

SWALLOW.*

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

"SWALLOW" IS A STORY OF SOUTH AFRICA, WHERE ANGLO SAXON, BOER, AND KAFFIR STILL STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY, AND THE READER IS LIKE TO FORGET HIS ENVIRONMENT AND IMAGINE THAT REAL LIFE IS BEING ENACTED BEFORE HIM: THAT HE, TOO, LIVES AND LOVES AND SUFFERS WITH RALPH KENZIE AND SUZANNE, THE BOER MAIDEN—THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST STORIES FROM MR. HAGGARD'S PEN SINCE "KING SOLOMON'S MINES," "SHE," AND "ALLAN QUATERMAIN."

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

SWALLOW is the name given by the Kaffirs to Suzanne, daughter of a Boer, Jan Botmar, whose wife is the teller of the story. Long years before, the worthy couple adopted Ralph Kenzie, an English lad, a castaway, who, when he reaches his nineteenth year, is discovered to be of noble blood and the heir to vast estates. He stoutly refuses to leave his foster parents, however, and weds Suzanne. On their wedding journey the young couple are surprised by a band of blacks under Piet Van Vooren, a rich Boer who has Kaffir blood in his veins, and Ralph's bitter enemy, who shoots the young husband and carries off Suzanne, for he has long been in love with the girl, though she detests him. But Sihamba, a young native witch doctress, who is a faithful servant of Suzanne, arrives in time to succor Ralph, who is badly wounded, and sends him back to the Botmar homestead in charge of native servants. Sihamba then starts in pursuit of Swart Piet, and after a long journey contrives to set the girl free. The two women seek refuge among the red Kaffirs, whose chief, Sigwe, is about to make war on the Endwandwe. The soothsayers of the tribe have declared that if his impis are led by a White Swallow, they will be invincible, and when he learns that Suzanne is known by that name he invokes her aid, offering in return protection from her enemy. Soon afterwards, Swart Piet and his men arrive and seek to recover their captive, but they are ignominiously driven away.

That night, in the guest hut at the town of Sigwe, Suzanne prays that her husband may learn that she is unharmed and well, and that she may learn how it goes with him; as if in answer to her prayer, she seems suddenly to find herself at her old home and in the presence of her husband Ralph. He is fevered and unconscious, but when she speaks to him he opens his eyes and they converse a brief moment, she describing the place where they are destined to be reunited. Then everything fades from view and she finds herself back again in the guest hut at Sigwe. When Vrouw Botmar next enters Ralph's room she finds that the fever has left him, and he talks of having seen Suzanne.

XXII.

WHEN Sihamba awoke in the morning, Suzanne asked her if the home of her people, the Umpondwana, was a great mountain faced round with slab sided precipices and having ridges on its eastern face like to the thumb and fingers of a hand, with a stream of water gushing from between the thumb and first finger, upon the banks of which grew flat topped trees with thick green leaves and white flowers.

Sihamba stared at her, saying:

"Such is the place indeed, and there are no trees like to those you speak of to be found anywhere else. The maidens use the flowers of them to adorn their hair, and from the leaves is made a salve that is very good for wounds. But, Swallow, who told you about the mountain Umpondwana that is so far away? I never described it to you."

"Nobody told me," she answered, and she repeated the vision to her, or as much of it as she wished.

Sihamba listened, and when the tale was done she nodded her little head, saying:

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"So even you white people have something of the power which has been given to us Kaffir witch doctors from the beginning. Without a doubt your spirit spoke to the spirit of your husband last night, and now, although you are apart from each other, the hearts of both of you will be rested. Now also I am sure that we must go to my people and live among them for so long as may be appointed, seeing that there is nowhere else you and the Baas Kenzie will come together again."

"I had rather go back to the stead," sighed Suzanne.

"That cannot be, Swallow, for it is not fated; and for the rest, if you meet again, what does it matter where you meet?"

That morning Suzanne, mounted upon the great *schimmel*, which by now had almost recovered from his weariness, although he was still somewhat stiff, and followed by Sihamba and Zinti riding the horse and the mule, passed up and down before Sigwe's regiments, which saluted her as chieftainess. Then, amongst much wailing of women and children, the impi started northward, Suzanne, proceeded only by scouts and a guard to feel the way, riding in front of it that she might escape the dust raised by so many feet and the hoofs of the great herd of oxen that was driven along to serve as food for the soldiers. For fourteen days' journey they traveled thus, and during that time nothing of note happened to them, except that twelve men and Sihamba's brown mule were lost in crossing a flooded river, whereof there were many in their path. The country through which they passed was populated by Kaffirs, but these tribes were too small and scattered to attempt to oppose so large an army, nor did the men of Sigwe do them any mischief beyond taking such grain and meal as they required for food. On the fourteenth day, however, they reached the boundary of the territories of a very powerful tribe of Pondo blood, and

here they halted while messengers were sent forward to the Pondo chief, saying that with him they had no quarrel, and asking for a safe conduct for the army while passing through his lands. On the third day these messengers returned, accompanied by an embassy from the Pondo chief, that after much talk, though to all appearance unwillingly, gave Sigwe the promise of safe conduct upon condition that he made a present of ceremony of one ox to their ruler. Now, Sihamba noticed that while the envoys were talking, their eyes wandered all about, taking note of everything, and especially of the number of the soldiers and of Suzanne, who sat beside Sigwe during the *indaba*.

"These are no true men," she thought to herself, and made a plan. In the evening she visited the camp of the envoys, who already had heard that she was a famous doctress, and offered her services to them for payment should any of them chance to need the exercise of her magic arts. They laughed, answering that they wanted neither charms nor divinations, but that she should see a certain young man, a servant in their train, who was very sick with love and had bought philters from every doctor in their country without avail, wherein to soften the heart of a girl who would have nothing to do with him. When Sihamba, without seeming to speak much of it, had drawn from them all that she wished to know of the story of this man and girl, and with it other information, though they won little enough from her, she took her leave, and so set her trap that that night, when all were asleep, the young man came to consult her in a place apart.

Now, she looked at him and said, without suffering him to speak:

"Let me see. Your name is so-and-so, and you are in love with such a girl, who turns away from you;" and she went on to tell him things which he thought were known only to himself.

"Wonderful!" he said, "wonderful! But say, lady doctress, can you help me? For my heart is water because of this girl."

"It is difficult," she answered. "Do you not know that when you come to consult a wise woman you should keep your mind fixed upon the matter about which you should take counsel with her from the first moment that you set out to visit her until you stand in her presence? Now, this you have not done, for as you came you were thinking of other things; yes, you were thinking about the ambush which is to be set for these people in the pass yonder, and, therefore, I cannot see the girl's heart clear, and do not know what medicine I should give you to soften it."

"It is true, lady," answered the stupid fellow, "that I was thinking about the ambush of which I have heard some talk, though I do not know who told you of it."

"Who told me? Why, to my sight your thoughts are written on your face, yes, they ran before you and reached me as I heard your footsteps. But now, think no more of that matter, which has nothing to do with you or me; think only of the girl, and go on thinking of her, and of her only, until you get back home, and use the medicine—that is, if you wish it to work."

"I am thinking, lady," he muttered, turning his stupid face up to the skies.

"Fool, be quiet. Do I not know that? Ah, now I see her heart, and I tell you that you are lucky, for when you have done as I bid you, she will love you more than if you were the greatest chief in all the land;" and she gave him a certain harmless powder to sprinkle in the hut where the girl slept, and bade him wait for her on six different days when she came up from bathing, giving her on each day a garland of fresh flowers, a new flower for every day.

The man thanked her and asked what he must pay her for a fee, to which she replied that she took no fees

in matters of love, since her reward was to know that she had made two people happy; but she added:

"Remember what I will tell you, or instead of earning love you will earn hate. Say nothing of your visit to me, and if you can avoid it, do not speak at all until you have sprinkled the powder in the hut; especially put all things which do not concern you and her out of your mind, and think only of her face and how happy you will be when you have married her, which, if you follow my instructions, you will soon do."

Now, the young man went away as though he were walking upon air, and indeed so closely did he obey her that he was dismissed by his masters as a dumb fool before ever he reached home again, but whether or no Sihamba's medicine softened the heart of the maid I have not heard.

So soon as he was gone Sihamba sent Zinti to bring Sigwe and two of his generals to the place where she and Suzanne were encamped in a booth made of branches and long grass. When they were come, she told them what she had learned from the love stricken lad, adding that this plan of making sure of what already she suspected had been born in the brain of the Swallow, although she had carried it out, for when she deemed that she could serve her mistress or win her honor, Sihamba thought less of the truth than she should have done.

On learning this tidings, Sigwe and his captains were full of wrath, and spoke of making war upon the Pondo chief at once, but Sihamba said:

"Listen: the Swallow has whispered a better way into my ear. It is this: the embassy of the Pondos leaves at dawn, and you must bid them farewell, telling them that you will follow and camp tomorrow night at the mouth of the pass, which you will enter at the next daybreak. Meanwhile, now at once we will send out my servant Zinti, dressed like a Pondo lad, to search the country, and find if there is not

another path by which the pass can be turned, for if such a way exists he will discover it and report to us tomorrow at nightfall, since he, who is stupid in many things, was born with the gift of seeking out roads and remembering them; also he knows how to be silent if questioned."

The chief and the captains thought this plan good, and thanked the Swallow for it, praising her wisdom, and within an hour, having been instructed what he must do and where he should meet them, Zinti was despatched upon his errand.

Next morning the envoys departed suspecting nothing, and taking with them gifts and the ox of ceremony; and that night the army of Sigwe encamped within a mile of the pass, to the right and left of which stretched tall and difficult cliffs.

About an hour after sunset Zinti crept into the camp and asked for food to eat, for he had traveled far and was hungry; moreover, he had been chased by some Pondo soldiers to whom, feigning the fool he was commonly supposed to be, he would make no answer when they questioned him. When he had eaten he made his report to Sigwe, Suzanne, and Sihamba, and the gist of it was that he had found a good road by which men might safely ascend the cliffs, though not so easily as they could travel through the gorge. Following this road, he added, they could pass round the Pondo town, avoiding its fortifications, and coming out at the cattle kraals at the back of the town, for he had climbed a high tree and mapped out the route with his eye. Then followed a council of war, and the upshot of it was that, under the leadership of Zinti, the army marched off in silence an hour before midnight, leaving its cooking fires burning to deceive the Pondos.

They climbed the cliffs by the path he showed them, and, traveling all night, at dawn found themselves before the cattle kraals, which, as no

enemy was expected, were unguarded except by the herds. These they cleared of the cattle, some thousands of them, and marched on at speed, sending a message back to the town by the herds that this was the luck which those must expect who attempted to trap the Swallow in a snare set for a rock rabbit.

The Pondos were very angry at their loss, and, gathering their strength, followed them for some days, but before they could come up with them Sigwe and his army had reached a country so difficult and so far away that the Pondo chief thought it wisest to leave them alone. So they marched on, taking the captured cattle with them, and after this bloodless victory Suzanne and Sihamba were greatly honored by the soldiers, and even the lad Zinti was treated like a chief.

Now once more they reached wild lands, inhabited only by scattered tribes, and passed through them at their leisure, for they had plenty of food to eat, although from time to time they were obliged to encamp upon the banks of flooded rivers, or to hunt for a road over a mountain. It was on the thirty first day of their journey that at length they entered the territories of the Endwandwe, against whom they had come to make war, where at once they were met by messengers sent by Sikonyana, the chief of the Endwandwe, desiring to know why they came upon him with so great a force. To these men the case was set out by Sigwe, speaking in his own name and in that of the Swallow. As he had promised to Suzanne, for this was a savage who kept his word, he offered to refrain from attack if the young Batwa was exchanged for her one eyed sister and sent to him, together with the thousand head of cattle which he had paid, and three thousand more by way of fine. At first these terms were refused, but afterwards an embassy came of whom the captain was the brother of the king, who said that he was charged to discuss this matter

with the white chieftainess named Swallow, herself, and with none other.

So Suzanne, accompanied only by Sihamba, and mounted upon the great *schimmel*, that had come safe and well through all the journey, though the black horse had died of sickness, rode out a hundred paces in front of the army and met the man. There she spoke to him well and wisely, pointing out to him that without doubt a trick had been played upon Sigwe which he was mad to avenge. The captain answered that they were well able to fight. She replied that this might be so, that they might even conquer Sigwe and drive him back, but it could not be done without great loss to themselves, and that if his tribe were at all weakened the Zulus, who hated them, would hear of it, and take the opportunity to stamp them out.

Well, the end of it was that the Endwandwe yielded, and upon the promise of Suzanne—for they would take no other—that no spear should be lifted against them, they sent the true Batwa, a beautiful but sullen girl, to Sigwe, taking back the old, who departed cursing him and all his race. With her they returned also the thousand head of cattle which he had paid and fifteen hundred more by way of fine, for the balance was remitted by agreement.

And so came to an end the war of Sigwe with the Endwandwe, which among the Kaffirs is still spoken of as the "War of the White Swallow," or sometimes as the "War of the Clean Spear," because no blood at all was shed in it, and not a man was killed by violence, although when Sigwe passed through that country on his journey home, by means of a clever trick the Pondo chief recaptured most of the cattle that had been taken from him.

XXIII.

So the cattle were handed over and the girl Batwa given to Sigwe, whom,

by the way, she made unhappy for the rest of his days. Indeed, she brought his ruin, for, being ambitious, she persuaded him to make war upon the white people in the Transkei, of which the end was that from a great chief he became a very small one. When all was accomplished Sigwe awaited upon Suzanne.

"Lady Swallow," he said, "in three days I begin my homeward march, and now I have come to ask whither you wish to go, since you cannot stop here in the veldt alone."

"I would return with you to the Transkei," she answered, "and seek out my own home."

"Lady," he said shamefacedly, "alas! that may not be. You remember the dream of the diviner, and you know how that all which she foretold, and more, has come to pass, for you, the White Swallow, appeared and flew in front of my impi, and from that hour we have had the best of luck. By your wisdom we outwitted the Pondos and seized their cattle; by your wisdom we have conquered the Endwandwe without lifting a single spear, and that Batwa whom I desired is mine; while of the great force which came out with me to war but twenty and one are dead, twelve by drowning, eight by sickness, and one by snake bite. All things have gone well, and she who dreamed the dream of the White Swallow is the greatest of diviners. But, lady, this was not all the dream, for it said that if you, the Swallow, should set your face southward with us, then the best of luck would turn to the worst, for then utter misfortune would overwhelm me and my regiments. Now, lady, I cannot doubt that, as the first part of the prophecy has come true, so the last part would come true also did I tempt the spirits of my ancestors by disregarding it, and, therefore, White Swallow, though all I have is yours, yet you cannot fly home with us."

Suzanne pleaded with him long and earnestly, as did Sihamba, but

without avail, for he could not be moved. Indeed, had he consented the captain and the army would have disobeyed his order in this matter, for they believed, every man of them, that to take the Swallow with them homeward would be to run to their own deaths. Nor was it safe that she should attempt to follow in the path of the impi, since then in their superstitious fears they might send back and kill her to avert the evil fate.

"Now, Swallow," said Sihamba, "there is but one thing for us to do, and it is to seek refuge among my people, the Umpondwana, whose mountain stronghold lies at a distance of four days' journey from this place; though, to speak truth, I am not sure how they will receive me, seeing that I parted from them in anger twelve years ago, having quarreled with them, first about a matter of policy, and secondly about a matter of marriage, and that my half brother, the son of my father by a slave, was promoted to rule in my stead. To them we must go, and with them we must stay, if they will suffer it, until we find an opportunity of traveling south in safety."

"If it must be so," answered Suzanne, sighing, "perhaps Sigwe will escort us to the house of the Umpondwana before he turns homeward, for they will think the more of us if they see us at the head of a great army."

To this plan Sigwe and his captains assented with gladness, for they loved and honored the Swallow, and were sore at heart because they must leave her alone in the wilderness. But first they made sure that the mountain Umpondwana lay to the west, and not to the south, for not one step to the southward would they suffer Suzanne to travel with them.

On the morrow, then, they marched, and the evening of the third day they set their camp in a mountain pass which led to a wide plain. Before sunrise next morning Sihamba woke Suzanne.

"Dress yourself, Swallow," she said, "and come to see the light break on the house of my people."

So they went out in the gray dawn, and climbing a koppie in the mouth of the pass, looked before them. At first they could distinguish nothing, for all the plain beneath was a sea of mist through which in the distance loomed something like a mountain, till presently the rays of the rising sun struck upon it and the veils of vapor parted like curtains that are drawn back, and there before them was the mountain fortress of Umpondwana separate from the pass by a great space of mist clad plain. Suzanne looked and recognized it.

"Sihamba," she said, "it is the place of my vision and none other. See, the straight sides of red rock, the five ridges upon the eastern slope fashioned like the thumb and fingers of the hand of a man. Yes, and there between the thumb and first finger a river runs."

"I told you that it was so from the beginning, Swallow, for in all the country there is no other such hill as this, and because of the aspect of those ridges when seen from a distance it is named the Mountain of the Great Hand."

Before the words had left her lips another voice spoke, at the sound of which Suzanne nearly fell to the earth.

"Good day to you, Suzanne," it said in Dutch, and was silent.

"Sihamba—did you hear, Sihamba?" she gasped. "Do I dream, or did Piet Van Vooren speak to me?"

"You did not dream," answered Sihamba, "for that voice was the voice of Swart Piet and no other, and he is hidden somewhere among the rocks of yonder cliff wall. Quick, Swallow, kneel behind this stone lest he should shoot."

She obeyed, and at that moment the voice spoke again out of the shadows of the cliff that bordered the pass forty or fifty paces from them.

"What, Suzanne," it said, "is that

little witch doctress telling you that I shall fire on you? Had I wished, I could have shot you three times over while you were standing upon that rock. But why should I desire to kill one who will be my lover? Sihamba I might have shot indeed, but her familiar set her so that the bullet might pass through you to reach her heart. Suzanne, you are going to hide yourself among the people of the Umpondwana. Oh, yes, I know your plan! Well, when once you are behind the walls of that mountain it may be difficult to speak to you for a while, so listen to me. You thought that you had left me far away, did you not? But I have followed you step by step, and twice I have been very near to you, although I could never find a chance to carry you off safely. Well, I wish to tell you that, sooner or later, I shall find that chance; sooner or later you will come out of the mountain or I shall get into it, and then my turn will come; so, love, till that hour, fare you well. Stay, I forgot, I have news for you; your husband, the English castaway, is dead."

At this tidings a low moan of pain broke from Suzanne's lips.

"Be silent and take no heed," whispered Sihamba, who was kneeling at her side behind the shelter of the stone; "he does but lie to torment you."

"The bullet and the water was too much for him, and he died on the second night after he reached the stead. Your father came to seek me in the place you know, and was carried home badly wounded for his pains, but whether he lived or died I cannot tell you; but I heard that your mother, the good Vrouw Botmar, is very sick, for things have so fallen out lately that her mind is troubled, and she flies to drink to comfort it."

Now, when she heard this, Sihamba could keep silence no longer, but cried in a mocking voice:

"Get you gone, Bull Head, and take lessons in lying from your friends of

my trade, the Kaffir witch doctors, for never before did I hear one bear false witness so clumsily. On the third night of his illness the husband of Swallow was alive and doing well; the Heer Jan Botmar was not wounded at all, and as for the Vrouw Botmar, never in her life did she drink anything stronger than coffee, for the white man's firewater is poison to her. Get you gone, you silly half breed, who seek to deceive the ears of Sihamba, and I counsel you, hold fast to your trade of theft and murder and give up that of lying, in which you will never succeed. Now be off, you stink cat of the rocks, lest I send some one to hunt you from your hole who this time will use the points and not the shafts of their assagais. Come, Swallow, let us be going."

So they went, keeping under cover all the way to the camp, which, indeed, was quite close to them, and if Swart Piet made any answer they did not hear it. So soon as they reached it Sihamba told Sigwe what had passed and he sent men to scour the cliff and the bush behind it, but of Van Vooren they could find no trace, no, not even the spot where he had been hidden, so that Sigwe came to believe that they had been fooled by echoes and had never heard him at all.

But both Suzanne and Sihamba knew that this was not so; indeed, this hearing of the voice of Swart Piet filled Suzanne with fear, since where the voice was there was the man, her hateful enemy, who had devoted his life to her ruin and that of those she loved. Whatever lies he might have spoken—and her heart told her that all his ill tidings were but a cruel falsehood—this, at least, was true, that he had dogged her step by step through the vast wilderness, and so craftily that none guessed his presence. What might not be feared of such a foe as this, half mad and all wicked, armed with terrible cunning and untiring patience? If the Umpondwana would not receive her, she must fall into his

hands at once, and if they did receive her she would never dare to leave their kraal, for always, always, he would be watching and waiting for her. Little wonder, then, that she felt afraid, though still in her heart shone the sure comfort of her hope, and more than hope, that in the end God would give her back her husband and her to him unharmed, just as the sun shines ever behind the blackest cloud. Yet, whichever way she looked, the cloud was very black, and through it she could see no ray of light.

When the mists had vanished and the air was warm with the sun, the army of Sigwe marched from the pass heading for the great mountain. As they drew near, they saw that the Umpondwana were much terrified at the sight of them, for, from all the kraals, of which there were many on the slopes of the mountain, they ran hither and thither like ants about a broken nest, carrying their goods and children upon their shoulders, and driving herds of cattle in towards the central stronghold. Noting this, Sigwe halted and sent heralds forward to say that he came in peace and not in war, and that he desired to speak with their chief. In less than two hours the heralds returned, bringing with them some of the head men of the Umpondwana, who stared round with frightened eyes, for they did not believe that any general would come upon a message of peace with so many regiments. When the *indaba* was set Sigwe told them his name and tribe, of both of which they had heard, and then, before speaking of his business, asked which of them was the chief of the Umpondwana.

"Alas!" answered the old man, "we are in sore trouble here, and wander in the darkness, for our chief"—and he named the brother of Sihamba—"died two days ago of the smallpox, which has raged among us for many months, leaving no children behind him, for the sickness killed them, also. Moreover, we are suffering from a

great drought, for, as you may see, the veldt is still brown, and there is no green upon the cornfields, and if rain does not fall soon famine will follow the sickness, and then it will only need that the Zulus should follow the famine to make an end of us once and for all."

"It seems that your tribe must have sinned deeply and brought down upon itself the curse of the spirit of its ancestors," said Sigwe, when they had done their melancholy tale, "that so many misfortunes should overtake you. Tell me now, who by right is ruler of the Umpondwana?"

"We do not know, chief," they answered, "or, rather, we cannot tell if our ruler is alive or dead, and if she is dead then none is left of the true blood. She was a small woman, but very pretty, and full of wisdom as a mealie cob with grains of corn, for in all this country there was no doctress or diviner like to her; her name was Sihamba Ngenyanga, the Wanderer by Moonlight, which name was given her when she was little, because of her habit of walking in the dark alone, and she was the only child of our late chief's *inkosi-kaas*, a princess of the Swazis, and the father of that lad who lies dead of the smallpox. But when this chief died and she was called upon to rule our tribe, quarrels arose between her and the *indunas* of the tribe, for she was a very handsome woman. We, the *indunas*, wished to marry her, but for her own reasons she would not marry; also we wished to swear allegiance to Chaka, but she was against it, saying that as well might a lamb swear allegiance to a wolf as the Umpondwana to the Zulus. The end of it was that in a temper she took a bowl of water and before us all washed her hands of us, and that same night she vanished away, we know not where, though rumors have reached us that she went south. From the day of her departure things have gone ill with us; the Zulus, with whom we made peace, threaten us continually; her half brother, the slave

born, was not a good chief, and now he is dead of the sickness. So our heart is heavy and our head is in the dust, and when we saw your impi we thought that Dingaan, who now rules over the Zulus, had sent it to eat us up and to take the cattle that still remain to us. But you say that you come in peace, so tell us, chief, what it is you desire, and I trust that it may be little, for here we have nothing to give, unless," he added with meaning, "it be the smallpox, although we are ready to fight to the death for what is left to us, our liberty and our cattle; and, chief, even a larger army than yours might fail to take that stronghold which has but one gate."

When he had finished speaking, Sigwe called aloud:

"Lady Sihamba, I pray you come hither, and with you the lady Swallow, your companion."

Then Sihamba, who was prepared for this event, for her hair was freshly dressed and powdered with blue mica, wearing her little cape of fur and the necklace of large blue beads, stepped from the screen of bush behind which she had hidden. With her, and holding her hand, came Suzanne, who covered the raggedness of her clothes beneath a splendid kaross of leopards' skins that Sigwe had given her, down which her dark hair flowed almost to her knee, and a strange pair they made, the tall Suzanne in the first flush of her white beauty, which had suffered nothing in their journeying, and the small, quick eyed, delicate featured Kaffir woman.

"Who are these?" asked Sigwe of the council.

The old man looked at them and answered:

"Of the white lady we can say nothing except that she is very beautiful; but, unless our eyes deceive us, she whom she holds by the hand is Sihamba Ngenyanga, who was our chieftainess, and who left us because she was angry."

"She is Sihamba and no one else," said Sigwe; "Sihamba come back to rule you in the hour of need, and now with her own tongue she shall tell you her story and the story of the White Swallow who holds her by the hand."

So Sihamba began, and for an hour or more she spoke to them, for when she chose this little woman had the gift of words, telling them all about herself, and telling them also the story of the Swallow, and of how she had brought good luck to the army of Sigwe, and how she was destined to bring good luck wherever she made her home. At the end of her speech she said:

"Now, my people, although I have wandered from you, yet my eyes, which are far seeing, have not been blind to your griefs, and in the hour of your need I return to you, bringing with me the White Swallow to sojourn among you for a while. Receive us if you will and be prosperous, or reject us and be destroyed; to us it matters nothing, it is for you to choose. But if we come, we come not as servants but as princes whose word cannot be questioned, and should you accept us and deal ill with us in any way, then your fate is sure. Ask the chief Sigwe here whether or no the flight of the Swallow is fortunate, whether or no there is wisdom in the mouth of Sihamba, who is not ashamed to serve her."

Then Sigwe told them of all the good fortune that had come to him through Suzanne, and of how wise had been the words of Sihamba, and told them, moreover, that if they dealt ill by either of them he would return from his own country and stamp them flat.

So it came about that the *indunas* of the Umpondwana took back Sihamba to be their chieftainess with all powers, and with her Suzanne as her equal in rule, and this their act was confirmed that same day by a great council of the tribe. So that evening, Suzanne, mounted on the *schimmel*, rode down the ranks of the red Kaffirs, while they

shouted their farewells to her, and then, having parted with Sigwe, who almost wept at her going, passed with Sihamba, the lad Zinti, and a great herd of cattle—her tithe of the spoil—to the mountain Umpondwana, where all the tribe were waiting to receive them. They rode up to the flanks of the mountain and through the narrow pass and the red wall of rock to the tableland upon its top, where stood the chief's huts and the cattle kraal, and here they found the people gathered.

"Give us a blessing," these cried. "Pray for us that rain may fall."

Sihamba spoke with Suzanne and answered:

"My people, I have entreated of the White Swallow, and for your sake she will pray that rain will fall ere long."

Now, Sihamba knew the signs of the weather, and, as it happened, rain began to fall that night in torrents, and fell for three days almost without ceasing, washing the sickness away with it. So the Umpondwana blessed the name of Sihamba and the White Swallow, and these two ruled over them without question, life and death hanging upon their words.

And there, a chieftainess among savages, Suzanne was fated to dwell for more than two long years.

XXIV.

Now my story goes back to that night at the stead when I, Suzanne Botmar, and my husband, Jan Botmar, were awakened from our sleep to learn that our daughter had been carried off by that mad villain, Piet Van Vooren, and that her husband, Ralph, lay senseless and wounded in the wagon at the door. We carried him in, groaning in our bitter grief, and despatched messengers to arouse all the Kaffirs about the place whom we could trust, and to a party of Boers, six men in all, who chanced to have outspanned that night upon the borders of our farm to shoot wildebeest and blesbok. Also we

sent another messenger, mounted on a good horse, to the house of that neighbor who was being attended by the doctor from the dorp, praying that he would come with all speed to visit Ralph, which indeed he did, for he was with us by half past eight in the morning.

Within an hour of the despatch of the messengers the Boers rode up from their wagons, and to them, as well as to ourselves and to the Kaffirs who had gathered, the driver and voorlooper told all they knew of the terrible crime that had been done upon the persons of Ralph Kenzie and his wife by Piet Van Vooren and his band. Also they repeated all that Zinti had taught them of the road to the secret krantz whither it was believed that he had carried off Suzanne. Then Jan asked them if they would help him in this trouble, and being true men, one and all, they answered yes, so by seven in the morning the little commando, numbering twenty one guns, eight white men and thirteen Kaffirs, started to seek for Swart Piet's hiding place, and to rescue Suzanne if they might.

"Alas!" I said to Jan, as he bade me farewell, "at the best I fear you will be too late."

"We must trust in God," he answered heavily.

"Never had we more need of trust, husband; but I fear that God turns His face from us because of the lies we told to the Englishmen, for now the punishment which you foresaw has fallen."

"Then, wife, it were more just that it should have fallen on us who were guilty, and not on these two who are innocent. But still I say I trust in God—and in Sihamba," he added by an afterthought; "for she is brave and clever, and can run upon a path which others cannot even see."

Then they went, and were away five days, or it may have been six. They started early on the Tuesday, and upon the Thursday morning, after much trouble, by the help of a native whom

they captured, they found Swart Piet's kraal, but of Swart Piet or Suzanne or the hidden krantz they could see nothing. Indeed, it was not until they had gathered together every man they could find in the kraal and tied them to trees, saying that they would shoot them, that a woman, the wife of one of the men, led them to a rock wall and showed the secret of the kloof. They entered and found the big hut, with the body of the man whom Sihamba had killed still lying in it, and also the knife with which Suzanne had intended to destroy herself, and which her father knew again. Then by degrees they made out the whole story, for the woman pointed out to him the man who had guarded the entrance to the kloof and at whom Zinti had fired, and under fear of death this man confessed all he knew, which was that Suzanne, Sihamba, and Zinti had escaped northward upon their horses, followed by Swart Piet and his band.

Accordingly, northwards they rode, but they never found any traces of them, for rain had fallen, washing out their spoor, and as might be expected in that vast veldt, they headed in the wrong direction. So at last worn out, they returned to the stead, hoping that Suzanne and Sihamba would have found their way back there, but hoping in vain. After that for days and weeks they searched and hunted, but quite without result, for, as it chanced, the Kaffirs who lived between the territory of Sigwe and the stead rose in arms just then and began to raid the Boer farms, stealing the cattle, including some of our own, so that it was impossible to travel in their country, and therefore nobody ever reached the town of Sigwe to make inquiries there.

The end of it was that, exhausted by search and sorrow, Jan sat down at home and abandoned hope; nor could the prayers and urgings of Ralph, who all this while was unable even to mount a horse, persuade him to go out again upon so fruitless an errand.

"No, son," he answered; "long before this the girl is either dead or she is safe far away, and in either event it is useless to look for her about here, since Van Vooren's kraal is watched, and we know that she is not in it." To which Ralph would answer:

"She is not dead—I know that she is not dead;" and we understood that he spoke of a vision which had come to him, for I had told the tale of it to Jan. But in his heart Jan put no faith in the vision, and believed that Suzanne, our beloved child, had been dead for many days, for he was certain that she would die rather than fall into the hands of Van Vooren, as I was also, and, indeed, of this we were glad to be sure.

To Ralph, however, that we might comfort him in his sorrow, which was even more terrible than our own, we made pretense that we believed Suzanne to be hiding far away, but unable to communicate with us, as in fact she was.

Oh, our lives were sad during those bitter months! Yes, the light had gone out of our lives, and often we wished, the three of us, that already we were resting in the grave. As he recovered from his wounds and the strength of his body came back to him, a kind of gentle madness took hold of Ralph which it wrung our hearts to see. For hours, sometimes for days, indeed, he would sit about the place brooding and saying no word. At other times he would mount his horse and ride away, none knew whither, perhaps not to return that night or the next or the next, till we were terrified by the thought that he, too, might never come back again. It was useless to be angry with him, for he would only answer with a little smile:

"You forget; I must be seeking my wife, who is waiting for me upon the Mountain of the Hand;" and then we learned that he had ridden to a far off hill to examine it, or to see some travellers or natives and ask of them if they knew or had heard of such a mountain,

with ridges upon its eastern slopes fashioned like the thumb and fingers of a man's hand. Indeed, in all that countryside, among both Boers and natives, Ralph won the by name of the "Man of the Mountain," because he rarely spoke of aught else. But still, folk black and white knew the reason of his madness and bore with him, pitying his grief.

It was, I remember, in the season after Suzanne had vanished that the Kaffirs became so angry and dangerous. For my part I believe that those in our neighborhood were stirred up by the emissaries of Swart Piet, for though he had gone none knew where, his tools and agents remained behind him. However this may have been, all over the country the black men began to raid the stock, and in our case they ended by attacking the stead also, a great number of them armed with guns. Fortunately, we had a little warning, and they were very sad Kaffirs that went away next day; moreover, forty of them never went away at all. Just at dawn, when they had been besieging the house for some hours, shouting, banging off their guns, and trying to fire the roof by means of assagais with tufts of blazing grass tied on to them, Jan, Ralph, and about twenty of our people crept down under cover of the orchard wall and sallied out upon them.

Almighty! how those men fought, especially Jan and Ralph. It was a pleasure to see them, for I watched the whole thing from the *stoep*, though I admit that I was anxious, since it was evident that neither of them seemed to care whether he lived or died. However, as it turned out, it was not they who died, but the Kaffirs, who went off with some few cattle and afterwards left us in peace.

And now comes the strange part of the affair, though I scarcely like to tell it, lest after all these years it should not be believed. Some one connected with the London Missionary Society

reported us to the government at the Cape for shooting poor, innocent black men, and it was threatened that Jan and Ralph would be put upon their trial for murder by the British government. Indeed, I believe that this would have been done had not we and others of our neighbors let it be clearly known that before they were dragged to the common jail there would be killing not of black but of white men. Our case was only one of many, since in those times there was no security for Boers—we were robbed, we were slandered, we were deserted. Our goods were taken and we were not compensated; the Kaffirs stole our herds, and if we resisted them we were tried as murderers; our slaves were freed, and we were cheated of their value, and the word of a black man was accepted before our solemn oath upon the Bible.

No wonder that we grew tired of it and trekked, seeking to shake the dust of British rule from off our feet, and to find a new home for ourselves out of the reach of the hand of the accursed British government. Oh, I know that there are two sides to the story, and I dare say that the British government meant well, but at the least it was a fool, and it always will be a fool with its secretaries of state, who know nothing sitting far away there in London, and its governors, whose only business is to please the secretaries of state, that when the country they are sent to rule grows sick of them they may win another post with larger pay.

Well, this tale is of people and not of politics, so I will say no more of the causes that brought about the great trek of the Boers from the old colony and sent them forth into the wilderness, there to make war with the savage man and found new countries for themselves. I know those causes, for Jan and Ralph and I were of the number of the voortrekkers; still, had it not been for the loss of Suzanne, I do not think that we should have trekked, for we loved the home we had made upon the

face of the wild veldt. Now that she was gone, it was no home for us; every brick of the house, every tree in the garden, every ox and horse and sheep, reminded us of her. Yes, even the distant roar of the ocean and the sighing of the winds among the grasses seemed to speak of her. These were the flowers she loved, that was the stone she sat on, yonder was the path that day by day she trod. The very air was thick with memories of her, and the tones of her lost voice seemed to linger in the echoes of the hills at night.

It was upon the anniversary of the marriage of Ralph and Suzanne—yes, on the very day year of her taking by Piet Van Vooren, that we made up our minds to go. We had dined and Ralph sat quite silent, his head bowed a little upon his breast, as was his custom, while Jan spoke loudly of the wrongs of the Boers at the hand of the British government. I do not think that he was much troubled with those wrongs just then, but he talked because he wished to interest Ralph and turn his mind from sad thoughts.

"What think you of it, son?" said Jan at length, for it is hard work talking all by oneself, even when one has the British government to abuse, which was the only subject that made Jan a wordy man.

"I, father?" answered Ralph, with a start, which showed me that his mind was far away. "I do not quite know what I think. I should like to hear what the English government says about the matter, for I think that they mean to be fair, only they do not understand the wants and troubles of us Boers who live so far away. Also without doubt the missionaries mean well, but they believe that a black man has a bigger soul than a white man, whereas we who know the black man see that there is a difference."

"*Allemachter*, son!" said Jan, looking at him out of the corner of his eye, "cannot you show some spirit? I hoped that, being an Englishman, you would

have stood up for your own people, and then we might have quarreled about it, which would have done us both good, but you only sit and talk like a magistrate in his chair, looking at both sides of the case at once, which is an evil habit for men who have to make their way in the world. Well, I tell you that if you had seen the cursed British government hang your father and uncle at Slagter's Nek, and, not satisfied with that, hang them a second time, when the rope broke, just because they tried to shoot a few Hottentot policemen, you would not think much of their fairness. And as for the missionaries of the London Society, well, I should like to hang them, as would be right and proper, seeing that they blacken the names of honest Boers."

Ralph only smiled at this onslaught, for he was not to be stirred from his lethargy by talk about Slagter's Nek and the missionaries. For a while there was silence, which presently was broken by Jan roaring at me in a loud voice, as though I were deaf:

"*Vrouw*, let us trek!" and to give weight to his words he brought his great fist down with a bang upon the table, knocking off a plate and breaking it.

I stooped to pick up the pieces, rating him for his carelessness as I gathered them, for I wished to have time to think, although for a long while I had expected this. When I had found them all I placed them upon the table, saying:

"They cannot be mended, and— hearts or plates—what cannot be mended had best be hidden away. Hearts and plates are brittle things, but the last can be bought in iron, and I wish the first could be also. Yes, husband, we will trek if you desire it."

"What say you, son?" asked Jan.

Ralph answered his question by another. "In which direction will the emigrants trek?"

"North, I believe, to the Vaal River."

"Then, father, I say let us go," he replied, with more spirit than he had shown for a long while; "for I have searched and inquired to the south and the east and the west, and in them I can hear of no mountain that has ridges upon its eastern slopes shaped like the thumb and fingers of a man's hand, with a stream of water issuing from between the thumb and first finger."

Now once more we were silent, for we saw that his madness had again taken hold of Ralph's mind, and that was a sad silence.

XXV.

ON the morrow we began to make ready, and a month later we trekked from our much loved home. Jan tried to sell the farm, which was a very good one of over six thousand morgen, or twelve thousand English acres, well watered, and having on it a dwelling house built of stone, with large kraals and outbuildings, an orchard of fruit trees, and twenty morgen of crop lands that could be irrigated in the dry season, well fenced in with walls built of loose stone. But no one would make a bid for it, for there were few English about, and most of the farmers were trekking, so at last he parted with it to a cowardly fellow, a Boer by birth, but, as I believe, a spy of the British government, who gave him fifty pounds and an old wagon in exchange for the place and everything upon it except the stock, which we took with us. Some years ago I heard that this man's grandson sold that same farm for thirty thousand pounds in cash, and that now it is a place where they breed horses, Angora goats, and ostriches in great numbers. It makes me mad to think that the descendant of that low spy should have profited so largely out of the land which was ours, but so it often chances that those whose hearts are small and mean reap the reward of the courage and misfortune of braver men. Nor should we grumble, seeing that

the Lord has blessed us greatly in land and goods.

Ah, it was a sad home leaving! The day before we trekked Ralph rode to visit his mother's grave for the last time, and then, following the track which he had taken as a child, he went to the kloof where Suzanne had found him, and sat down upon that stone on which as a child he had knelt in prayer, and where in after years he and his lost wife had told their love. Jan accompanied him upon this dismal journey, for, to speak truth, we did not like to leave him alone more than we could help, since his manner remained strange, and when he set out on his solitary rides we could not be certain that we should ever see him come back again.

Next morning we trekked away, and my eyes were so full of tears as I sat beneath the tent of the first wagon that the familiar landscape and the home where I lived for twenty years and more were blotted from my sight. But I could hear the long nosed spy who had bought the farm, and who was waiting to enter into possession, talking to Jan.

"Good by, Heer Botmar," he said, "and good fortune to you upon your journey. For my part I cannot understand you emigrants. The English government is an accursed government, no doubt; still, I would not sell a farm and a house like this for fifty pounds and an old wagon in order to wander in the wilderness to escape from it, there to be eaten by lions or murdered by Kaffirs. Still, good by, and good luck to you, and I hope that you are as content with your bargain as I am."

"The Lord will be our guide, as He was to the Israelites of old," answered Jan, in a somewhat troubled voice.

"Yes, yes; they all say that, Heer Botmar, and I trust that they are right, for you will need nothing less than a cloud by day and a pillar of fire in the darkness to protect you from all the dangers in your path. Also I hope that the hosts of Pharaoh, in the shape of

English soldiers, will not fetch you back before you cross the border, for then, when you have sold your birthright in Egypt, and are cut off from the Promised Land, your lot will be hard, Heer Botmar."

"The Lord will guide and protect us," said Jan, and he gave the word to trek.

In my heart at the time I was inclined to agree with that cheat's sneering words; and yet Jan was right, and not I, for of a truth the Lord did guide and protect us. Has anything so wonderful happened in the world as this journey of a few farmers, cumbered with women and children, and armed only with old fashioned muzzle loading guns, into a vast, unknown land, peopled by savages and wild beasts? Yet, look what they did. They conquered Moselikatse; they broke the strength of Dingaan and all his Zulu impis; they peopled the Free State, the Transvaal, and Natal. That was the work of those few farmers, and I say of their own strength they could never have done it; the strength was given to them from above; the Sword of God was in their hand, and He guided that hand and blessed it.

Our first outspan was at the spot where Van Vooren had tried to murder Ralph and carry off Suzanne upon her wedding day. We did not stop there long, for the place was bad for Ralph, who sat upon the box of a wagon staring moodily at some blackened stones which, as one of the drivers told me—the same man who accompanied them upon their wedding journey—had been brought by Ralph from the kloof and used by Suzanne to set the kettle on when they took their last meal together. Led by this same driver, I walked to the edge of the cliff—for I had never visited the place before—and looked at the deep sea pool, forty feet below me, into which Smart Piet had thrown Ralph after he had shot him. Also I went down to the edge of

the pool and climbed up again by the path along which Zinti and Sihamba had staggered with his senseless body, then I returned to the wagons with a heart full of thankfulness and wonder that he should still be alive among us today, although, alas! there was much for which I could not feel thankful, at least not then.

Now, it is of little use that I should set down the history of this trek of ours day by day, for if I did my story would have no end. It is enough to tell that, in company with other emigrants, we crossed the Orange River, heading for Thaba Nehu, which had been the chief town of Maroko before Moselikatse drove him out of the Marico country. Here several bands of emigrants were to meet, and here they did meet, but not until a year or more had passed since we left the colony and wandered out into the veldt. Ah, I tell you, my child, the veldt in those days was different indeed from what it is now. The land itself remains the same except where white men have built towns upon it, but all else is changed. Then it was black with game when the grass was green; yes, at times I have seen it so black for miles that we could scarcely see the grass. There were all sorts of them, springboks in myriads, blesbok and quagga and wildebeeste in thousands, sable antelope, sassaby, and hartbeest in herds, eland, giraffe, and koodoo in troops; while the forests were full of elephants and the streams of sea cow. They are all gone now, the beautiful wild creatures; the guns of the white men have killed them or driven them away, and I suppose that it is as well that they are gone, for while the game is in such plenty the men will not work. Still, I, for one, am sorry to lose the sight of them, and had it not been for their numbers we Boers should never have lasted through that long trek, for often and often we lived upon buck's flesh and little else for weeks together.

(To be continued.)

SILHOUETTES AND SHADOW PICTURES.

THE QUIANT OLD ART OF BLACK AND WHITE PORTRAITURE THAT FLOURISHED IN THE DAYS OF OUR GRANDFATHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS, AND ITS RECENT REVIVAL BY THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S CAMERA.

I—OLD TIME SILHOUETTES.

THE black and white profile representations known as silhouettes were in great vogue among our grandfathers. A hundred years ago he of the classic features and she of the *nez retroussé* adorned the mantel side by side. The learned judge, with wig and bowed spectacles, elbowed the little miss in her pinafore. At that time no one minded being "cut" by a friend. In many of these simple pictures the portraiture was remarkably faithful. Though often grotesque, there is usually a touch of melancholy about them, lent, perhaps, by the funereal black.

There are several different kinds of silhouettes. Some quaint "conversation pieces" are still extant, showing whole families seated stiffly in groups. Besides the regulation black profile upon white background, some of the earlier ones reversed this. In others the ebon profiles are touched with gold, "special attention being given to the details of the lady's head dress," while in others, more ambitious, the portrait is painted in black, on a concave glass, the hair and dress made lighter, and the whole shaded over by a thin coating of white wax. Then, too, we all remember Thackeray's old woman, who kept a sticking plaster silhouette of her departed husband pasted on her window pane for all to see.

The name "silhouette" came from Etienne de Silhouette, who was comptroller general of finance under Louis XV. Upon coming into office he found the French treasury in a state of depletion. Seeing that bankruptcy threat-

ened the country; he attempted to curb the extravagance prevalent at court; but his efforts only brought upon him the ridicule of his frivolous countrymen, and made him the jest of the day. The gay courtiers cut off their silken coat tails, cut out their sleeves, and, with solemn faces, would offer one another a consoling pinch of snuff from rough wooden snuff boxes. Everything cheap was called derisively "*à la Silhouette*," and therefrom, some say, these portraits took their title.

But others claim that Silhouette's name became attached to them for another reason. Harried by his persecutors, who eventually drove him into retirement, the unhappy minister occasionally betook himself to his château at Brie-sur-Marne, where, with a few congenial spirits, he would endeavor to forget his troubles. One of his chief diversions was to draw his friends' profiles cast by their shadows, and the walls of several of the rooms were almost covered with these presentments.

Whether the name was given in derision or not, shadow pictures were in existence long before this period. There is a tradition that the process of their drawing first suggested itself to a long absent lover, who, hastening home to his betrothed, arrived only in time to find that she had died of grief at the separation. To add to his sorrow, he possessed no picture of her; but when he entered the room in which the dead girl lay, his eye was caught by the shadow of her profile cast by the tapers that were burning beside the bier. Eagerly seizing a piece of charcoal, he