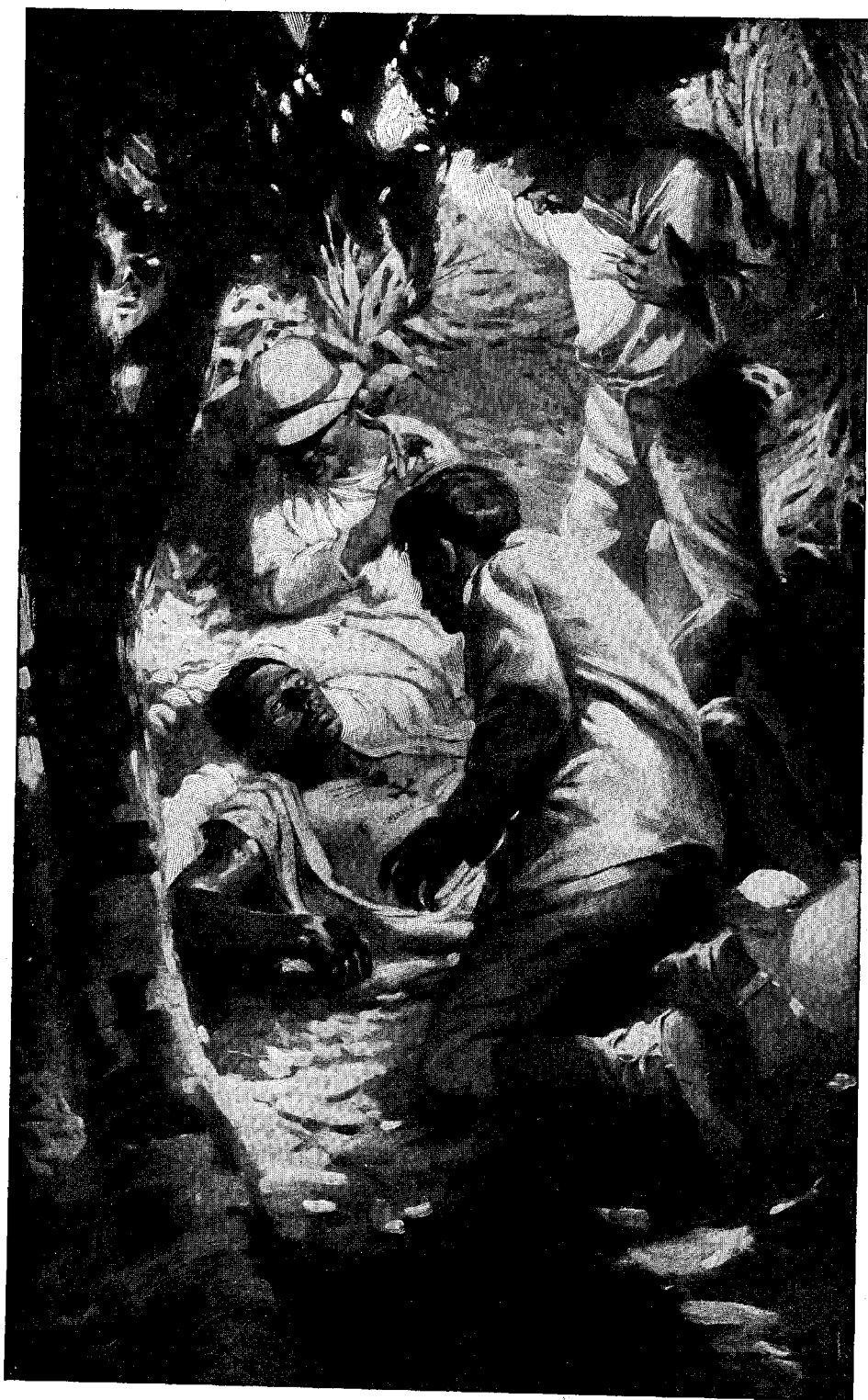
When we gained the consul's veranda, we felt like two flies entering a meat-safe; for it was inclosed in wire mesh against the mosquitos, and furnished with a heroic simplicity. There was a distinct interval between our welcome and our repast, so that I had time to ask our host if he had ever heard of a Maltese sutler named Nosretap.

"I knew him by sight in Benguela; the stores for our mess were bought from him, and he was the most energetic coffee-colored man I ever knew."

"I thought he was white," I said.

"So he was," Hood declared,—"opaquely white, as it were. He was white like all white men who have a touch of the tar-brush in them. But he was never the least bit *pink*; do you know what I mean?"

I answered, "Yes," and got in Nosretap's entire history as I knew it.



"ALBERTUS LIGHTED ONE OF THE LANTERNS AND HELD IT HIGH"

"Oh, he's dead — very dead, depend on that," Hood cried over his shoulder, as we went in to dinner. "It's hard to get lost in Africa in these days of telephones from water-hole to water-hole! You'll find a very informal Portuguese record, no doubt, when you reach Telleray — day after to-morrow, isn't it?"

We asked him about the prevalence of telephones, and he told us they were everywhere except in Portuguese territory. "The truth is," he cried impulsively, "that, with the cocoa industry conducted as it is, all modern improvements are a menace to official plunder."

Pieter begged him to be explicit. "Every one tells me how rotten labor conditions are, but I want instances," he said.

"Tell him about Pinto," at once suggested every voice at the table except Pieter's and mine.

"I wish," the consul replied, "that I could speak a happier prologue to your administration in Telleray, Applecourt, but you know how chocolate labor is supplied —"

"Don't apologize for another man's crimes," Pieter laughed impatiently; "just tell them."

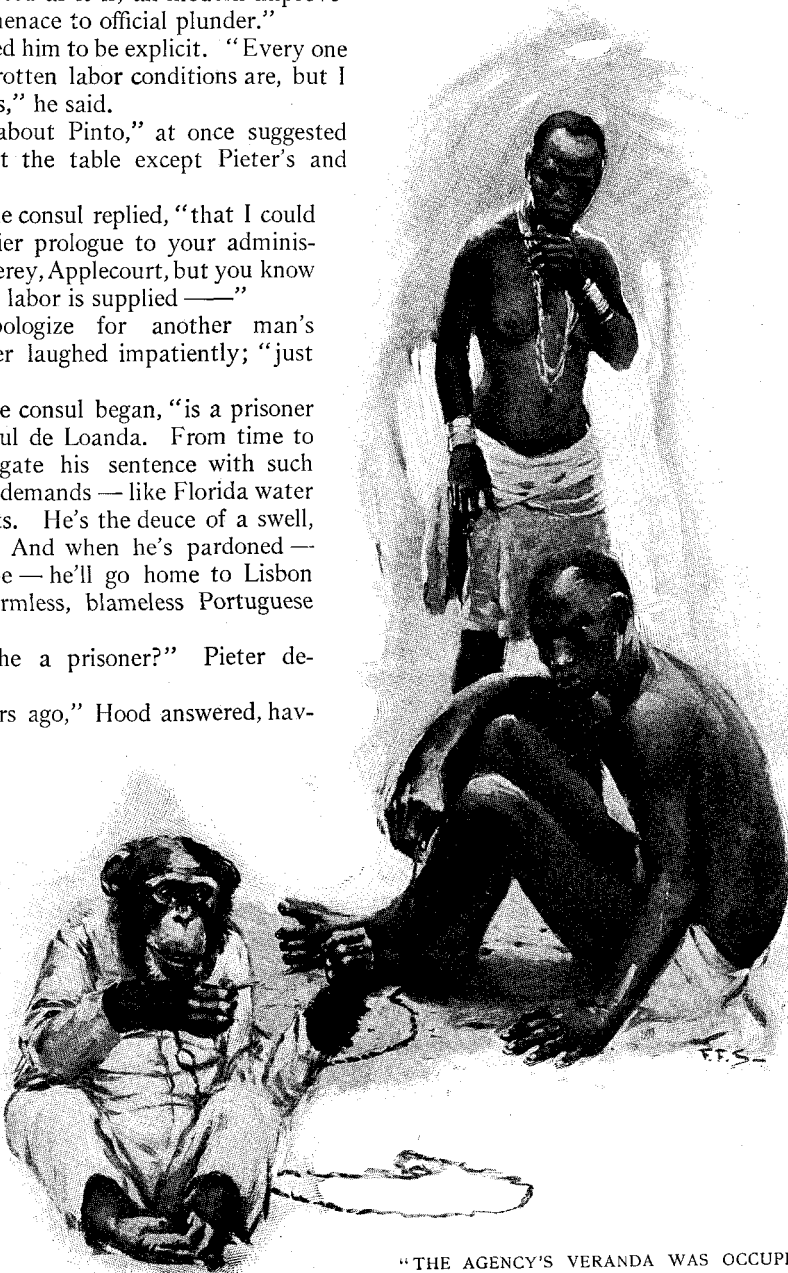
"Pinto," the consul began, "is a prisoner here in St. Paul de Loanda. From time to time we mitigate his sentence with such luxuries as he demands — like Florida water and pecan nuts. He's the deuce of a swell, is old Pinto! And when he's pardoned — and he will be — he'll go home to Lisbon and be a harmless, blameless Portuguese grandee."

"Why is he a prisoner?" Pieter demanded.

"Three years ago," Hood answered, having secured a general silence at the table, "I had my first consular billet — in Benguela. My predecessor had just died, and there wasn't any one to tell me about anything or anybody. My job was just about like policing Hades. All the impor-

tant papers had mildewed illegibly, and the snakes and monkeys and entomological miscellany made me afraid to get into bed at night.

"But one man, Colonel Pinto, offset all horrors for me. He had splendid nerve, a good house, a king among cooks, wine to match, and such service from his niggers as an emperor might envy. He seemed to me like a philanthropist in Sheol. His personal guard were quinine-fed, the boys who waited on his table



"THE AGENCY'S VERANDA WAS OCCUPIED  
BY A CHIMPANZEE"



were sleek and portly, and the atmosphere of creature comfort in his house was like an anodyne to the pains of that vile country. I used to say to him:

"Gad! if I had your money, I'd chuck it out here, and clear for Lisbon."

"And he would answer: 'What if I did? I'd have no authority there. Any gendarme could hold me up on a crossing to let a rag-cart pass.'"

"And I saw his point, gentlemen; we all like being big frogs in small pools!"

"I never inquired the sources of his wealth, but I was sometimes surprised at the lack of discipline observable in the two officers under him, and the absence of blacks for him to drill. Every one but the officers seemed to love him awfully,—really love him, d'you see,—and hang about him and lap up his drinks. But I never quite understood what had become of the four companies that were supposed to take punitive survey of his cannibal district, and report wrongs and racketings among the men on the cocoa stretches. And I never had enough interest in it to ask questions."

"One day some Lhassi blacks put a Dutch merchant on to boil. And, mind you, they were no uncivilized cannibals: one of them had gone to school six years in Liverpool, another wore clothes habitually, and a third peddled religious chromos among missions in the Hinterland. To my amazement, Pinto let the Dutch merchant pass. But another cannibal caterer caught a young Swede off one of the river boats, and stuffed *him* in the larder. The Swedish authorities were beside themselves, and sent feverish telegrams asking what Portugal meant, so that Pinto, who was absolute ruler in the town nearest the niggers' soup-pot, had to make a showing."

"He asked me to help, but I commanded nothing but house-boys and a D. B. S.\* Pinto went to war with the cannibals, his forces consisting of a posse of unskilled, emaciated cocoa criminals, who shot at each other, and fell on the necks of the Lhassi blacks upon finishing up a ragout of human flesh."

"We all condoled with Pinto upon his defeat. He had wonderful wires from home about his splendid bravery. We heard that his fighting force was to be doubled. His officers seemed to blaze with sudden appreciation of him, when—presto, change!—the Portuguese governor appeared, took away Pinto's sword, and held a court martial to inquire into his losses on the Field of the Soup-Pot."

"It then transpired that my rich friend, Colonel Pinto, had sold his four companies into slavery on the cocoa stretches long before, and

risked it in Benguela without his guard. In his economy, he had drawn their pay and rations and sold their uniforms as soon as he had dispensed with them as police."

Pieter was the only man at the table who had heard Hood out with an unchanging face. "Did the poor fellows all get back to freedom?" he inquired.

"Only about twenty were alive," Hood explained. "Tuberculosis and cancer, and that sort of game, are mere beginners in dissolution compared to work in a cocoa factory. There's an old cocoa king in England—you two chocolate swells probably know which it is—who won't buy anything but South American raw chocolate, because he says West African labor abuses ought not to be countenanced. He says that a cup of cocoa is made of sweat and tears."

"That's my old man," I declared proudly.

"Then God bless him!" Hood cried impulsively, rising, glass in hand. "Gentlemen, I give you Mr. Bly Applecourt, of Applecourt, Kent."

Although I appreciated his compliment, I somehow felt Hood to be unduly emotional; but I could see that Pieter liked it awfully.

"Who informed on Pinto?" he questioned.

"God knows!" the consul cried. "But if his name's known to Pinto's people, it will show on a speedy tombstone, I'll wager good gold."

### III

Pieter and I were shown to an excellent house, when we arrived in Tellerey, which we were told was the British agency; but the agent had left the month before, on a stretcher, with a temperature of 103. It was further told that a vow of total abstinence was upon his lips. The agency's veranda was occupied by a chimpanzee, which had, we were informed, always dwelt there; and he welcomed us by banging a tin cup on the tiled floor, and grunting, with noises terrible by day, but not to be borne, we vowed, after nightfall. Chained and clamorous, he was evidently suffering, and we watched a silent-footed black boy dole him out gin in his battered cup. We spent a few moments in engaging Cigaretti, this attendant, as agency runner. A parrot, which had previously voiced piercing screams or mellifluous whistles, presently spoke distinctly in Dutch, which Pieter translated as "Once there was a child of sin, who lived for nothing but more gin." Upon inquiry, we learned that the ape was named Grand Duke.

We felt as if we were pressed between the leaves of a child's book of natural history, for the animal and insect worlds beset us everywhere. I remember seeing a cockroach, in shape, size, and action much like a roller-skate, slide

\* Distressed British subject.

over the floor, evading with human adroitness the hand-bag I sped after it. This was our initiation into West Africa, and, except for Pieter's presence and a worthy shame, I could have wept aloud. The depression cast upon us by Telleray was instant, and the dirty, sun-stricken street in which we presently stood took on as glassy a surface as one of Vermeer's paintings, as glassy a surface as a place viewed through tears must ever wear. A wet, lagging breeze blew over us, with gusts of fierce heat in it, as if the devil sometimes left ajar the doors of his perfervid kingdom.

Cocoa plantations rose above the town in green tiers, and one could see that their trees were of the stubby kind of high yield and generally marketable character. But these verdant terraces were too distant for this evening's stroll, and the custom-house yard, whence a hum of workers attracted us, was nearly opposite our dwelling. A series of grunts, the flight of bare feet registered by the slaps of their callous soles, a thud as of some great weight set down suddenly, aroused our curiosity, and we entered the place by a little back door, evidently not for general use. In an instant we stood in greater, more stagnant heat, a sort of humid breathlessness, which snatched at strength and left us limp and listless as a ship's sail unfurled and in dead calm. There was but little light in the vast yard, roofed in a sort of gallery from its boundary wall on three sides, while its fourth was the custom-house itself, through which one might have looked to the open sea if the door had not been closed.

As our eyes accommodated themselves to the sudden dimness about us, three hundred negroes were revealed, naked, except for soft loin-cloths which caught the sweat of their thin, shining bodies before it might fall on the cocoa-beans among which they labored. Sometimes their arms threatened to drip sweat as they packed their three grades of bales in gunny-sacking, matting, and stout cotton drill, and when this happened an overseer offered them an absorbent cotton cloth.

An extremely fat man with a dark brown face seized a filled sack and ran with it to the government weigher, who approved it, and loaded him again, when he ran to a white man, who stenciled the custom-house mark on the bale. We watched him make that round on a dog-frot again and again. We heard his labored breath and saw his strained lips as he snatched for air in this martyrdom of labor. He was the high light in this hideous scene, not only because his work was the most slavish, but because, unlike the other men, he wore a long, filthy smock, which buttoned tight at his throat

and fell to his knees; and the expression on his brown face was not that of a negro's inarticulate sorrow, which knows no redress, but the indignant agony of a creature who has possessed rights, and who finds himself wronged only because he is overpowered.

"That face will haunt me till I die," Pieter cried passionately, pointing at him.

We observed that the people whose task appeared lightest were three seamsters who sewed up the sacks; and one of these, a listless, bearded creature, had skewers thrust through his cheeks. This was like a conjurer's trick, for his beard covered the holes from a casual glance, and he made himself into a human pincushion with miraculous avoidance of blood. His skewers were great needles which he threaded for his two helpers.

The scales attracted us, partly because they were marked with a name that linked a civilization that we knew to this scene of outrageous labor, and partly because I wanted to know how many pounds Portugal allows to a bale — for I had forgotten, it being three years since we had fetched our cocoa from San Thomé. We found that the bales varied in weight, although all were stenciled as correct. As we stood by the scales, I was about to question, to protest, when Pieter squeezed my arm and somehow gestured me to silence.

I was quiet for a moment before I knew why; then I saw great piles of sacks marked "V D L AM" (van der Luyt, Amsterdam) waiting to pass the inspector, and at that I understood perfectly. Every bale thus marked weighed from four to ten pounds in excess of bales addressed elsewhere, and Pieter meant to investigate. He spoke not at all, but strolled, his arm in mine, out of the damp, teeming inclosure.

"See here, Applecourt," he said persuasively, "I know you're pretty much not in order, but may I have a guest to dine? I mean our agent, Bols."

I acquiesced, and we went back to our house, to find the Governor's cards, and a short man with a pale but merry countenance, black hair, and humorous though piercing blue eyes.

"I am Hector Bols," he said, "and I offer myself as a key to devious Telleray. I should have met you at the steamer, except that word of your coming was in a letter your steamer brought me."

"I've just been reviewing our overweight bales," Pieter cried pleasantly. "Is that to provide a little plunder for the Government?"

"Partly," he replied. "We bribe 'em for the overweight, and we couldn't do business here if we didn't bribe 'em for something."



The man had about him a strength and shrewdness which the tropics had not lessened or dulled. He laughed frankly, and dressed with the preternatural neatness of an intellectual Dutchman. There was also an innate friendliness about him, and the tales he told us of Portuguese misrule made us laugh as we never dreamed to laugh in exile. He took all peculation as a jest, but the cruelty he saw daily had sickened him to the point of despair.

Pieter and he reviewed the business with exhaustive care, and I could see how surprised Bols was at the great energy of his employer. I left them together until our dinner hour, and, as I reëntered the veranda, I knew, after a glance at Pieter, that he had some sort of surprise for me.

"Bols gave Nosretap a job," he said, "and he never turned up to fill it."

We were silent then, thinking, until Bols said: "I should just think him a bit casual, like any Latin who dwells in the tropics, except that he undoubtedly informed on Pinto, and that, in the code of a Portuguese official, was an offense worthy of death."

I looked at Pieter, and neither of us spoke; but a flash from his eyes ignited the conviction I had at heart; and we harked back to our presentiment of a beginning at St. Paul de Loanda as a prophetic thing. "We know about Pinto," I proclaimed faintly.

"Don't you just think him dead?" I asked at last. "I should think that death was the solution, after all."

Bols sat, in very evident contemplation of Tellerey as he had found it. We could see pros and cons flocking to his mind, and, when he spoke, what he said was full of sense and restrained imagination. He concluded, after a glance out of the windows, by coming close to us and repeating what he had declared in the first instance.

"You see," he said, "when Pinto fell, it was a wonder that a horde of others didn't fall, too. When you realize that, you realize that there's more than revenge as a motive to make way with Nosretap; but, as long as there are so many real savages about in this district, there is no need for the Government to take the responsibility of his disappearance."

"That's reasonable," I said.

"Let's go to the Felicitas Plantation, or somewhere where he ought to be, and beat up the bush for him," Pieter suggested.

"We might go to the Zaida; that's a Government cocoa stretch, and he was there last. Only," Bols said, "there's a *dabolu* on there to-morrow,— the first in two years,— and somebody's sure to get hurt."

"What's a *dabolu*?" we asked together.

"It's a big dance, with feasting, licensed by the Government. The niggers are practically insane and very violent for weeks afterward."

"Let's go just the same," I said.

Bols looked to Pieter for his orders, and received an affirmative nod.

"We'll go," he said, "to-morrow — at what time?"

His agent thought deeply. "I could leave at four," he answered; "it's a tough walk."

I shall not forget the silence that fell on us until dinner was announced. A black cloud descended on us, also, from the terraces above the town, fastening us down under it as if it had been a box-lid. Black creatures peddled ill-smelling jackfruit and gobbets of fried meat, hawking this black man's supper up and down, with yells that split one's head, frequently leering at us through the open windows, which gave on the dull and breathless street. Their faces were like the hellish grotesques of a fever dream, wide lips below the noseless tract of a leper, eyes vanquished long ago by the infected flies, and now but sightless seams, watering a little as if in memory of tears.

#### IV

I returned the Governor's call next morning as early as etiquette would permit, and, upon my return to our dwelling, wrote him formally asking for news of Nosretap. In an incredibly short time I received a certificate of his death from rheumatic fever, signed by a physician who had gone home on leave, and a Dutch cocoa-buyer who had dropped dead of heart disease as he entered the custom-house one morning. I confess that at first glance the document seemed to me convincing, for I knew nothing of its witnesses, save that their positions in life seemed assuredly those of responsibility. But when Pieter returned from his company's office for second breakfast, he told me what Bols had related to him, and when Bols himself turned up in the veranda just at four, he said that the Dutch cocoa-buyer and Nosretap had died the same day, according to my certificate — "which complicates the Government's statement," Pieter declared gravely.

I had never walked abroad with a chimpanzee before, nor did I want to now; but Cigaretti had loosed the Grand Duke, and put a long chain into the hasp of his collar, and supplied himself with a whip of rhino hide, called *shambok* by Bols and *pidaviva* by Cigaretti. We had food and good drinks, all neatly packed in a champagne hamper, and we presented no appearance of a rescue party. The first shadows were show-

ing in the glaring street as we waited for Albertus to declare all in readiness and put on the jungle boots a man must wear in a place full of vipers.

Bols did all the talking, and said that negro labor for the cocoa stretches was deliberately solicited by private plantation-owners, with promises of enormous pay. Upon arrival, or shortly afterward, such laborers were accused of anything at all, theft and cannibalism being the likeliest charges. They were always convicted, and thus became *degradados*, the planter regaining them at nominal cost through the Government — "to whom one must be generous," Bols concluded.

There was something humorous to me in our starting to rescue Nosretap without an idea of where he was last seen, when a responsible Government vouched for his death; but the Pinto story had gone deep, and Bols did not seem of the type that swallows fairy tales whole.

The street in which we lived changed at its far end to a footpath shrouded in shrubs of indescribable green, whose foliage fell like uncurled ostrich feathers of miserable limpness. The infinite inventiveness of nature was here spent upon ugliness. A sickening olive green was often mottled with shining emerald in the leaves of a tall, discouraged-looking shrub of impassable thorny thickness.

At first there were many small insects to detract from the pleasures of a walk. A vivid green fly hummed in a fine, small voice, and once I put my hand out to feel the brilliant stem of a shrub's branch, which wriggled and passed on, when I knew that I had almost touched a highly imitative Bomita reptile. A tiny parrot, unlike any I had ever seen, swooped before us, until we came to a sharp hill, and passed a party of *degradados*, men and women, going home to their night's rest in the town prison. They sat on the summit and coasted to the base, as if the slope had been a toboggan run; and a soldier with a drawn cutlass received them, while one with a loaded pistol ordered their start.

It was a labor to achieve the hill's summit, but its one reward was fresher air, and the trees grew taller there. The cocoa palms were planted in groups, which was the old-fashioned cocoa planter's device for protecting them; while, on the height above, one saw them stretching in long alleys, squat, perfect specimens of the *Theobroma Cacao* as used for the chocolate trade.

Cigaretti freed the Grand Duke here, and, with one yell of riot, he sprang to the top of the branches and pursued his elevated road with a raucous rejoicing. I reveled in his liberty, and

was glad to think him free for good; but Bols told me that a flask of gin had been provided to lure him to his chains again.

The plantations through which we passed had just been picked, so that we encountered no laborers until we approached the outskirts of the Zaida plantation itself, a huge stretch of prosperous trees beset by groups of negroes who worked in silence, watched by soldiers, and further policed by little negro boys, who took the beans away to their drying-sheds. They had no impulse to melodic rhythm, like the happy industrial darcy.

Bols chose a small negroid Arab of whom to ask questions, and talked with him apart from us. He evidently knew him, for he called him Selim, employing his faculty for narrative in an attempt to draw from him news of Nosretap. Nothing could be learned from Selim; he did not even remember seeing Nosretap when he was in the town selling stores to the plantation masters and their servants — of whom he, Selim, was one.

After this we continued to walk through lane after lane of cocoa trees, through bunch-grass which detained one with its coarse strands caught on the fastenings of boots or leggings. The ape continued between us and the sky, following faithfully, except for such detours as the joys of liberty suggested. His shadow preceded us at our feet — the shadow of a flying man, hurling himself with sure aim and triumphant, sinewy grasp from tree to tree. One could hear the shock of his body and the rustle of the rattling palm branches as he fled from alley to alley with an inexorable sureness which had a soothing quality in the very certainty of its success as a mode of transit. Aloft the ape was beautiful, a creature pursuing the custom of its kind with vigor, emancipated from the whining sot of the veranda, moaning for more gin.

Just before dusk the trees were shadowed on our path like great bars, and a wind arose which seemed to come from right at our side in puffs, instead of with a world of space between us and its beginning. We toiled along, sweating and leg-weary, until the many aisles of cocoa palms converged upon a square grassless space bordered with ugly clay huts, like wasps' nests. An ill-looking English youth with his antiquated wife met us here. Both greeted us rather formally, and proclaimed themselves missionaries. Pieter attempted friendlier relations with them, and all that I heard them say bore out Bols. They were there in anticipation of the *dabolu*, not because they liked it, but because their converts needed restraint on such occasions.

We joined forces, the missionary and his wife

(Mr. and Mrs. Luke Bixbee) and ourselves, Albertus, Cigaretti, and the Grand Duke moving to a little dry mound, where our rubber sheets were spread and our wind-proof traveling lanterns lighted. Our supper, recruited from tins, was excellent, and when we had finished, Cigaretti and Albertus took what they needed, surrounded by naked creatures who begged for the remainder.

The crowd of black men were all practising steps, exactly as a houseful of girls at home might have done on the eve of a ball, except that this African dance included wild swaying of the body and a singular backward jerk of the whole torso which would have dislocated a white man's neck.

As night drew its darkness about us, women ran out from their huts, putting great clay vessels in rows to mark the dancing space. Each pottery tub was filled with oil in which a wick floated, and, when all were lit, an avenue of flame ran round four sides of the great square. I noticed that everybody had matches—that they were as much a commonplace of domesticity as in England.

The feast was now set forth, consisting of nauseous lumps of flesh such as we had seen peddled in the town, and great hands of bananas, pomelos, rice cooked in beef blood, and a mixture of milk and blood, like the draught of a Masai. Before they ate they drank fermented cocoanut milk, and were drunk in the twinkling of an eye.

A low growth of bushes beyond the huts gave rather the effect of a hurdle in the gloom, and it was over this that the dancers made their entrance, with a long leap. A drum was beaten, monotonously at first, but later with a palpitating effect which stirred and excited even the phlegmatic Albertus. Pipes with but two notes in them were blown with a maddening persistence, until the Grand Duke could scarcely contain himself at the sound, which was suddenly augmented by a group of women with clappers of bright yellow wood, used like cymbals, and clashed drunkenly, without a hint of the tom-tom's rhythm. Cigaretti wanted to chain the ape, but I begged him not to, he so loved his liberty as he swayed, grunting and sometimes yelping, in the branches of an acacia tree which had surprised us with its presence and its grace.

When the feasters were sated, they rose and rushed into the circle of dancers, turning and leaping, spinning, springing, or dervishing solemnly, until they fell, and remained inert where they had fallen, horrid examples of indecorum from the standpoint of British administration, and an outrage to the standards of decency innate in any race. Then young women cleared

the barrier of bushes, and swayed, almost in nakedness, to the wild chanting of old mothers, who followed them like infirm shadows of every motion their youth and undeniable grace effected. Their wool was combed back and piled high on their heads, secured and decorated with things discarded in European households—old neckties, outworn garters, broken paper-cutters, and other pathetic reminders of the minutiae of civilized convenience.

When the moon swam out above the aisles of cocoa palms, the native lamps were changed in color to a deep amber, casting a flickering brilliancy on the breasts and upturned faces of the writhing, rhythmic women, who advanced and backed again in an intricate weave of studied steps, to the clapping of shriveled old hands and the cramped melodies of cracked old voices. Then a string of free laborers dashed out to meet them, splendid in their native dress—or the lack of it; and, as a girl was chosen by one of them, the old women shrilled out like crazy things, and bore the maid away to fast for the wedding and dress for the ceremony. I had never seen such motion anywhere; a ball in Vienna was nothing to it. Every muscle in every man in the community was exercised in *dabolu*, and the faces that before the feasting and drinking and dancing had been as the faces of cattle were now filled with insanity, with a mad excitement unlike any I had ever seen. It was fascinating and horrid at the same time. Bols was growing very uneasy, and I appreciated that it was no place for the missionary's wife; but, if her husband had decided differently, I hesitated to express an opinion.

Pieter pressed heavily against me, and, in the din and dust caused by the ceaseless motion of many feet, he separated me from the other Europeans, and said that the missionaries were worried because this was the first *dabolu* known in Tellerey where the Government's representatives had not been in evidence as a restraint.

"That decides me," I replied. "We leave this instant; and I shall command the Bixbees, by virtue of my position as British agent, to leave with us."

They demurred, but I insisted; and we turned into a cocoa aisle whose slant was toward the sea, Cigaretti in the lead, with the Grand Duke leaping near him in the flooding moonshine; Pieter, Bols, and I in the rear; Albertus and the Bixbees in the middle position. The thudding of the dancers' feet sounded loudly, but ever a big tom-tom beat like a savage heart dominating all sound and jarring the peace of a moon-filled marvel of tropic night.

The aisle we had chosen was without the rank grass that had so detained us on our walk out;



it was smooth, and evidently worn bare as a thoroughfare to the town. I shall never know what made us stop and draw close to one another; but we did so, wondering, and stood gazing in the shadow of the endless aisles of trees, and saw the brilliance of the moon lie like cloth of gold over the cocoa stretches, barred by the tree-trunks and their shadows in as regular a pattern as one might find in a draper's window. From the silence about us, and louder than the now distant sounds of dancing, we heard gasps — desperate, agonized gasps — and the unsteady feet of a runner far spent; and then a man blundered past us, with his deep brown head and arms stretched before him, and his face a record of despair. He was our friend of the custom-house who carried the bales to the weigher. Pieter shouted to him to stop, but he went on unheeding. And then a wave of black hunters passed along the moonlit aisle, with bared knives in their hands, and joy on their faces. I had never thought to see a man's life sought, except in anger; but, as I looked at Bols, the whole horror came to me: these blacks were hunting for meat. I cannot remember who gave chase first, breaking loose from the bond of consternation that held us, but I think it was Mrs. Bixbee.

She was, however, the first to fail; and I think I should have been the next, if Albertus had not snatched a savage from the rear of the hunting posse, thrown him, and kicked him under the chin, with that Dutch brutality that rivals a negro's own. He caught up his knife then, and I passed him, with Bixbee, Pieter, and Bols in the lead, and only a little space between them and the bloodhounds, who had no great speed, but who never slackened pace for an instant.

And then Pieter's brain served him. We were running downhill, and the aisle, to avoid a steep rise, crooked like an elbow. He did not hesitate, and I followed him instantly as he left the lane and ran straight over ground as firm as any we had passed, but rising instead of falling to the sea. We chose an inside track, but, when we joined the aisle again, it was by a sharp jump of about four feet, and we had arrived ahead of the hunting party and of the quarry himself. Pieter spread his arms out wide, and the hunted creature fell into them with a sob.

I think the scene must have held me, for I forgot the pursuers until I saw a raised knife, which fell swiftly, but not before I had broken the hand that held it. It had caught Pieter on the shoulder, however, and a stain spread on his tunic that looked black in the moonlight, but which I knew was blood.

The lust of killing came on me then, and I

cracked black heads together like a thrawn thing, without much effect. In my excitement, I was still full of commiseration for Pieter and for myself. "Dead," I cried, "on our second day in Tellerey!"

A shadow hovered over me, and I felt the air stir as the Grand Duke leaped into the mêlée, and, by God's grace, landed on the negroes and not on me. He tore at their bodies and grunted with delight, until one turned, and stampeded the rest by the mere fact of his turning. Another lay at my feet, and I realized with shame that the ape had killed him, and not I, while across his nakedness Bols eyed me sadly, his clothes torn off him and a black stain on his brow. Cigaretti was tapping on a tree-trunk with the Duke's tin cup, and the ape himself was regarding him, in two minds as to whether to drink with the white man or hunt the negro. I saw all this before I turned to Pieter, who was sitting upright behind me, the brown man's head upon his knee.

"Cigaretti," I called, "bring that drink here."

He did, and I poured the vilest kind of neat gin down Pieter's throat, while the Grand Duke came nearer with a crashing leap into the heart of a tree. Bols sucked at Pieter's wound, in fear of poison; and I stood by, perfectly detached, strangely calm, and possibly a little faint. I remember saying that the night was warm.

Albertus then appeared, carrying Mrs. Bixbee, who had been badly trodden on in the hunters' retreat. He held in his teeth the knife he had captured, and was extremely chatty and, I thought, officious.

"Give that nigger a drink, too," Pieter cried. And Albertus took Cigaretti's bottle and filled the tin cup, leaning toward the fagged creature whose head still lay on Pieter's knees. I felt the air stir again, and the Grand Duke descended. Cigaretti made a rush, and snapped the chain into his collar, but not before he had torn at Pieter's burden and slit his loose smock from neck to hem.

I saw Bols start, and heard Pieter cry out. Albertus lighted one of the lanterns and held it high. Mrs. Bixbee limped painfully nearer. As we looked down on the man, who still lay faintly panting, we saw that his arms and shoulders, head and legs were a deep brown, his body as white as snow; and on his chest, beneath the sienna stain, a Maltese cross in tattoo was visible, with a flaming heart over it, and beneath it the name, Marco Nosretap.

I don't remember much after that, only that we found Bixbee, who promised to bury the Duke's victim in the mission inclosure. About six in the morning we all arrived at the agency. Nosretap couldn't speak; Pieter's shoulder, his

right one, was gaping red and wide; Mrs. Bixbee was one bruise; Bols had a square piece missing from his right temple—he didn't know how he lost it; Albertus had a broken toe, the middle one of his right foot; my forearm was sprained, and I had a cut on the thigh. Bixbee, Cigaretti, and the Grand Duke were in perfect health.

On the strength of Nosretap's case, we arranged a treaty which helped labor conditions for the next luster in Telleray, and, when it was signed, I got away home and had a nice post given me. Nosretap went away, too, but it was months before he spoke. His mouth had been stopped with a poisoned gag, and it took the best men in London to make him well again.

He then told Rusheown, Pieter, and me that he had been loading a runner in Telleray with tins for the Bixbee Mission,—tongue and ham and such things,—when he was overpowered by negroes in command of a Portuguese officer who was supposed to be in Europe on leave. His torso and legs were then stained, and he was put to work in the custom-house. The gag

that he wore in his first nights as a *degredado* prevented his speech by day. A famous chemist pronounced the dye on his hands and legs marvelously lasting, and said that it contained cassia in great quantities.

He never could realize that we rescued him by accident; he always felt that we knew he would be where he was, by our wonderful diplomatic talents. There is little doubt that he had been sent to the *dabolu* in the hope that he might disappear without further effort on the part of the authorities.

Nosretap solemnly swore to Lord Rusheown, in my presence, that Pinto's name was never mentioned to him after he had informed on him, through the French consul, in an attempt to collect an outstanding bill.

He went in for reciting his escape from cannibals in the music-halls, and made a pile of money at it. We went to see him one evening, Pieter and I, and after the performance he introduced us to his wife. He had sold out his African trade to a Chinaman, and wanted to be taken on at Applecourt's.

## FOR YOUR SAKE

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN

FOR your sake who have left me grieving  
I love the old who are tired of living,  
Tired of traveling a road grown weary,  
More than the young, more than the merry.

The old, patient and rosy faces  
Stir my heart in its secret places;  
The old eyes that ache for rest  
Set my heart to bleed in my breast.

More than the children, golden and ruddy,  
The bent knees and the feeble body  
Stab my heart with the mother-pain,  
For your sake in the night and rain.

For your sake I would fain enfold them  
The old heads to my breast and hold them,  
Keep them safe from the lonely fear,  
My kind love of many a year.

The old hands I could kneel and kiss them,  
Knotted and purple, could love them, caress them.  
Ah, my dear, when the house is asleep,  
I see your hands and I wake and weep.