

The Adventures of Miss Gregory

No. 4

by
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The
Adventure with
the Slave Dealer

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IT was high morning when the Kaffir porters, jogging over a saddle of hill, checked and cried out at the far sight of the camp; but evening was at hand before they reached it. Lazaro, the half-caste interpreter, puffed to the front to take stock of it, staring down over the broken land with lowered brows. It lay in a little cup of valley, among those brooding hills that stretch south from Mount Irati toward the lost rivers of the heart of Mozambique. The one tent, which proclaimed it the habitation of a white man, shone under the strong sun like a patch of snow. Lazaro turned to call the news to his employer in the rear.

"See," he cried, pointing with a lean dramatic arm. "I have bring-a you to an Inglez. To-night you will have a society."

Lazaro never failed to claim credit for any piece of good fortune that might occur; he waited now to be thanked for leading the party to this fortunate point.

His employer came briskly up the last of the slope, and gazed out over the world spread below under the sun — a world crumpled like paper into naked hills and abrupt valleys. She nodded briefly.

"I see," she said. "But what are we stopping for?"

Lazaro smiled resignedly. "Only to see," he answered, and called to the Kaffirs. The party strung out again on the downward slope, weaving in a ragged line through the rocks and clumps of aloe, with the red dust puffing up like smoke from under their feet. At the rear, Lazaro ranged himself alongside of Miss Gregory to indulge her with conversation. He had been chosen for his post by a British consul down

country, chiefly because of his skill in avoiding danger, but partly also because he spoke a fluent and recognizable English. The consul, who had lived most of his life in the tropics, disapproved of globe-trotting for ladies. Miss Gregory's project for a journey of half a year in the unknown interior seemed to him hardly proper; and he felt it due to her family that she should not move out of hearing of the English tongue, at least. Therefore he had prevailed on her to accept Lazaro.

"He is said to steal quite a lot," he told her, while Lazaro shuffled his toes in the sand outside the consular veranda and smiled sidelong, "and perhaps he's not very clean; but think of the advantage of having somebody to talk to."

So Miss Gregory had become Lazaro's master, and had fulfilled the consul's good intentions by listening to the complacent singsong of his voice across nearly two thousand miles of wilderness. She hastened now to forestall his small talk with a question.

"Do you know whose camp it can be?" she inquired.

"It can be anybody," answered Lazaro pleasantly, "but not many. Only three-four white men come up here — all Inglez, all very bad people."

"How?" demanded Miss Gregory.

"What you call bolt-from-a-police," explained Lazaro blandly. "Ye-es; very bad people."

"I see." Miss Gregory was not at all disturbed. She had already met the discreet outlaw of the Coast; and had not found him formidable. She was fifty years of age and a woman of the world, and her world was wide enough to accommodate human beings of all kinds. She had it in mind that her travels should result in

a book — a big book, full of meat, spiced with character and pungent with real raw life; and in the meantime she saw all men in the light of possible literary material. Even Lazaro was down in her note-book.

From the heights the little camp had seemed to lie just below, near enough to shout to; but there was a day of hard going across rough spurs of hill and straggling thickets of aloe and cactus before Miss Gregory and her party came forth at last to the cool stillness of the little valley in which the one tent was pitched. A last tangle of spiked shrubs let them through, and Miss Gregory stepped forth on to short parched grass within fifty yards of the tent. The sun was already over the hills to the west, and the world was beginning to breathe again after its day-long torpor of heat. Beyond the tent, cooking-fires were sending up their thin spires of blue smoke; about them, Kaffirs moved babbling, and a single white man, conspicuous in shirt and trousers among their sleek bare bodies, stood with his back toward her. There seemed to be some business going forward; his voice sounded in curt queries and was answered with obsequious clamor.

As Miss Gregory advanced, with Lazaro beside and a little behind her and the Kaffirs straggling in the rear, he turned and caught sight of her. He stared for a moment, as well he might, for white women do not come within a month's journey of that part of the world; but he recovered himself with creditable quickness, and came striding to meet her.

"This is capital," he said — "capital!" and greeted her with a big, wandering hand.

He was a big, fair man, with a deep stoop in the shoulders, and a large, mild, absent face. His pale eyes looked through big spectacles with an effect of simplicity and vagueness; there was about him an indoor, scholarly suggestion, most strikingly at variance with the background of scarlet-plumed aloes and hushed, listening negroes. He beamed in a kindly, preoccupied fashion on Miss Gregory.

"Saw your camp this morning," she said. "Hope we sha'n't be in the way, you know."

"In the way?" He waved the idea from him. "But it's capital, I tell you. So glad to see you. I'm Smith."

Miss Gregory accepted the introduction, and imparted her own name. "Not Pirate Smith?" she inquired, as an afterthought. "I heard of Pirate Smith when I was at Chinde."

He shook his big, fair head. "No," he said; "no connection. I *know* him, of course. He's a shy bird. No. They call me 'Silly Smith,' for some reason. A chap gets all kinds of names out here, you know."

"Yes," agreed Miss Gregory. "It's dreadful."

He looked like some monstrous child, with loose smiles straying upon his large pink face. He seemed as soft and agreeable as a kitten. He waved the staring Kaffir porters to the fires and the company of his own Kaffirs, and led the way for Miss Gregory to the front of his tent, where his folding table stood ready for the evening meal. He shambled as he walked; there was nothing about him that was not vague and innocuous and amiable.

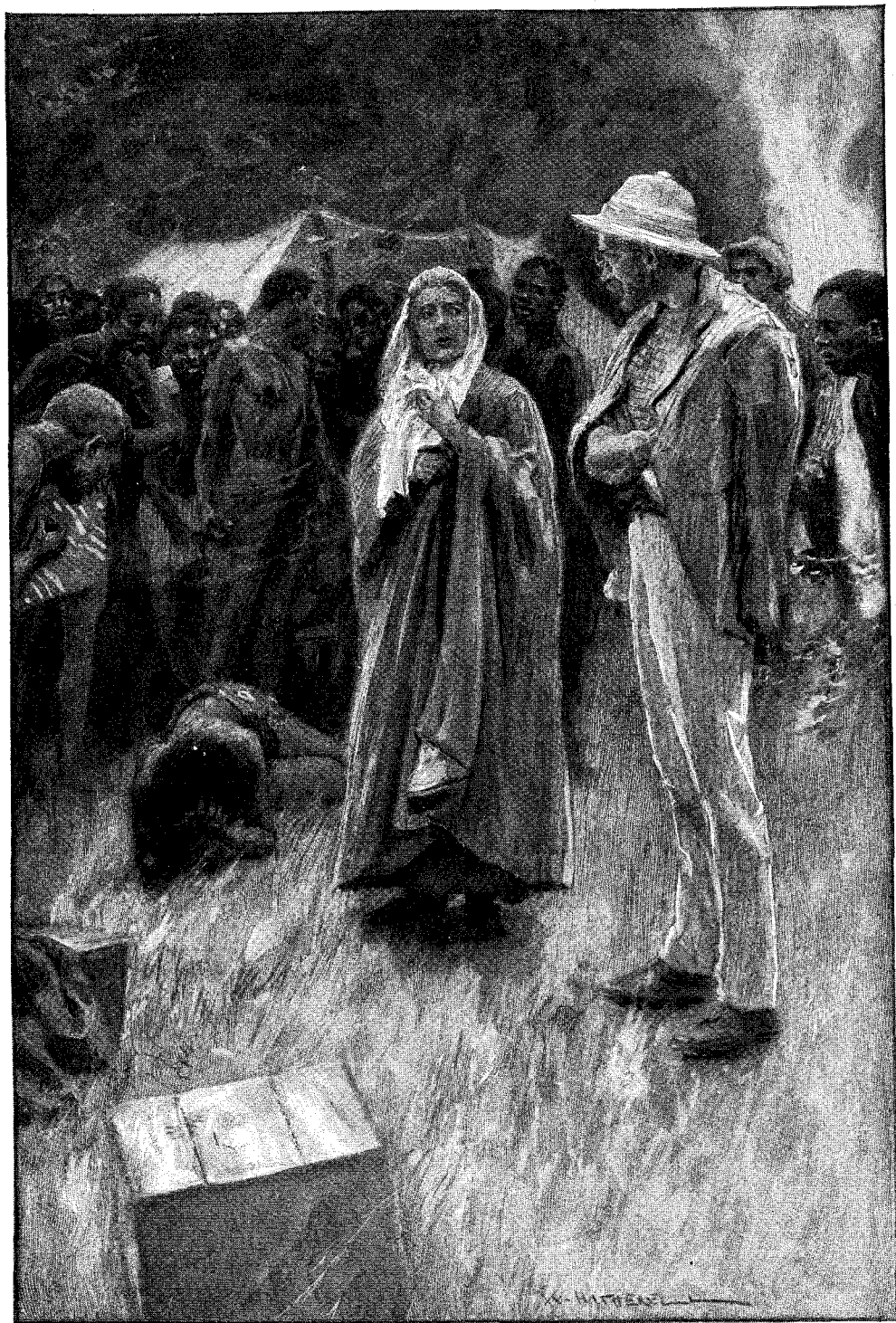
"Never could get used to eating my meals off the ground," he said. "A man must have some furniture. So I always carry a table and a chair." He made a sudden dive into his tent, and came out again with a collapsed chair in his hands. "Have the chair, by the way," he suggested, and struggled to open it.

"Oh, please don't bother," begged Miss Gregory, as he pinched a finger violently in one of the joints of the ingenious machine.

"It's always like this," said Smith, looking at her worriedly as he sucked the hurt finger.

He let the chair go, and it opened of itself as it fell. He stared at it with a manner of suspicion, and pushed it gingerly toward her. "Have it, anyhow," he said. "Don't waste the beastly thing, now it *is* open."

He left her and went over to superintend the erection of her tent, and Miss Gregory, watching him, saw that he possessed in the supreme degree the art of commanding Kaffirs. It is by no means a thing that any one can do; men spend half a lifetime in Africa and are no nearer it at the end than they were at the beginning. It is a gift more esteemed than virtue and more coveted than wealth. Miss Gregory had only heard of it, up to the present, in the casual talk of people she met; now she saw it, and recognized it forthwith. There was nothing of violence or menace in the man's speech; he did not even raise his voice. He shambled at large round about the work, and delivered brief orders in the tones of commonplace speech; and Miss Gregory's weary "boys" tumbled over one another in an undreamed-of haste to obey. Even Lazaro — Lazaro, who never worked with Kaffirs, who had his own "boy" to serve him and play white man to, who spoke English and wore a hat — Lazaro was drawn in, too. He was checked on his way across the grass to speak to Miss Gregory. The big, dreamy man cast him a word over his shoulder, and without a protest, without even an answer, Lazaro fell to. His reproachful eyes made complaint through the fresh dusk to Miss Gregory, but the music of his tongue was stilled. It was a beautiful thing to see: Miss Gregory felt that it



“‘WHAT IS THIS?’ DEMANDED MISS GREGORY”

compensated her in some measure for months of Lazaro's conversation.

"Do your 'boys' ever disobey you?" she asked Smith, when he came to tell her that all was ready for her.

"Disobey?" he repeated. "They never do anything else. Why?"

"I thought you seemed to handle them rather easily," she answered.

Smith shook his head. "You don't know 'em," he said. "But you ought to see old Pirate Smith handling niggers. It's like conjuring."

In Mozambique the evening redeems the day. While Miss Gregory, in her tent, repaired the havoc of the march with much cold water and some hoarded *eau de Cologne*, the daily marvel achieved itself. There came a breath of wind out of the east, and forthwith the world came to life, like one that springs from sleep to full wakefulness. About the little valley, the bush was suddenly vocal. One heard movements, goings to and fro, the traffic of small beast life in the undergrowth; a parrot rent the peace with one raucous scream, and launched himself — a wedge of crude green — across the still air. Even the ground underfoot, baked and cracked with the oppression of the sun, became a theater of minute activities, and insects threaded among the stems of the dry grass. Night came striding up at the speed of the tropics; and when Miss Gregory, restored and refreshed, came forth from her tent, the sky was dark overhead and powdered with bold stars. A lantern on the folding table shed a steady light over the preparations for supper.

It was a curious meal, a meal of highly civilized foods which none the less were characteristic of the wilderness. There are few things eatable that can not be and are not put into tins and sold on the East Coast of Africa to those whose memories are fresher than their palates. "Silly" Smith produced for his guest *pâté de foie gras* and lobster, as preliminaries to the eternal fresh venison one shoots for one's self. He looked larger and more indeterminate than ever with the lantern shining on the twin moons of his spectacles; he was a sort of nightmare of an urbane host.

"By the way," he asked, "I suppose you're not up here for — er — your health? Charmed to see you, of course, in any case; but I just wondered."

"I'm traveling," explained Miss Gregory, sawing at the venison on her plate, "seeing the country; I'm writing a book."

Silly Smith hastened to show comprehension.

"It was your askin' about old Pirate Smith," he explained. "That's what made me think that perhaps —" He paused. "Better shy that

meat away," he advised gravely. "No use spoiling your knife. I'll chop you off a tender bit."

"No, thanks," said Miss Gregory firmly. "No; I've only heard of Pirate Smith. They talk about him a good deal at Chinde. Rather a ruffian, I should imagine."

Silly Smith stared. "A ruffian — poor old Pirate? Not a bit of it," he said. "He's not a gentleman, you know; comes of pretty poor stock an' all that; but there's no harm in him. Not" — he added thoughtfully — "not that you could call him an absolute saint, though."

"I suppose not," observed Miss Gregory. She had heard the name spoken at Chinde, and since. It was given as the name of a peculiarly bloodstained scoundrel. She examined her host with fresh attention, as a man of singularly tolerant standards.

"By the way," she said, "since we're asking questions, are you up here for your health?"

He smiled delightfully, almost gleefully. "Yes," he answered confidentially. "Got away just in time, too. That was luck."

It was impossible to connect him with law-breaking in the picturesque forms that the Coast affects; one could as easily have imagined a murderous baby. And yet, men do not take to the bush for matters of small moment. Miss Gregory gasped and gave it up.

"There is a man somewhere in Mozambique whom I had hoped to meet," she said, abandoning her attempt to eat the venison. "His name is Jeal — John Jeal. He was the son of a tenant of ours in Kent. Have you heard of him?"

Smith pondered. "Jeal," he repeated. "That was his name in England, eh? How long has he been out?"

"It would be about ten years," replied Miss Gregory. "He was a big youth ten years ago, with very red hair and a squint."

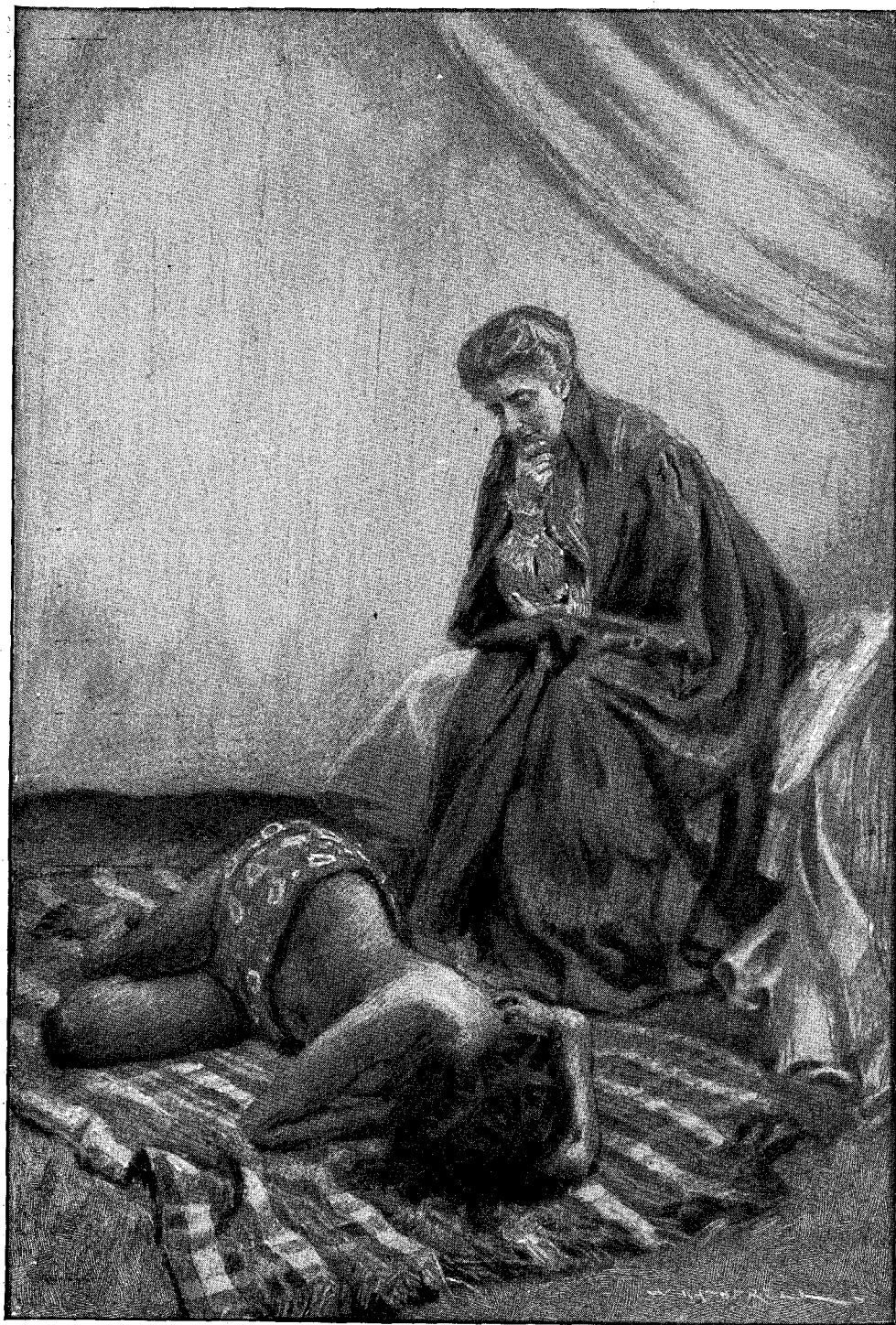
"A squint, eh? I know somebody like that," said Silly Smith; "but his name's not Jeal. No, I'm afraid I don't know your man. Do you want him particularly?"

"I merely wanted to see him," explained Miss Gregory. "One doesn't like to lose sight of people entirely, and I promised old Jeal, his father, to see him if I could. They're very good yeoman stock, the Jeals; tenants of ours, father and son, for two hundred years."

"Ah," said Smith, with interest. "And this one's broken adrift? A pity, isn't it?"

It seemed to make him thoughtful. He blundered back to the subject several times during the evening.

"Yeoman stock," he would mumble reflectively, and turn his vacant eyes on Miss Gregory. "Your man seems like a throw-back, eh? Strain of devil in that family, somewhere." He would



"MISS GREGORY, SITTING ON HER BED, SURVEYED HER WITH FROWNING SPECULATION"

shake his head regretfully, as if he, too, had experience of the small reliance to be placed in a carefully nurtured tenantry.

There was a thin moon in the sky when Miss Gregory bade him good night and prepared to go to her tent. He shook hands with her uncertainly and gave her the lantern for her use. The subject was still on his mind.

"Jeal," he said, when he had bidden her good night,—"Jeal. It's a good name, too. Family like that might have mixed its blood as far back as the Crusaders. And it breaks out in this fellow. Pity, isn't it?"

From her pillow in the darkness of her tent, before she fell asleep, Miss Gregory heard the low rumble of his meditations as he walked to and fro under the paring of moon, and "Pity, too," reached her ears more than once. She was too tired for her regular nightly exercise with her diary and note-book, and postponed it till the morning. It was obvious that Silly Smith must go down in black and white in that copious record of Miss Gregory's experiences; she saw precious humanity in him for the book that was to come. Africa has always its novelties; but even Africa is not fertile in men who combine the appearance of a university don with—so far as Miss Gregory could gather—the dark past of a villain of melodrama.

"Character," murmured Miss Gregory to herself. "Character is what one wants in a book of travels."

And it was upon that note she closed her eyes.

She was awakened in the chill of early morning by the noise of voices near her tent—a babbling of Kaffirs, and now and again the soft, brief remarks of Smith. Also, there was another sound, which struck persistently through the mingled voices and lifted her sharply to her elbow—the sound of weeping. She listened acutely and made sure that she was not mistaken: some one was sobbing brokenly near at hand, with a quality of abandonment in the sound at which Miss Gregory exclaimed shortly and bundled herself out of bed. The dawn chill made her shiver, and she dressed in haste; she came out to the open with a long cloak shrouding her.

Smith and the Kaffirs were grouped near the fires, and the former turned round as she approached.

"Cold, isn't it?" he remarked.

"Yes," said Miss Gregory. "I thought—I'm sure I heard some one crying just now."

Silly Smith nodded. "I shouldn't wonder," he said. "You see, a woman has just got into camp and——"

Miss Gregory stepped round him as he stood before her, and the ring of Kaffirs opened out to

make way. They were gathered about one of God's creatures, who crouched on the ground, with a face pressed into helpless hands, and uttered the slow, soul-shaking sobs of anguish she had heard in her tent. Miss Gregory halted in the middle of a stride and stared. It was a negro woman, foul with dust; there was blood here and there upon her body, from thrusting through thick bush. She half sat, half lay, in the center of that circle of men, and the noise of her sorrow never abated; the last protest of weakness and impotence was eloquent in every line of her attitude. It was a slice of tragedy wedged suddenly into the scene.

"What is this?" demanded Miss Gregory.

Silly Smith mooned benevolently at her side.

"We can't understand much of what she says," he replied; "but her game's pretty plain: she's bolted."

Miss Gregory stared at him, understanding nothing. "Bolted—from where?" she asked.

At the sound of her voice, the forlorn creature on the ground looked up. Her face—the pathetic mask of the negro, framed to be void and foolish—was alight with a sort of passion, hope, and servility joined together. She looked from the silent circle of staring black men to the one other woman.

Silly Smith waved an uncertain hand to the large east.

"She's run from somewhere over there," he said. "Got away in the night, you know. She doesn't seem to have been chained or anything."

Miss Gregory's lips parted. "A slave?" she asked, scarcely above a whisper.

"Well"—Smith seemed to shy at the plain word. "You can call it that, you know. There's probably a train of 'em being marched north-east, and we don't want trouble with 'em. Now, do we?"

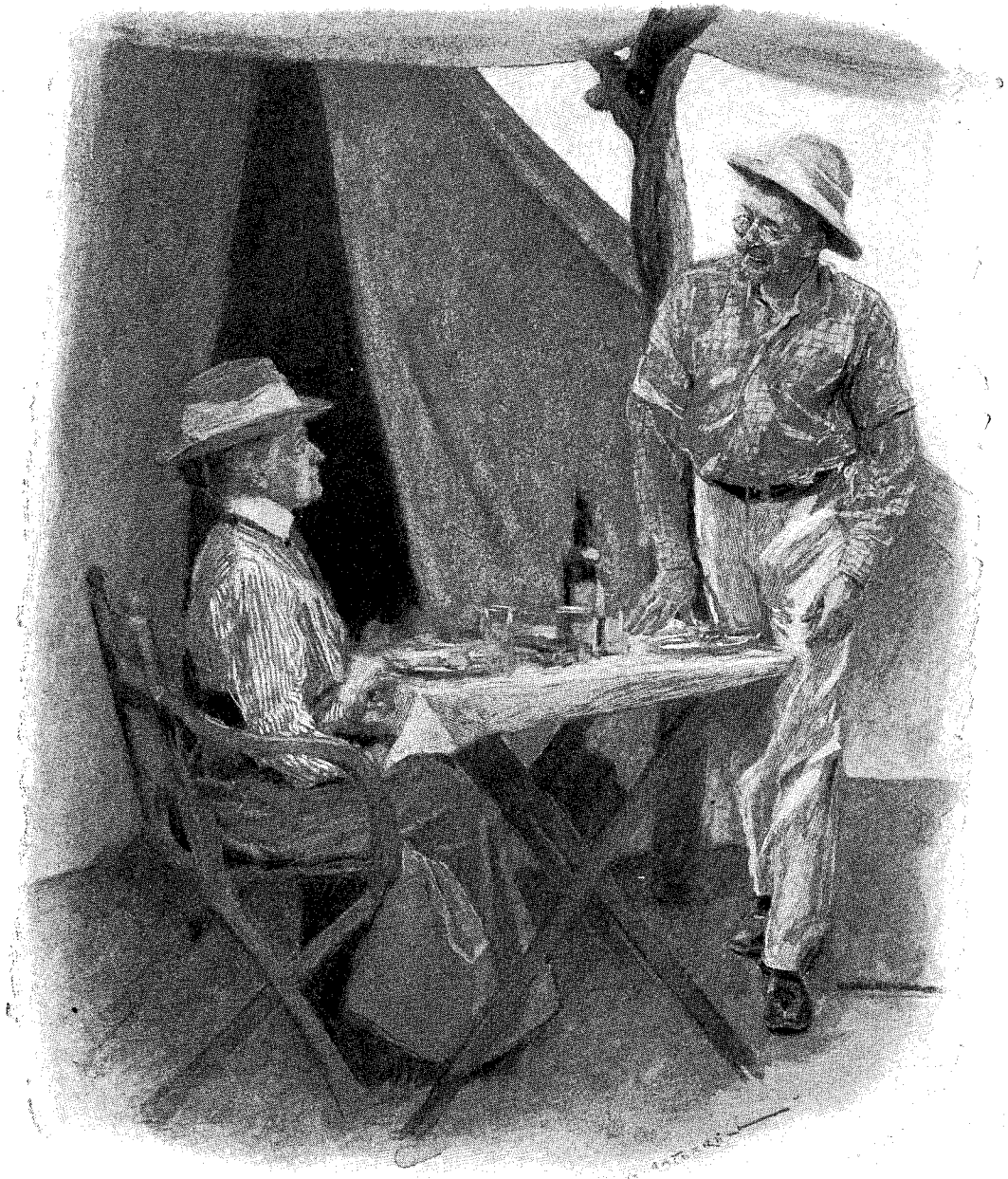
"Trouble?" repeated Miss Gregory. The crouching woman's face strained toward her. "What do you mean—trouble?"

The big, mild-looking man smiled down at his fingers.

"Oh, I meant *trouble*," he answered. "If some one were to come after her, and found her here, you'd know what trouble stands for. I was just telling her to be a good girl and clear out."

The woman shifted and crawled a foot nearer Miss Gregory's feet. That lady stood for perhaps ten seconds in thought. In the background, the yellow Lazaro, shivering in the keen air, pursed his pliant lips disapprovingly. Silly Smith fidgeted and smiled and picked at his nails.

"Very well," said Miss Gregory, at last. The hushed Kaffirs pricked their ears at the sound of



"HE LAUGHED OUTRIGHT, AND ROSE FROM THE TABLE"

her voice; they knew the ring of decision. "If she's fit to travel, I'll take her with me at once. And if not ——"

Silly Smith dropped from his smiling reverie.

"Ah! And if not?" he inquired.

"Perhaps, in that case, you'd better move your camp beyond the reach of — er — trouble," suggested Miss Gregory.

His eye met hers, and for the moment his gaze was steady and full of calculation. It was as if a

light had been flashed upon him and removed; that instant's illumination showed a fell power under the man's mask of manner. It lasted only while one might draw breath; then he smiled sheepishly again.

"Oh, I don't think I want to shift, you know," he answered.

Miss Gregory nodded; she was his equal in resolution. She turned from him and stooped to the woman. At the touch of her hands, the

broken creature drew a short gasp; one could see how the revulsion of relief rent her. She closed her eyes and her head drooped; then, with her race's instinct of obedience, she rose tottering and went with Miss Gregory to her tent.

Silly Smith watched the canvas flap fall behind them, and spat meditatively. His wandering eye seemed to appeal to earth and heaven for an explanation; but, when it rested upon the Kaffirs, their staring group dispersed forthwith. The illumination that had enlightened Miss Gregory was an old story for them.

In her tent, Miss Gregory, eager to ease the trembling woman, found herself baffled by the fact that the poor creature had no needs beyond rest and security. She seemed young; her limbs were of that splendid black-brown which ripens under the equator; the muscles rippled in smooth waves under the sleek skin. It was a comely animal and little more. The sorrowful negro face, so formed for grotesque passions, fell back to vacancy and the exterior shape of content as the woman let herself sink on the rug which Miss Gregory spread for her. She would not eat; rest was the first of her requirements; and there was a flash of perfect teeth as she looked contentedly up to her protector and turned to sleep. In five minutes she was breathing like a child, and Miss Gregory, sitting on her bed, surveyed her with frowning speculation. There had been no gratitude, no tears, nothing fervent or moving; the runaway slave was in safe-keeping again, free from responsibility and the dangers of independence, and could now sleep in peace. "It wasn't from slavery she ran," reflected Miss Gregory. "Perhaps it was from the particular slaver." And, while these reflections were fresh in her mind, she reached for her note-book and proceeded to perpetuate them.

The woman slept immovably, taking her fill of rest after a night of desperate flight. It was past noon when Miss Gregory stepped across her body and went out again. She had missed her breakfast, and had no intention of letting her host off the obligation of serving her with luncheon. No one who knew Miss Gregory would have expected it; and Silly Smith, who had known her for upward of twelve hours, made no mistake in this respect. The folding table was laid, with the folding chair at one end and an up-ended whiskey-case at the other. Lazaro was placing knives and forks in position when she arrived. He showed the whites of his eyes at her.

"Not go away to-day, Missis?" he asked quickly, in a whisper. Miss Gregory shook her head. "This Inglez very bad man," sighed Lazaro. "Very bad, Missis; very rude. Better we go away."

He stopped there, and resumed the placing of

the table equipment with jerking haste. Silly Smith had come out of his tent and was looking on agreeably.

"Young woman doing nicely?" he asked, with heavy politeness. "Yes? That's good. But it's a mistake, you know — a mistake. Like giving soup and blankets to another man's tenantry. Bad form, bad form. You don't mind me tellin' you?"

Miss Gregory seated herself opposite to him. "Yes, I'll take a little whiskey, please," she said. "I never was remarkable for good form, Mr. Smith, and soup and blankets are things of the past in my part of the world. When is the trouble you spoke of due to arrive?"

"Oh, any time," said Smith; "any time. If you hear any shooting, you'll know it's here. The wonder to me is that it hasn't started yet. They've had time enough to follow her up by now."

Miss Gregory's face set grimly. She had her moments of magnificence, and this was one of them. Smith peered at her short-sightedly through his spectacles, and there was no token of wavering in her.

"I thought the slave trade had been put an end to," was all she answered.

"It has," said Smith. "There's hardly any, really — not a dozen trips in a year. The markets are too far away, you see. You could count the fellows who go in for it on the fingers of one hand, and they've all got their own special customers." He held up a plump freckled hand. "Let me see," he said. "There's King Jim — he's one; there's a Turk they call 'Turkey Gall' — he's two; there's old Pirate Smith —"

"The man you were talking of?" asked Miss Gregory.

"Yes; that's the chap I mean." He smiled as he spoke; Miss Gregory wondered why. "Well, that's all I can think of at the moment, but there are a couple more. They're a rough lot. I really think I'd turn that girl out, if I were you."

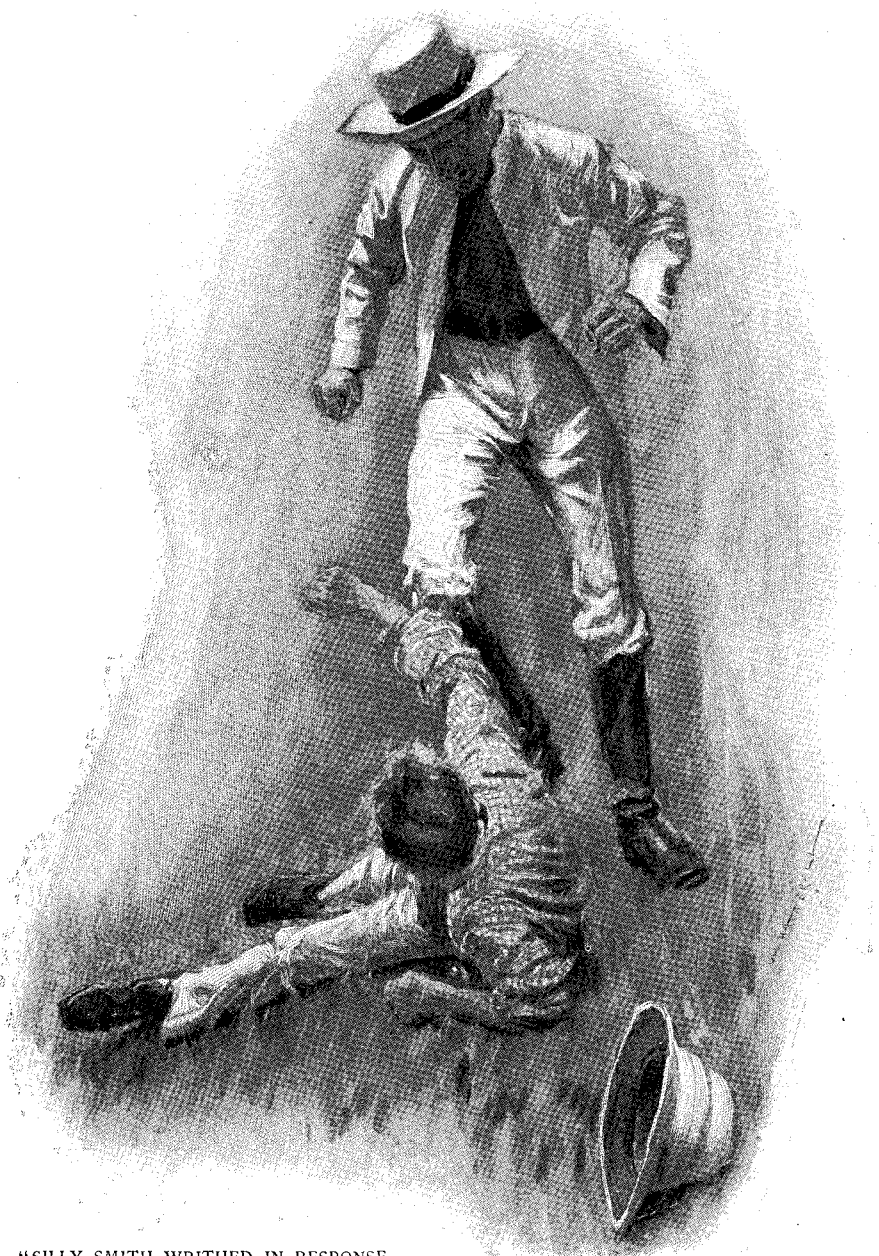
"Oh, no," said Miss Gregory. "Oh, dear me, no. She's not going to be turned out. Please let that be quite clear. I need to be able to look my countrymen in the face; and that girl goes with me."

He laughed outright, and rose from the table. "Sure?" he asked.

"Quite sure," she replied.

"Right," he said, and shouted to Lazaro. He had still his studious droop, his soft and supple appearance, but there was a new briskness in him which warned Miss Gregory. She rose to her feet as Lazaro came running.

"Sorry to disappoint you," smiled Smith to her; "but you must let me have my way in this."



"SILLY SMITH WRITHED IN RESPONSE
TO A SICKENING KICK"

He spoke shortly to Lazaro in the native tongue, pointing at Miss Gregory, and then strode over the grass toward her tent. At the wave of his hand, his Kaffirs flocked after him. Miss Gregory made to go, too; but Lazaro, dancing in front of her in a nervous agony, stopped her with outspread arms.

"Missis, Missis!" he cried beseechingly. "Please — *please* to stop still. Meester Seely

Smith say I mus' make you. Please — please to stop still!"

"Let me pass at once," commanded Miss Gregory.

Smith was at her tent door, and she pushed Lazaro from her. But he, with a last appeal to her to "*please* stop still," laid hold of her jacket and hauled her back. She turned on him, flaming; but he only shut his terrified eyes and hung

on desperately. Miss Gregory struggled, but it was no use: Lazaro was more afraid of Smith than of anything else in the world; he obeyed his orders and held her back.

She ceased to struggle; the purposelessness of it disgusted her.

"Very well, Lazaro," she said. "We will have a reckoning by and by; but now I will sit down."

He was only too glad to let her. She had seen Smith enter her tent with a couple of Kaffirs, and had heard the woman's short cry as they roused her. She turned to take her chair again, but stood rooted.

At the moment of her turning there had stepped forth from the fringe of the bush a tall white man bearing a rifle in the crook of his arm, and she stood now face to face with him. "White man" is the term, but this man was red — red and ardent, from the flame-colored hair under his hat to the great, cruel hands of him — a man tinted like fire. He was no less startled than she; he stared at her out of hard, narrow eyes that squinted evilly. He was big and limber and dangerous, potent and threatening in every aspect. Miss Gregory took a quick step toward him.

"Why, Jeal!" she cried. "Don't you know me, Jeal? Don't you know me — Miss Gregory — from the Hall?"

The man gave ground with a motion like a stagger, and the blankness of mere amaze swept over his face.

"Miss Gregory," he repeated. "Well, if this ain't —" He paused, still gaping, and put a hand to his hat. "Well, miss," he said in a hard, matter-of-fact voice, "if this don't beat cock-fightin'!"

Miss Gregory put a hand on his arm. "Jeal," she said, "look."

Across the parched grass, Smith was coming forth from her tent, thrusting the Kaffir girl before him by the nape of the neck. Jeal looked with all his little eyes.

"That's my tēnt, Jeal," said Miss Gregory urgently, "and he's taking that woman to drive her into the bush. Don't let him, Jeal."

"Eh?" Jeal needed a second or so to understand. "Your tent, Miss? Right."

It was as if she had touched the button that let loose the waiting forces of a machine. Jeal discharged himself from under her hands like some sentient projectile, brushing past Lazaro with an impetus that sent that faithful servant spinning.

Miss Gregory sat down deliberately. She had good nerves, but the last few minutes had been full of stress, and it was as a confused and blurred picture that she saw Jeal's arrival in the midst of Smith's grouping, the scattering force of his charge, the Kaffirs spouting from his im-

pact as water spouts when a stone is thrown into a pool, the whirl of his blows, and the epic fall of Silly Smith.

"Jeal's my name," floated across to her, in the tones of fury. "Call me 'Pirate' again if you dare!" And the form of Silly Smith writhed in response to a sickening kick. "I'll 'Pirate' you, you dog!"

Presently Miss Gregory, with her composure quite restored, sauntered across the grass. Jeal eyed her sheepishly, at an atrocious angle; Silly Smith sat up and blinked.

"Thank you, Jeal," she said. "That was just what I wanted. But I suppose I ought to be moving now. Mr. Smith will be glad to see the last of us."

Smith, seated on the ground, rubbed himself thoughtfully.

"Oh, don't think that," he begged, settling his spectacles on his nose. His vague, benevolent smile returned. "Now, if only old Turkey Gall was to turn up, we could make up a hand at bridge."

Jeal scowled and his foot drew back. Silly Smith, still smiling, edged, sitting, out of range. "Good old soup and blankets," he murmured. "The tenants are grateful, bless 'em!"

Miss Gregory turned to Jeal. "What you want, Jeal, is a holiday," she said. "You ought to go back to Kent for a year. Do you no end of good. Your father's getting old."

"Is he, Miss?" Jeal squinted more than ever in his embarrassment. "I 'ope the Squire's keeping 'is 'ealth, Miss?"

"My brother? Yes, thanks. Now, there's just one thing more I want you to do for me, and then we'll pack up and move."

"Yes, Miss," said Jeal. "Anything you like."

Miss Gregory smiled graciously, and beckoned to Lazaro. He came at top speed, though manifestly anxious.

"Lazaro," said his mistress, "I'm not pleased with you. Now go with this gentleman and get a good beating, while the Kaffirs break camp."

"Come on, Lazarus," said Jeal genially. And Lazaro went. A beating was bad, — as it proved, — but it was better than disobeying the man who squinted.

Silly Smith, benevolent and dreamy, bade Miss Gregory good-by at the edge of the clearing.

"Good luck," he said, with his big pink face wavering above her. "Wonderful how the old feudal spirit crops up, isn't it? Breed 'em carefully for three hundred years, give 'em tracts for their morals and pills for their digestion, and old Pirate Sm — Jeal, I mean — a man like Jeal is the result. Pity, isn't it? Good-by."

He waved his hand to the scowling Jeal, and stood smiling till the bush closed behind them.

GOLDWIN SMITH'S REMINISCENCES

III

RECOLLECTIONS OF GREAT ENGLISHMEN

PARTLY by my connection with journalism, partly by my Eton and social connections, I was led to intimacy with some public men, with the Peelite circle at first, and afterwards with Bright, Cobden, and the Manchester school. Peel himself was always the object of my political allegiance. I saw in him a statesman, in his later days at all events, above party, who sought and studied with singleness of heart the good of the whole nation; and, though I had less respect for some venerable institutions than he had, I recognised his wisdom in preferring administrative reform, which he steadfastly pursued, to organic change. Beyond doubt, he had the confidence not only of the majority but of the most intelligent and respectable part of the nation. His fall before an unprincipled coalition of Protectionist Tories, office-seeking Whigs, English Radicals, and Irish enemies of the Union had increased my feeling in his favor.

Of Peel I saw nothing. When I went to London he had fallen from office — not from power: he was still at the head of the House of Commons and of the country. Greville says truly that he would have been elected Prime Minister by an overwhelming majority. Soon afterwards he was killed by a fall from his horse. He was a good shot, but a bad horseman, having a loose seat. Care was supposed to be taken in buying horses for him on that account; yet the horse that killed him had been offered for sale to my father and other fox-hunters in our neighbourhood, and had been rejected for its trick of bucking and kicking. Our neighbour at Mortimer, Sir Paul Hunter, met Peel riding in the park, recognised his horse, actually turned to warn him, — but, fearing to intrude, abstained. The horse probably played its usual trick — threw Peel over its head; and he, falling with the reins in his hand, pulled down the horse upon him. The horse with his knee broke the rider's rib, drove it into his lungs, and thus, like the mole whose mole-hill killed William III., played a part in history.

Peel's Quarrel with Lord George Bentinck

It was currently reported, and the belief has found a place in Froude's Biography of Disraeli, that Peel wanted to send Disraeli a challenge for something said by him in the Corn Law debates. Peel did want to send a challenge, and for something said in the Corn Law debates; but it was not to Disraeli — it was to Lord George Bentinck. The Duke of Newcastle, who was asked by Peel to carry the challenge, told me the story.

We were talking about our contemporaries at Eton and Oxford. This led to mention of Sidney Herbert and a reference to a false charge against Peel of having abused Sidney Herbert's confidence in him. The Duke said that no one would be less likely to be guilty of such a thing than Peel, who was so sensitive about his relation to his friends that, for aspersing it, he had wanted to send a challenge to Lord George Bentinck. The Duke proceeded to say that after the debate, when the House was up, Peel had asked him to wait while he wrote the customary letter to the Queen, then took his arm and walked with him towards his own house in Hyde Park Gardens, saying by the way that Bentinck's language had been an aspersion on his honour and the Duke must carry a challenge. The Duke remonstrated. Peel insisted. They walked to and fro till workmen began to pass on their way to work. Peel was then persuaded to go to bed, the Duke promising speedily to return. Returning, the Duke found Peel still resolved to send the challenge; but at length consideration for what the Duke pleaded would be the feelings of the Queen, in case of serious consequences, prevailed.

Having heard the story, I naturally asked how it was that Peel felt so much a blow of Lord George Bentinck's bludgeon, when he showed such indifference to Disraeli's poniard, of which he once only stooped to take cursory notice. The Duke's answer was that, calling at Peel's house on his way to the House of Commons, he