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Title: Into the Unknown: A Romance of South Africa

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Release Date: June 20, 2010 [EBook #32912]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK INTO THE UNKNOWN: A ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA ***

Lawrence Fletcher

"Into the Unknown"

Chapter One.

The Ghosts' Pass.

"Well, old man, what do we do next?" The speaker, a fine young fellow of some five-and-twenty summers, reclining on the rough grass, with clouds of tobacco-smoke filtering through his lips, looked the picture of comfort, his appearance belying in every way the discontent expressed in his tones as he smoked his pipe in the welcome shade of a giant rock, which protected him and his two companions from the mid-day glare of a South African sun.

Alfred Leigh, second son of Lord Drelincourt, was certainly a handsome man: powerfully and somewhat heavily built, his physique looked perfect, and, as he gradually and lazily raised his huge frame from the rough grass, he appeared—what he was, in truth—a splendid specimen of nineteenth-century humanity, upwards of six feet high, and in the perfection of health and spirits; a fine, clear-cut face, with blue eyes and a fair, close-cropped beard, completed a *tout ensemble* which was English to a degree.

The person addressed was evidently related to the speaker, for, though darker than his companion, and by no means so striking in face or figure, he still had fair hair, which curled crisply on a well-shaped head, and keen blue eyes which seemed incessantly on the watch and were well matched by a resolute mouth and chin, and a broad-shouldered frame which promised strength from its perfect lines. Dick Grenville, *aetat.* thirty, and his cousin, Alf Leigh, were a pair which any three ordinary mortals might well wish to be excused from taking on.

The third person—singular he certainly looked—was a magnificent creature, a pure-blooded Zulu chief, descended from a race of warriors, every line of his countenance grave and stern, with eyes that glistened like fiery stars under a lowering cloud, the man having withal a general "straightness" of appearance more easily detected than described. A "Keshla," or ringed man, some six feet three inches high, of enormously powerful physique, armed with a murderous-looking club and a brace of broad-bladed spears, and you have a faithful picture of Myzukulwa, the Zulu friend of the two cousins.

The scene is magnificently striking, but grand with a loneliness awful beyond description, for, so far as the eye can reach, the fervid sun beats upon nothing but towering mountain-peaks, whose grey and rugged summits pierce the fleecy heat-clouds, and seem to lose themselves in a hopeless attempt to fathom the unspeakable majesty beyond.

"Do next, old fellow?" The words came in cool, quiet tones. "Well, if I were you, Alf, I should convey my carcass out of the line of fire from yonder rifle, which has been pointed at each of our persons in succession during the last two minutes;" and Grenville, with the stem of his pipe, indicated a spot some three hundred yards away, where his keen eye had detected the browned barrel of a rifle projected through a fissure in the rock; then, in quick, incisive tones, suiting the action to the word, "Lie down, man!" and not a moment too soon, as an angry rifle-bullet sang over his head and flattened against the rock. In another instant all three were ensconced behind a rocky projection, and endeavouring to ascertain their unknown assailants' force.

Truly, an unpleasant place was this to be beleaguered in—little food, still less water, and positively no cover to protect them in the event of a night attack upon the position they occupied. Grenville quietly picked up the flattened bullet, eyed it curiously, and then handed it to Myzukulwa with an interrogative look; the other scarcely glanced at the missile and replied quietly, yet in singularly correct English, "Inkoos (chief), that lead came from a very old gun, but it is a true one—the Inkoos, my master, was too near it."

"Yes," responded Grenville, who had now quite taken command of matters, "but we must find out how many of these rascals are lurking behind yonder rocks with murder in their hearts." So saying he coolly stepped out into the open again, ostensibly to pick up his pipe, which lay on the ground, but kept his eye warily fixed upon the expected point of offence, and instantly dropped on his hands and knees as another bullet whizzed over him. Then he quietly rose to his feet, but with a beating heart, for, if the rifle were a double-barrelled one, or if more than the one marksman were lying hid, he was in deadly peril. No shot followed, however, and he calmly picked up his pipe and again sought shelter with his companions.

"Now, chief," said Grenville, after a brief interval, "wait till I have drawn the scoundrel's fire again, and then rush

him," and, executing a rapid movement round the rocky boulder which served the party as a shelter, he once more provoked the fire of the hidden foe, delivered with greater accuracy than before, the bullet grazing the skin of one hand as he swung himself into cover, crying, "Now, Myzukulwa!" but the fleet-footed Zulu was already half-way across the open space, going like a sprint-runner, having started simultaneously with the flash of the rifle. In a moment more the cousins were after him, only to find, upon reaching the rock, that there was no trace of the would-be assassin, and that the Zulu was hopelessly at fault. A little powder spilled upon a stone showed where the man had been placed, and that was all.

Just then Grenville's quick eye "spotted" the barrel of a rifle slowly rising a hundred yards away, out of a hollow in the ground, imperceptible from where they stood; he instinctively pitched forward his Winchester, and the two reports blended into one. Leigh's hat flew off his head, carried away by a bullet, and at the same instant Myzukulwa again "rushed" the hidden marksman, only to find the work done; and a gruesome sight it was. There lay a fine-looking man, stone-dead, with the blood welling out of a ghastly hole in his head, the heavy shell-bullet doing frightful execution at such short range, having fairly smashed his skull to pieces.

The Englishmen were very considerably taken aback at finding that their assailant was as white-skinned as themselves; they had half expected to find some loafing Hottentot or Kaffir, though the accuracy of the shooting had already caused Grenville to doubt that the marksman could be either of these, for, as a general rule, if a Kaffir aims at anything a hundred yards from him he misses it nine times out of ten. The dead man was dressed in a deerskin costume, which caused the cousins to remark that he looked like many a man they had seen when shooting buffalo on the prairies of the Wild West. His gun proved to be a long flint-lock rifle of an obsolete type, but extremely well finished, and it was the flash of the powder in the pan which had enabled Grenville to anticipate the leaden messenger from this weapon.

Leigh, who was disposed to scoff at their present undertaking, which he called "a wild-goose chase," gave it as his opinion that the miserable man was some escaped convict who had gravitated up country, and who, no doubt, imagined that the white men were in search of him with a native tracker—anyway, it had been a very near thing with them, and nothing but Grenville's unceasing watchfulness could have saved his cousin's life, as it unquestionably had done, twice over.

Grenville listened in silence to Leigh's remarks, and then, turning their backs on the mortal remains of their foe, they left him to the eternal solitude of that vast and rocky wilderness.

Several hours of hard toil followed, during which they slowly and warily ascended the Pass, without, however, seeing any further sign of life. Stopping once to take a hurried mouthful of dried deer-flesh, the party was soon again on its way, and reached the top of the Pass just before sunset. Beyond this point all possibility of advance in any direction seemed at an end. The mountains shot up towards the sky, based, as it were, by a precipitous wall of rock, and flanked by mighty spurs, whose peaks stood out, clear and sharp, some fifteen thousand feet above the Pass, their barren and rugged sides almost beautified by the glow of the setting sun.

The sterile appearance of the valley was, however, to some slight extent relieved by a magnificent waterfall, which appeared to receive its supply through a fissure in the wall of rock, whence it came sheer over a beetling crag and fell from a height of at least one hundred feet into a rocky basin at the very head of the Pass.

Grenville quickly bestowed his party in a small cave for the night, and by the time they were comfortably domiciled the sun had set. He then mounted guard whilst the others slept, and three hours later, having aroused the Zulu, he himself turned in for a much-needed rest.

Chapter Two.

An Anxious Day.

In the morning, after a meal of dried flesh and water—an appetising repast at which Leigh grumbled considerably—the trio lighted their pipes and went into council.

"Now then, Dick," said Alf Leigh, "as I, at all events, see no more of those objectionable rifle-barrels round here, I'll repeat my question of yesterday—What do we do next?"

"Ah! that's the point," responded Grenville. "Now doesn't it strike you as very odd, not to say significant, that we should be so murderously assaulted precisely on the spot where our mission is supposed to commence? I am convinced that there is more in that attack than you fancy. However, here is the inscription which, as you know, we found scratched with a pin-point on a slaty rock down the Pass yesterday—'*An Englishman and his daughter imprisoned in the Hell at the top of this Pass. Help us, for the love of Heaven.*' Well, as you also know, we resolved to carry help to the unfortunates who make this pitiful appeal to our honour as countrymen, or die in the attempt; and, by Jove, if you ask me anything, we came perilously near doing the latter yesterday. To proceed, Myzukulwa here declares that there has been handed down for generations in his tribe, legends of a strange and mighty people, who frequent this pass by night only, who, on being followed, vanish into thin air, and whose description answers accurately to the gentleman I settled yesterday, with the one exception, easily accounted for, that these people were said to have black faces."

"And a nice beginning we've made if, according to your idea, our friend of yesterday was one of them," grumbled Leigh.

"Don't make any mistake, Alf," rejoined Grenville; "we shall gain nothing by palaver; whoever sees the inside of their territory will never again, with their consent, re-enter the outside world to give them away. This kingdom is an inscrutable mystery, enveloped in something like a hundred miles of inaccessible rock and impassable mountain, and upon the very threshold of it I feel convinced that we have now arrived."

"Inkoos," said the great Zulu, "your words are wise, even as the wisdom of my father's father. For a thousand moons—ay, and for a thousand before that—has this place been haunted, and the traditions of my people ever warn us to beware of sleeping nigh to this falling water. Many have done so, and have never again visited their kraals; I, Myzukulwa, have alone done so and lived. More, Inkoos; as I watched yesternight I heard strange sounds, as though the spooks (ghosts) were mourning over the dead one who lies below us."

"Hah!" said Grenville, starting suddenly to his feet, "we'll have another look at that body," and, followed by his

companions, he strode away down the Pass, but, when the party reached the scene of the previous day's rencontre, the lifeless remains were nowhere to be seen; there was the hole, the rock crusted with coagulated blood, but not the faintest trace of the body they had left behind them a dozen hours before. Clearly no beast of prey had been responsible for its disappearance, for the man's gun and ammunition had also been removed. A lengthy and careful examination of the surroundings revealed nothing; all was barren rock, without a single sign of its having ever been pressed by the foot of man, and, with most uncomfortable feelings, the trio retraced their steps up the Pass, and reached the cave again, weary and disheartened, as the sun went out with the rapidity peculiar to the latitudes of Equatorial Africa, at once plunging everything into darkness that might be felt.

Grenville's active mind was, however, at work upon the incidents of the day, and he never rested until his party was safely housed in a cave some hundred yards from the previous location. This night all kept watch; and well was it for them that they were on the alert, for, just before the moon got up, the darkness of the Pass was suddenly cut, as if by magic, with the flash of at least a score of rifles, fired so as to fairly sweep their old resting-place. Grenville and his companions crouched down amongst the rocks, straining eyes and ears for sight or sound of their murderously-inclined foes; but all was as still as death, and at daybreak the Pass was again, to all appearance, utterly deserted, only their old cave was strewn with flattened bullets, which had been fired with murderous precision.

Grenville tried to get Myzukulwa's views upon the events of the night as they smoked their pipes after breakfast, but the chief was unusually reticent. "Spooks," he said, "who shot as well as these did were dangerous; nothing but a spook could shoot like that in the dark." Leigh was for clearing out altogether; he was as plucky a fellow as ever stepped, but this sort of thing was enough to shake any man's nerves. That day was spent in a rigid search which literally left no stone unturned; but the keenest scrutiny revealed no place of concealment and no way into the mountain—over it none could go, for that towering wall of rock would have defied anything short of an eagle's wings—and a couple of hours before sunset the party set off again down the Pass.

Chapter Three.

A Leap in the Dark.

As the party sullenly descended the Pass, no one seemed in a conversational mood, but Leigh noticed that his cousin took a very easy pace, and urged them to feed well, just before the sun set.

No sooner was the darkness fairly upon them than Grenville turned short in his tracks and quietly said, "I'm going back, Alf, and I'm going through with this. There's a secret up there, and I believe it's a black one, and I've no intention of playing into the hands of these rascals by running away."

"But, my dear boy," remonstrated Leigh, with a rueful face, "you don't know your way into the mountain; you aren't a bird to fly over it, and you'll only get yourself shot."

"I believe I do know my way into the mountain, and I hope I shan't get shot; so come along, old fellow," replied his cousin.

Grumbling and arguing, Leigh turned to follow, and very soon Grenville imposed the strictest silence upon his companions.

The darkness was now something almost tangible, but after walking—or, rather, feeling—their way at a funereal pace for a couple of hours, the murmur of the waterfall broke upon their ears, and the stars now beginning to grow bright, greater caution than ever became necessary. Soon the trio were flat on the ground, wriggling along like three gigantic lizards over the rough, knobby rocks, which called forth many a subdued groan from poor Leigh. The advance was, however, continued, all obstacles to the contrary notwithstanding, and in another hour the party lay securely hidden within a stone-throw of the waterfall.

A little later, becoming dissatisfied with his position, Grenville drew his party back some fifty yards under the cover of a rock, and then proceeded to act in a most singular manner. Divesting himself of his hat, jacket, and hunting-shirt, he slipped a brace of six-shooters into his hip-pockets, and, directing Leigh and the Zulu to stay where they were—unless they heard him blow a small whistle, which he always carried—he left the pair wondering at his extraordinary movements, and gradually and cautiously approached the Fall. Arrived there, his conduct became curious to a degree, for, lying flat on the rock, on the very edge of the basin indeed, where the spray from the cataract fell in a continuous and blinding shower, Grenville first commenced feeling about inside the rush of the water at the very back of the Fall, and finally buried himself, head and shoulders, in the water of the basin, frequently raising his head to take breath. After he had expended quite ten minutes in this edifying manner, he gave a grunt indicative of satisfaction, rose dripping wet, and retired into concealment behind the nearest rock, watching the Fall like a lynx.

Soon his patience was well rewarded, for a wonderful and beautiful thing happened. In a single instant the Fall grew gloriously light and beautiful, and the foaming, flashing surface of the water seemed by the touch of some fairy wand transformed into a stupendous rainbow of indescribable loveliness, as the changing lights appeared to come and go through the driving rifts of steaming, gauze-like vapour.

Grenville smiled, and made himself, if possible, still smaller amongst the stones; a slight splashing was heard, and in another moment the light went out suddenly and the Fall resumed its normal appearance—a white, angry-looking streak of sliding foam, clearly outlined against the dark background of rock. And now Grenville could see by the starlight the forms of fully a dozen men who appeared to have sprung from the earth; crouching down, he lay for some moments breathless and motionless as the rocks beneath him, but, hearing no footsteps, and cautiously raising his head, he found no one within his limited range of vision. Hazardous though the act was, Grenville crawled out, snake-like, to the spot where he had seen the strange party take its stand, and, by following the damp feel of the rock where wet footsteps had passed, quickly satisfied himself that the enemy had proceeded down the Pass. Quietly rejoining his anxious friends, he led them back, after a brief consultation, to the basin at the foot of the Fall, into which each silently dropped in turn, and instantly vanished from sight.

A few moments later three dripping, panting forms stood whispering together upon a rocky ledge, which was in fact the entrance to a vast cave, by which, as Grenville had cleverly surmised, their assailants passed through the base of the mountain-range and obtained access to their mysterious country beyond.

The air, though dense with a heavy, noxious odour, was still very refreshing to the party after their dive; but Grenville soon reminded the others that they had no time to lose, and, warning them to look to their arms, ammunition and matches, all of which had been most carefully enveloped in mackintosh ground-sheets, himself proceeded to strike a light. Now the striking of a match is a very trifling affair at ordinary times, but, with a dark and doubtless vast unknown before them, each waited anxiously to see what the tiny flame would reveal. One brief instant it shed its feeble light upon their pallid faces, then, in an endeavour to pierce the apparently limitless gloom, Grenville raised the match above his head, and at that very moment there was a wild, hissing rush, and the cavern stood revealed in a blinding glare of light. The match had evidently ignited by accident a reservoir of natural gas, and this, in the shape of an enormous stream of fire, now hung globe-like from a rift in the roof of rock, where it arched a score of feet above their heads.

One glance was sufficient to tell the merest novice in such matters that this cavern had at some distant date formed the channel of one of those underground rivers by no means uncommon in Africa. What had been the bed of the stream was, however, filled in with earth, and was now to all intents and purposes a very passable road, which, after mounting a short hill that served in fact to keep back the water from the basin, ran straight before them as far as the light could penetrate.

The first act of the whole party was to remove themselves from the intense heat thrown out by the gas; their next, to draw their pistol-cartridges and slip fresh ones into the chambers; and hardly was this done when a startled exclamation, uttered just behind them, caused all to turn hurriedly, only to find themselves confronted by a most repulsive-looking white man, who stood dripping unpleasantly upon the rocky ledge and regarding them with a scowling face.

The newcomer appeared altogether unarmed, and our friends promptly rushed at him; but he incontinently turned tail, and dived out through the entrance, followed like a flash of light by Myzukulwa.

The cousins waited in anxious suspense for close upon a minute, and then the great Zulu silently appeared upon the rock and lay gasping for breath. Soon, however, regaining his wind—

“Inkoos,” he said, “he was too quick for me; the coward ran away down the pass; but first he fired his gun, and it was answered by another gun a mile away.”

It was quite clear that the man had been a sentinel near to their old sleeping-place, and, seeing the Fall suddenly light up of its own accord, had come down to examine the unusual phenomenon.

The three now fell to eagerly discussing their position. If they were holding the only entrance to the passage, they could with their revolvers defy almost any number of men attacking through the water; but if, on the other hand, there was more than one way of access to the cave, or if another hostile body, attracted by the firing, should come up the river Pass, our friends would be placed between the devil and the deep sea with a vengeance.

Then, again, if the foe had any means of extinguishing the light from outside, the trio would be entirely at their mercy.

This light was evidently a pure gas generated in the mountain, and used by these strange people to light them to the entrance of the cave; but how they extinguished it, and how without its help they followed their subterranean road through the absolutely inky gloom, was a mystery to the adventurers.

On looking about, however, they discovered a bundle of torches made of a resinous woody fibre, and lighting one of these in the gas-flame, Grenville proceeded to examine the road and see what cover, if any, it might offer. Hardly had he taken a dozen steps when a stream of water poured through the fissure in the roof of rock, extinguishing the gas in an instant. Grenville quickly whispered to his friends to bring the torches and follow him, as without proper light to shoot by it was impossible for them to hold the entrance to the passage. “Bring every single torch you can find,” he said, “and keep your eyes skinned for any more lying about the road. We’ll keep these beggars in darkness if possible; and once let us get to daylight, and we’ll fight them if need be.”

And now by the light of one torch the party proceeded in single file at a good speed, for the roadway was fair, and, when the first hill had been climbed, proved decidedly on the down grade. This surprised Grenville, as he had been of opinion that the water had formerly come from the inside of the cavern and emptied itself into the basin; the reverse, however, had evidently been the case.

After they had travelled about half a mile, the road, to Grenville’s delight, twisted almost at a right angle—this would, of course, hide the light from their pursuers—and directly after the turn had been negotiated, Leigh called attention to a niche in the rock where several more torches were found; these they promptly annexed, and the party again hurried on, the air momentarily growing fresher and keener.

Truly this cavernous road was a strange and awesome affair; the roof here and there vanished from human ken in utter and indescribable blackness, but uniformly it hung some fifteen to twenty feet above their heads, and had been worn quite smooth by the rapid action of water, but was quickly becoming a vast bed of growing stalactites, which flashed back the rays of the torch like a sparkling sea of vivid radiance set with many-hued and lovely diadems.

After the party had accomplished quite five miles, Grenville suddenly called a halt, whilst all listened intently for a moment, and then, having first examined his matches, he extinguished the torch, and, holding one another’s hands, the trio crept cautiously forward. Despite all their care, however, in turning a corner some hundred yards further they fairly walked into another sentinel, who promptly flew at their throats, and for a full minute Pandemonium seemed let loose in the bowels of the mountain. Grenville, with his customary coolness, quickly extricated himself from the scrimmage and struck a light, only to find Leigh and an awkward-looking customer locked in a deadly grip. The draught here proved strong, and the match was blown out as soon as lighted; but its flash showed the Zulu all he needed to know—enemy from friend—and in another instant the sentinel lay a corpse, and Myzukulwa was eulogising his war-club. Quickly the party passed on, and in another minute found themselves at the top of a massive stone stairway, and again under the lovely canopy of heaven, with the welcome moon shimmering down upon them in all the weird, glittering glory of an Equatorial African midnight.

The scene revealed to them by the moonlight was inexpressibly beautiful and magnificent; below them some hundred feet only the rolling veldt in all its mysterious silence swept sheer away as far as the eye could reach, whilst to the right and left towered the majestic spurs of the mountain-range, their snowcapped crests gleaming white under the brilliant moon, and rendered even more vivid by contrast with the awful chasms which here and there rent the precipitous rocks with unfathomed depths of yawning blackness.

No sign of any living creature could they see; yet each knew that it would be sheer madness to strike out into the unknown veldt, without water, almost without food, and with the knowledge that a few minutes, more or less, would in all likelihood bring their pursuers to the head of the stairway, whence, under such a clear light, the movements of their party over the scrub would be distinctly visible for miles. After a brief colloquy, they descended the stairway and glided along the wall of rock, stepping on the stones and keeping carefully in the shadow, meantime seeking keen-eyed for a secure hiding-place adjacent to water.

Almost within gun-shot of the stairway, the party hit upon a narrow cañon in the rocks, into which they entered, and, posting Leigh as a sentinel, Grenville consulted with Myzukulwa, and, after they had whispered together for a few moments, the Zulu slipped out of the opening and was instantly engulfed in the shadows of the mountain. Taking up his position opposite his cousin, Grenville looked at his watch and found it was after two o'clock in the morning; the pair then proceeded carefully to wipe out their Winchester rifles, and each felt happier when he lowered his gun with the magazine chock-full of cartridges. These rifles, though made on the Winchester pattern, carried a heavy shell-bullet, and had proved themselves uncommonly serviceable weapons amongst the heaviest game, and, as both men were crack shots, any hostile person getting within range was likely to have an unpleasantly hot time of it. The Zulu alone carried no rifle, but he had so far overcome the traditions of his race as to use a heavy service revolver, whilst each of the cousins possessed a brace of Smith and Wesson's six-shooters. This and the knowledge that they had plenty of ammunition, having only parted with their bearers two days before at the foot of the Pass, was reassuring. And now, as the pair awaited the Zulu's return, a very curious and fearsome thing happened: the cañon, which, when they entered it, had been as dark as Erebus, was being gradually lighted by the moon, and, as the silvery radiance illumined the centre of the gulf, a guarded exclamation broke from the astonished watchers as they saw that the cañon terminated abruptly some two hundred yards from them in a gigantic wall of apparently solid rock; yet from the very centre of this mighty but otherwise commonplace mass looked out a prodigious and perfect model of a human face, about five times the size of life, complete in every detail, and most diabolical in its expression; the eyes, from which streamed scintillating rays of fire, appeared to be rigidly examining every nook and corner of the cañon, and the cousins, who felt somewhat creepy, almost involuntarily drew outside the entrance and kept close in the shadow.

At this juncture a cloud crossed the moon, and it was at once evident that the unearthly-looking figure borrowed no light from the heavenly orb, for the exaggerated lineaments showed up as if cut with a sword of fire out of the inky blackness of the chasm, and on its brow they could now read, in English, the words:—

“The Eyes of the Holy Three are Unsleeping.”

And each knew he was gazing upon the fateful and universally-hated emblem of the false and filthy prophet of the Mormon creed. The cloud passed from the moon, and even as it did so, the light behind the hideous face died out, and the wall of rock regained its normal appearance, scarcely revealing to the straining eyes of the watchers that the counterfeit presentment of the human head had ever existed, save in their excited imaginations.

At this moment the Zulu rejoined the cousins, but as both eagerly welcomed him, and were about to speak, another diversion occurred. A gleaming, rushing thread of living fire suddenly shot up from the stairway and cut its way across the heavens, bursting at its extreme height into a shower of blazing and meteoric stars; and hardly had its radiance died out, than it was followed by a second and similar messenger, which in its turn was succeeded by a third, and then all was again as still as death.

“Three rockets,” said Grenville, “meaning three enemies in the camp; so look out for squalls. Watch keenly where the answer comes from.” And hardly had he spoken, when a single answering rocket was fired, probably a score of miles away, across the veldt.

Chapter Four.

Into the Unknown.

Grenville briefly detailed to the Zulu all they had seen in the cañon, eliciting many wondering comments from him as to the possible utility of the figure in warfare, after which he gave them an account of his reconnaissance. Suffice it to say that he had rigidly examined the adjacent rocks, and found several small fissures which appeared quite practicable of defence, but had ultimately concluded their present position to be the best, as they were free to strike out upon the veldt, without—so far as he could judge—bringing themselves within range of any likely rifle-posts.

On repassing the stairway, he had heard a subdued murmur of voices, and guessed that their enemies were consulting over the body of the sentinel, and had now realised that three men, already accountable for the deaths of two of their comrades, were by this time at large somewhere within the jealously-guarded precincts of their own secret kingdom; and thinking that the sooner he regained his party the better, Myzukulwa had returned at speed.

The Zulu proposed that their party should hold the cañon against all comers. There was water to be had close by, he said, under cover of their rifles; they had sufficient dried meat to last them for fully three days, and in the meantime they could form an opinion of the number and quality of their enemies. Neither Grenville nor Leigh would, however, consent to this plan of action, for they argued that if the stupendous rock which bounded the cañon was thin enough to admit of the hideous facial transparency they had seen, it was also capable of being pierced with loopholes, and a single marksman thus posted would make the place untenable by their party. Truth to tell, the unexplained horror of that diabolical face was strong upon the cousins, and each was anxious to be gone from its neighbourhood at all risks.

The Zulu continued to urge his view of the case, when his opposition was very strangely disposed of. The moonlight, which had all this time been gradually leaving the cañon, now crept along the nearer wall, and the party perceived, to their dismay, a human figure, apparently watching their movements; an instant more, and the waning light revealed a gruesome spectacle which fairly froze their blood. The man they had seen was *dead—recently and ignominiously crucified*; and upon wooden crosses, ranged at intervals along that awful wall, hung eight or ten hideous skeletons, their naked bones gleaming white and inexpressibly ghostly in the silvery moonlight; and on approaching these they found over each individual horror identically the same inscription—“*By order of the Holy Three*”—and realised that this was the Golgotha in which the infamous Mormon Trinity quietly, yet with infinite cruelty, executed their victims, whether innocent or otherwise. Pausing before one skeleton, Grenville pronounced it unmistakably that of a young woman, and Leigh, usually unimpressionable, rapped out a string of oaths, and vowed to pile a hecatomb of Mormon bodies to her manes.

This revelation sufficed even the Zulu, and after a short consultation the party ate some food, and then struck out

into the unknown, just as the fading moonlight began to be merged into the ghostly mists of approaching dawn, which, as they hung over the veldt, would effectually conceal the movements of the trio from prying eyes.

By common consent the party kept away to the left of the direct line supposed to lead to the Mormon stronghold as indicated by the single answering rocket they had seen, and by putting their best foot foremost trusted before the morning broke to find cover somewhere out of eye-shot of the stairway, and in this they were successful beyond their fondest hopes.

Silently the daylight came travelling over the grey and weird expanse of fog and veldt, lifting the wreaths of mist here and there—only, as it seemed, to render them by contrast with its own brightness even more opaque than ever; still our friends knew that at any moment the orb of day might be expected to rise and completely disperse the fog banks which afforded them such kindly shelter, and they were feeling consequently anxious, when the Zulu suddenly exclaimed that there were trees close by; and so it proved, for in another five minutes the trio were effectually concealed in a broad belt of bush which appeared to fringe a forest of considerable extent.

Hardly had our friends gained this welcome cover than they saw the mountains, now some dozen miles away, appear suddenly through the gauzy wreaths of vapour; it was as if an angel's hand had withdrawn the intervening curtain of ghostly mist and revealed the wondrous scene in all the glowing, flashing splendour of a tropic sunrise. The mighty spurs of the mountain seemed instinct with life and beauty, as the clouds lifted and the glorious sunlight ran along their peaks and glinted upon their scarped sides in changing tints of varied loveliness; for but one moment was the picture seen, then the cloud fiend again obtained the upper hand, and only the rolling veldt could be seen both far and near.

The Zulu was now despatched upon another scouting expedition, and, after an absence of half an hour, returned with the reassuring news that no enemy was in sight in any direction. The party then indulged in their customary frugal breakfast of dried meat and water, into which last—in consideration of the night's exposure—Grenville introduced a dash of brandy from their carefully-husbanded store; then after enjoying their one luxury—a good lazy smoke—the cousins settled down to sleep, leaving Myzukulwa to keep watch, Grenville relieving him a few hours later, as the trio had resolved—at all events, until they knew more about the strange country they were operating in—to confine their travels strictly to the night-time.

Towards evening Grenville climbed a huge tree in order to obtain a general idea of their position, but came down without being very much wiser; and it was finally determined to keep along the edge of the veldt, utilising the shadow of the forest, so far as possible, as a defence against prying eyes.

This programme was carefully adhered to, and when daylight came again without further misadventure, it was a satisfaction to feel that they had at all events placed another twenty miles between themselves and the ghostly cañon which Leigh had christened "Execution Dock."

On this morning all felt cold and tired, and would have given much for a warm breakfast; but it was thought altogether inexpedient to light a fire as yet.

After their usual sleep Grenville again ascended a tree, and came quickly down with the news that smoke was rising from the bush a few hundred yards off, and that he thought he could smell tobacco. Each man immediately seized his weapons, and in a trice the little party was gliding stealthily forward in the direction indicated by Grenville.

Just as Myzukulwa, who formed the advance guard, was about to enter a small clearing in the forest, he was arrested by the sound of a human voice. The tones were low and growling, but the speaker was still too far off for them to hear his words, and at a sign from the Zulu the trio were soon stealing snake-like through the bush, eager to see what was going on.

A curious scene now presented itself. In the very centre of an open space some fifty or sixty yards in circumference—for it was an almost complete natural circle fringed by trees and heavy bush—a white man was sitting on a fallen log, a big pipe in his mouth and a long rifle across his knees. His face, which looked low and brutal, seemed to peer out through a profusion of bushy beard and whiskers, and his manner of speech was aggressive and objectionable.

Within ten yards of him, bound hand and foot to a sapling, stood another white man, stripped naked to a waist cloth, yet looking, in spite of his degradation and emaciation, a brave man and a gentleman, whilst his style of address differed in a very marked degree from that of the scoundrel before him.

As our friends noiselessly gained their coign of vantage, the prisoner was speaking, and his voice, though clear, was so weak and low that the trio had to strain their ears to catch his words.

"Abiram Levert," he said, "you have kept me bound to this tree for three days and nights without food, you have given me water to prolong my sufferings and keep me alive, and I tell you once and for all that your devilish ingenuity is utterly thrown away upon me. I am an Englishman, and a man, moreover, who fears and trusts the God you daily blaspheme in your false, infamous worship: and I warn you that no power on earth shall force or induce me to consent to my daughter's union with such a wretched piece of carrion as yourself, having already half a dozen miserable so-called wives in your filthy harem. I would undergo a thousand horrible deaths sooner than agree to your proposals, and I pray God that Dora may die rather than fall into such abominable hands."

The face of the Mormon assumed a positively Satanic aspect, and he nervously fingered the lock of his rifle, but suddenly rose and laughed a harsh discordant laugh, removed his pipe from his mouth, and expectorated violently. "All right, Jack Winfield," he growled. "I guess I can wait; another week of this will bring you to your senses; and if it doesn't—why, I'll carry your pretty daughter off into the woods, and then perhaps she'll be glad to form one of my establishment, *if she can get the chance*," and the villain turned to walk away.

And now was enacted a singular drama—part tragedy, part comedy.

The cousins, with their rifles cocked, had been watching every action of the Mormon so closely that they had quite forgotten their Zulu friend, and just as the man who had been designated as Abiram Levert was about to leave the glade and betake himself to the forest on the side farthest from their hiding-place, to the utter astonishment of the watchers, Myzukulwa coolly stepped out into the open and barred his passage in a threatening manner. Quick as thought the Mormon threw forward his rifle, but before he could pull the trigger the active Zulu had struck up his muzzle and the piece was harmlessly discharged in the air.

Myzukulwa promptly followed up his advantage, and aimed a thrust at his enemy which would certainly have annihilated him, when his spear was deftly turned aside by a similar weapon, from which it struck a veritable shower of sparks, and the Zulu found himself fully employed in protecting his own epidermis from the spear of a splendid-looking man, who might easily have passed for one of his own people.

Taking advantage of this diversion in his favour, the cowardly Mormon drew a murderous-looking hunting-knife, and, walking up to the Zulu, prepared to strike him in the back. The moment he raised the weapon, however, Grenville's rifle vomited a sheet of flame through the bushes, and Brother Abiram Levert bit the dust, with a heavy bullet through his brain.

The cousins watched anxiously for a chance of disposing of Myzukulwa's opponent in like manner, but the evolutions of the combatants were much too complicated to admit of shooting one without very great risk to the other.

The Zulu had forced his man inch by inch into the centre of the forest glade, and the steely flashes of the spears were keen and vivid as the lightning on a stormy night; all at once Myzukulwa, who had manoeuvred so as to get the light into his opponent's eyes, made an advance which Grenville knew to be a favourite and deadly point of his, and, on its being most unexpectedly parried, bounded back with a cry of astonishment, and stood quietly leaning on his spear, whilst his foe gazed at him, for the space of a few seconds, in sheer wonder, and then, concluding Myzukulwa had given in, prepared to finish him. The great Zulu, however, raised his hand, and, pointing to his foe, began a speech which was both wild and curious:—

"Tell me, white men, what is life? Is it not the breath of the Creator? Does it come and go like the blushes on a maiden's cheek? Is it the shadow which comes to us at daybreak but to vanish with the setting sun? Here have we no daybreak, nor can it be evening; yet, how then, in this strange place of witchcraft, have I, Myzukulwa, the son of Isanusi, the last of the ancient chieftains of the race of Undi, met face to face and fought with my brother Amaxosa, the son of my own mother, he having been slain in the Pass of the Spooks sixty long moons ago?"

The other man emitted a strange wild cry, gazed for a moment at Myzukulwa as if spell-bound, and then the pair fell to embracing one another, vociferating the while in the Zulu tongue, whilst Grenville, who saw they had no more to fear from the new arrival, commenced unbinding the white prisoner with many commiserating expressions.

"Who are you?" he asked Grenville.

"Englishmen who have come in answer to your entreaty for help," replied Leigh.

"Thank God—oh! thank God," murmured the other, and then fainted dead away in their arms.

A little water sprinkled on his face soon brought him to life again, and he commenced to explain his position.

"My name," he began, "is John Winfield, and I—"

"Look here, old chap," cut in Leigh, "we've no time to hear your story now; we can see you don't belong to this wretched Mormon herd, so just swallow this drop of brandy whilst we strip yonder scoundrel and get you something decent to put on, and we'll try to feed you by-and-by. Dick, what a good thing it was you took that fellow in the head; I drew a bead on his ribs, and should have mauled his clothes horribly if you hadn't fired first."

With the help of the Zulus the dead Mormon was quickly despoiled of his apparel and Winfield rigged out in it, and by the time this was done, the shadows were lengthening and Myzukulwa said his brother was ready to take them to a place of safety, where they would find food, water, and sleep. Rapidly assenting to the plan, Grenville told the Zulus to lead on, and leaving the denuded body of Brother Abiram without compunction, they followed their new friend through the forest.

Plunging deeper and deeper into the bush, they found the country rough and stony; the trees were of unusual growth, and matted with curious creepers of the lichen species, whilst here and there tangled festoons of parasites hung from tree to tree in the likeness of gigantic swinging hammocks. The party at length heard the welcome sound of running water, and soon reached a small stream, into which, by direction of Amaxosa, all entered, following its course upward for quite a mile, so as to conceal every trace of their movements. Then, instead of climbing the bank, the active Zulu swung himself into a tree which overhung the water, and, working his way along a stout branch, was followed one by one by the entire party, all being thus enabled to drop on to some rocks a dozen feet off, without leaving any marks behind them. Another mile, mainly over stony ground brought the party to a second small river, up which they waded in like manner for some little distance, until they found that it issued from a great hole in the side of a curious ragged-looking cliff, which, erecting itself some hundred feet above them, seemed entirely to bar further progress through the forest.

Through this entrance Amaxosa passed, beckoning to the party to follow; and when the gloom began to grow deep some twenty yards from the outlet, he spoke for the first time, addressing Grenville in fairly good English, though he did not speak the language with the same fluency as his brother.

"Let the Inkoosis strike lights, and Amaxosa will find his torch."

Grenville at once complied with this request, and when the match was once alight the Zulu stepped forward a couple of yards, picked up his torch from a ledge of rock, and having quickly ignited it, led the party out of the water, up a passage some fifty feet long, and into a spacious and lofty cavern, having the appearance of a vaulted room, with only one outlet.

Chapter Five.

The Forlorn Hope.

In one corner of this vaulted room—for such it certainly looked—was piled a stack of firewood, whilst several strips of dried flesh hung invitingly against the wall, and three or four large stones lying handy had evidently been used as seats by the former occupants of the cavern.

Amaxosa now proceeded to light a fire; but Grenville stopped him, just as he was about to thrust his torch into a

mass of dry wood and leaves, urging the unwisdom of the proceeding.

"Let not the Inkoosis fear," replied the Zulu; "the smoke travels through a hole in the roof of the cave and comes out through a heap of reeds in an evil-smelling fever swamp on the high lands above, and which no man will willingly approach; and if the smoke be seen, it will but be taken for the evening mists rising from the marsh. Besides all this, the night is now dark outside; let the Inkoosis look—the words of Amaxosa are true."

Grenville went down the passage and looked out, only to find that their guide was perfectly right, and that night had indeed cast an unusually black mantle of protection round them.

This being so, they enjoyed to the full a good warm feed, accompanied by hot coffee from their own little store; and then placing Myzukulwa on guard, a precaution which no fancied security would induce Grenville to forego, the party lighted their pipes, and disposed themselves comfortably round the fire to listen to Winfield's narrative.

This was short, but to the point. He had been gold-prospecting near the foot of the Pass with his party of seven men, his daughter also being with him, and had been surprised one night by about threescore Mormons, who at once murdered his men, but saved Winfield's life and his daughter's because he offered a heavy ransom.

"You see, gentlemen," he said, "my little girl had been with me for five years, and I had forgotten, God forgive me! that she was growing up into a fine young woman. I had been at my work for ten years, and between gold and diamonds I had done so well that I'm afraid I thought of little else. I imagined I could buy these rascals off. My daughter, I now see, they kept for their own vile ends, and, unfortunately for me, they soon found out that I was the very man they were short of in their community, for, let me tell you, this secret territory of theirs is literally bursting with mineral wealth of all kinds, which they have no idea how to work. Over and over again they have pressed me to join their abominable brotherhood and become one of them, offering me instant death as an alternative; but I knew I was much too useful to be killed out of hand, and I laughed in their faces. That blackguard Levert was positively the first man who ever really tried to injure me, and he took me by surprise when we were out on a prospecting trip—he had been importuning me to give him my daughter in 'marriage'! and I had determined to shoot her dead before I would accede either to his or any Mormon's wishes in that respect.

"Fortunately every woman is safe here for a full year, unless she chooses to marry of her own accord, and after that time the consent of her nearest relative is sufficient, whether the poor creature wills or no. Now we have been here just ten months, so have still some little time before us—that is, if you gentlemen are, as I understand, willing to assist me in liberating my little girl from the Novices' Convent in the Mormon town which lies about a dozen miles from here." And the poor fellow looked at Grenville and Leigh with a half-inquiring and wholly imploring expression on his face.

The cousins were deeply touched by Winfield's evident anxiety about his daughter; neither, however, spoke—but both reached forward and warmly shook hands with him, and as they did so Grenville saw the tears spring to his eyes. Rightly interpreting their silent sympathy, he went on—

"And now, gentlemen—"

"One moment, old fellow!" interjected Leigh; "this is Dick Grenville, who 'bosses our show,' as, I suppose, our unwelcome neighbours would call it, and I am his lazy cousin Alfred Leigh; so do, for goodness' sake, call us Leigh and Grenville, and drop that 'gentlemen' palaver—it sounds a bit off in a cavern, don't you know."

Winfield bowed to the cousins over this unceremonious and characteristic introduction, and then again took up the thread of his story.

"I was going to say that I feel certain you are quite safe in trusting yonder Zulu; he hated his brutal masters even more than I did, and I suspect he only interfered to-day because he knew that if he did not do so his own skin would pay the forfeit. He once escaped, and was at large for upwards of three months, and I suppose he must then have unearthed this hiding-place. He killed one of the guards who stood in his way, and was to have been shot when retaken; but the Holy Three relented at the last moment, on the score of his being such an excellent hunter with native weapons—a great consideration with these people, as the stock of ammunition which has sufficed them for fifty years is getting rather low. They got a dozen barrels of powder out of my little camp, and thought they had found a treasure, but, unfortunately for them, it was fine blasting powder, which blew half a dozen of their rotten old shooting-irons to pieces, and opportunely hurried two of their biggest ruffians into the nether world."

A discussion then ensued, in which Grenville closely questioned their new ally, and received answers which gave him a very fair idea of their present position and prospects, and confirmed him in the knowledge that their party would never be permitted to leave the Mormon territory alive if those gentry had their own way. "Only one man," said Winfield, "ever got away alive, and he, curiously enough, must have escaped two or three days before you got in. He was a very decent man, and a great agitator for reform, and was consequently popular with many of the people, but particularly obnoxious to the Holy Three and their immediate satellites, the Avenging Angels."

Grenville obtained an accurate description of this fortunate (?) individual, and had little difficulty in convincing Winfield that the man in question—or, rather, all that remained of him—now hung rotting ignominiously upon a cross near the great stone stairway.

"That explains their coolness over it all," said Winfield. "I told the guards that he would be back in two months' time with an army to reduce them, but they only laughed, and said 'they guessed their little country was just about impregnable,' and they were glad to see the last of him, for he was only a nuisance."

"Well," said Grenville at last, "the best thing you can do now you've had a smoke and relieved your mind, Winfield, is to go to sleep, for you stand much in need of rest after your long exposure and involuntary fast. I'll have a chat with the Zulus now, and, if they consent, I propose to lie hidden here for a couple of days, so that you can get your strength up. So pray turn in at once—you too, Alf." And leaving the pair to make their rough beds of dried leaves, he joined the Zulus, who were talking earnestly together in the doorway of the cavern.

Amaxosa was quite confident that their place of shelter was altogether unknown to the Mormons, as they had never been able to find him until one evil day when they had stumbled across him a score of miles from the spot they now occupied. Asked whether there was any way out of the country, he said "No"; he had most thoroughly searched for a means of exit, and had concluded that the white people were witch-finders, who got in and out by flying over the mountains.

On being asked how he was brought in, he said he did not know, as he was knocked senseless with a blow from the butt-end of a rifle before he was captured, and had been expected to die for a week thereafter. Myzukulwa had told him the story of their entry into this wonderful country, and he (Amxosa) was "very willing to follow and to fight for such great and wise white chiefs, and would be their man to the death." Grenville then bestowed some tobacco upon his new ally, and, after a hearty handshake, sent both the brothers to lie down, whilst he himself took the first watch, and cudgelled his brains as to the further movements of the whole party. Three hours later, when he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and lay down to rest, after having seen Amxosa on guard, and given him strict orders that no fire was on any consideration to be alight during the daytime, Grenville's mind was quite made up.

They must carry off Miss Winfield by a *coup de main* in the course of the next few days, occupying the interim in choosing out and victualling one or two exceptionally strong positions between their present refuge and the great stairway. They must hold each of these as long as was possible, falling back by degrees, and, after fighting their ultimate position to the last gasp, endeavour to take the foe by surprise, and circumvent—or, if needful, cut their way through—the guard, which, he had no doubt, was already rigidly posted in the subterranean roadway, and so regain the Pass and the outside world.

The plan was dangerous to a degree, but was in fact the only one which offered the slightest chance of success; their own act had brought them into this mysterious country, and nothing short of supreme audacity and the most determined bravery could carry them out again. Moreover, Grenville was quite resolved not to go away empty-handed. Granted that the place really was, as Winfield had said, simply alive with gold, he meant both Leigh and himself to have a lion's share—not that either was greedy of fortune, but both, as younger sons of old families, had keenly felt the snubs of wealth, and it would truly be a grand thing if they could fill their pockets out of nature's inexhaustible stores.

Their present position, except by trenching advisedly upon their supplies, was untenable for any length of time; this had come out in the course of Grenville's questions to Amxosa.

"Why," he had asked, "have we seen no game, not a living creature of any kind, with the exception of a few birds, and yet you and the Inkoos Winfield talk of hunting?"

"Because of the great black gulf and the dark River of Death," was the answer; and Grenville had been given to understand that this wonderful country was absolutely cut in two, from side to side, by a yawning abyss, forty to fifty feet across, through which, some three hundred feet below, flowed a sluggish and inky-looking stream of incalculable depth, thoroughly meriting the Stygian name bestowed upon it.

This awful chasm, which intersected the country for over eighty miles, was cleverly spanned in three places, equidistant about twenty miles, by stout but narrow wooden bridges; and these were jealously-guarded night and day, the nearest one to the present hiding-place of the party being also the bridge most adjacent to the Mormon stronghold, which went by the name of East Utah. It was one of these bridge guards that Amxosa had slain in order to cross the gulf and, as he—poor fellow!—thought, regain his freedom.

On further consideration, and after an early breakfast, the party decided to change their quarters that very night, for, much to their surprise, it proved that Amxosa had stowed away, in a cave close by, sufficient dried flesh to keep a small army going for months; this led to inquiry, and it came out that an enterprising Mormon had obtained the sanction of the Holy Three to conveying himself and his belongings across the bridge and into the veldt, where he expected to find excellent pasturage for his cattle, there being no animals of any kind on the outer side of the chasm. This herd the Zulu had looted most successfully, without the Mormon having an idea where a round dozen of his finest beasts had gone; and so disgusted was he thereat, that after a trial of one month he again betook himself to the inner lands, *minus* the pick of his herd. The meat thus feloniously obtained, Amxosa had carefully dried and laid up—with most unusual forethought for one of his colour—against a rainy day.

Just before sunset, therefore, the whole party, bearing as much dried flesh as they could conveniently carry, took leave of their comfortable shelter, and cautiously retraced their steps to the glade where Levert had met his death, and where they found his body still lying, just as they had left it.

It being no part of Grenville's new programme that the corpse should be discovered as yet, it was hastily concealed; and then, rapidly passing on, the party reached the open veldt just before sunset, rested there until the moon rose, and two hours later were safely entrenched in a spot which had previously impressed itself upon Grenville's retentive memory as being singularly adapted for a sustained defence in the event of a protracted siege.

Their new shelter consisted of a curious-looking table-topped rock, quite fifty feet high and some thirty yards in length by about as many in breadth. From inside this rock flowed a small stream, which, as in the case of the cave they had just deserted, obtained exit through a rent about four feet wide in the massive wall of stone. In the interior of this rock, which was hollowed out into two separate caves of singularly angular and distorted appearance, the water welled up cool, fresh, and clear as crystal. The floor was of sandy gravel, and the rock, which was apparently of ironstone formation, had evidently been at one time struck by lightning, and was rent in every direction, in such a way as to leave most convenient loopholes for shooting through.

Altogether, it was a very strong place indeed, stood alone in a forest glade with six hundred yards of clear ground on every side of it, the only cover being low scrub; yet it was only one mile from the edge of the veldt, and perhaps twenty from the great stairway. Well provisioned, and with such weapons as theirs to defend it, and having regard to the fact that the place could only be entered by one man at a time, it might well be considered absolutely impregnable.

Here the party rested for the night, keeping guard by turns, and spending the whole of the next day in piling up firewood and timber joists, by which they could ascend twenty feet above the level of the outside ground, so as to scour the scrub, if needful, for any lurking foes; and also in putting up a sort of earthwork inside the rock, wherever the loopholes were too numerous to be required.

Night again put a welcome period to the labours of the party, and after breakfast on the following morning Grenville called all together, told them that the time for decided action had arrived, and unfolded his plan of operations, as follows.

At sunset the two Zulus were to set out and travel all night, and by dawn he calculated that they would—though taking a wide *détour*, to avoid the risk of premature discovery—have had time to reach the furthestmost bridge across the great cañon, and hide themselves amongst the trees which at that point bordered the veldt. Both men were to lie carefully concealed there until shortly after sunset; but the moment it was fairly dark they were to approach the bridge, and contrive to let themselves be seen hanging about, as if desirous of crossing. This method of procedure would,

Grenville felt sure, cause the guard great uneasiness, and result in his firing the signal rockets, and calling up the main body to effect the capture or destruction of the audacious foe.

Unless they were regularly set upon, the Zulus were not to indulge their inclinations for fighting, but, once having seen the fiery signals ascend, were to use the utmost despatch in regaining, by the most direct route, the neighbourhood of the central bridge. Here they were to await the return of Grenville and his party, accompanied, if successful in their attempt, by Miss Winfield, when the united body would make a desperate effort to reach the Table Rock, or, if too hard pressed to gain that desired haven, would find sanctuary in Amaxosa's cave. If the stratagem, however, took the Mormons in as completely as Grenville expected, his own party would have a start of at least two hours, and this would probably enable them to get right through to the rock.

The plan was undoubtedly clever, and one, moreover, which gave promise of success; and having been discussed in all its details, it was unanimously adopted. The Zulus were recommended to rest and sleep all day, and at sunset were despatched as arranged, the white men in the meantime occupying themselves in completing, and if possible amplifying still further, the natural defences of their rocky fortress.

The Zulus were armed, as usual, with their spears Myzukulwa willingly relinquishing his revolver to Winfield, who had also possessed himself of the rifle and ammunition of which the party had despoiled Abiram Levert.

Grenville accompanied Myzukulwa and Amaxosa as far as the edge of the veldt, and impressed upon them the desirability of deceiving the bridge guard, if possible, as to the number of their persons; for, he explained, "if the main body of Mormons see but two signal rockets, they will suppose them to refer to Amaxosa and the Inkoos Winfield unarmed, and will only send on a few men to capture them; whilst if three rockets are fired, they will conclude at headquarters that it is our own party—it being clearly their habit to send up a rocket for each foe sighted on the outer veldt—and will send on all the men they have on the spot." Then, wishing the brothers good luck, Grenville returned to the rock. The night was passed quietly by the party, which was now again reduced to its original, and, as Grenville said, fortunate number, Leigh adding jocularly that he would back their "dauntless three" at long odds against any Mormon trio in East Utah, the Holy Three preferred.

The next day was spent by the white men in examining their weapons with anxious care, after which they rested and smoked, waiting with feverish anxiety for the declining sun to set them on their way. At last the time came, and, after feeding well, the trio shook hands all round, and started out upon their desperate enterprise, for such it most certainly was. Three men against the whole Mormon community, which numbered, according to Winfield, probably a thousand able-bodied men, besides women, children, and youths, and was by no means deficient in subtlety of intellect.

The little party pushed forward in ominous silence, keeping carefully under cover, and about three and a half hours later saw all securely hidden in a patch of scrub which impinged upon the veldt a short mile from the central bridge, whereupon, before the darkness fell, as it did almost directly after their arrival, they could perceive *two* sentinels standing smoking and chatting together; and it was a saddening reflection to the trio that these men, at present in the full enjoyment of life, must of necessity die before the bridge would be free for their own purposes.

The minutes dragged on their weary way with leaden feet, and Grenville's watch marked half an hour after sundown, when a shout from the bridge brought the whole party to its feet as one man, just in time to see a rocket dissolve in mid air into myriads of lovely shooting stars. A score of seconds later this was followed by a second rocket, whilst immediately afterwards, to Grenville's infinite delight, a third of these shining messengers winged its fiery way across the heavens.

Over the silent veldt the Englishmen could hear the Mormon guards talking in excited tones, but suddenly both parties gave vent to one common cry of astonishment as a fourth rocket swiftly sailed up into the azure vault, and was instantly succeeded by a fifth, after which perfect stillness reigned for a full minute; then, all at once, a vivid streak of fire shot up like a flaming arrow from the Mormon city, now comparatively close at hand, and a moment later its many-hued stars were vying with the glittering constellations of the sky. The answering rocket had been fired, and the Avenging Angels were on their way.

Chapter Six.

The Fiery Cross.

For fully fifteen minutes, which seemed so many hours, did the little party wait, in order to allow the main body of the Mormon fraternity to get well on their way in the direction of the eastern bridge; and then, at a sign from Grenville, all cautiously worked their way forwards, crawling at full length upon the grass, and soon finding themselves, undiscovered, within fifty yards of the bridge which was now becoming visible by the light of the moon. Another short wait rendered all as clear as day; yet the trio, hidden within pistol-shot of the sentinels, remained altogether unseen by them, the men being evidently thrown off their guard by the rockets fired from the eastern bridge.

And now Grenville and his friends coolly rose to their feet, and, covering the Mormons with their rifles, commanded them to lay down their arms. The surprise was complete. The sentinels, however, instantly threw forward their guns; but ere the pieces had reached their level, they both fell, Winfield and Leigh having each marked his man with deadly accuracy.

Quickly taking possession of the guns and ammunition, which they hid in the scrub some little way off, Grenville then placed the dead Mormons in fairly upright postures, leaning over the outer edge of the bridge, as if the men were looking at the water below, and conversing together. This was simply an old Indian artifice, utilised in case any stray watcher, attracted by the firing, should take a fancy to see if there were guards on the bridge. If a regular inspection were made, the imposture would of course become evident at once; but at a reasonable distance, and under the moonlight, the corpses might well pass muster for living men.

Our friends soon cleared the two miles lying between the bridge and the Convent in which Dora Winfield was imprisoned, and reached the spot without falling in with a living soul.

This Convent proved to be a fine stone building of considerable size and height, and Grenville saw at a glance that only stratagem could obtain them an entrance into such a formidable-looking edifice, for nothing short of cannon would have any effect upon the massive walls.

There was, however, no difficulty for them to contend with in the way of gaining admission, Winfield having merely to give in his name through a grating, in order to be permitted to visit his daughter.

The moment the door was opened, Grenville and Leigh, who had kept in the background, quietly followed him in, revolvers in hand.

There was, however, but a slight disturbance, as it proved that the Convent was tenanted solely by womankind. The Superior, a matronly-looking dame, was summoned, and remonstrated with Winfield, whom she, of course, knew, as he had been in the habit of paying regular visits to his daughter.

"If you insist," she said, "I must perforce give up your daughter, but you know well that neither you nor these misguided young men can ever escape from our mysterious country. Remember, *the eyes of the Holy Three are unsleeping.*"

"Excuse me, madam," said Grenville with a quiet laugh, "but we have no time for parley. Our minds are made up; and if you will kindly produce Miss Winfield, we will be gone. Your miserable Trinity may serve to frighten women, but it has no terrors for honest men." Then turning to Leigh, "Alf, guard this door; and if anyone—man, woman, or child—attempts on any pretext to leave this building, see that that creature dies, or remember that our own lives will pay the forfeit."

At this the Superior lost her temper, and commenced to harangue Grenville in no measured terms; but he put her on one side without further ado, and when the woman found that these men intended to search every cell till they found Miss Winfield, she soon led them to that young lady's apartment, which proved to consist of a small prison-like chamber, furnished only with a shabby bed and one wooden chair. The poor girl, who sat reading by a rushlight, flew joyfully into her father's arms and fairly wept with delight at the thought of being free once more. Winfield introduced her to Grenville, and after briefly thanking him with a kindly smile for his share in her release, she expressed herself equally eager with themselves to get away from the Convent and its environs.

After a hasty introduction to Leigh, all passed out into the moonlight, Grenville locking the door from the outside, and taking possession of the key, hoping thereby to prevent the inmates of the Convent from prematurely giving the alarm.

As Miss Winfield followed the hasty strides of her father in the direction of the bridge, Alf Leigh walked by her side, conversing with her in low tones, and secretly wondering how her father could have been so careless as to risk such a treasure in the wilds of Africa.

He saw at a glance that Dora Winfield was a lady, and as thoroughly lovely a specimen, moreover, as one could find in a day's journey through England. Her hair was of a lustrous golden hue, she had fine blue eyes, and a face which was singularly winning and beautiful, but which yet possessed an expression of self-reliance that in no way detracted from her charming countenance. Her voice was sweet and well modulated; and altogether she was a most lovable little person—at least, so thought Alfred Leigh from the vantage ground of his six feet two inches.

Dora Winfield was, however, no ordinary woman—she was quite five feet eight inches in height, and fortunately for herself and the all-night journey she had in prospect, possessed a well-knit figure and a constitution hardened by years of travel with her father, in the pursuit of his somewhat hazardous occupations.

Leigh was delighted to find her a quiet, modest young girl, whose tone had evidently been in no way lowered by her contact with the rough diamonds of advanced civilisation in the South African bush.

The girl had, indeed, been well-trained by a good mother, and after the death of that beloved relative had been so wrapped up in her father, of whom she was passionately fond, that she had never experienced any desire to mix with the outside world, of which Leigh soon discovered that she knew absolutely nothing.

As the party drew near the bridge, Leigh whispered a few words to his cousin, who at once moved on ahead, and, finding the bridge just as they had left it, coolly tipped the two lifeless sentinels over the parapet into the water, and a sullen plunge which reached Leigh's ears as he approached with his fair companion told him that she would be spared the ghastly sight of those two livid corpses acting such a hollow, hideous mockery.

As the party crossed the bridge, Leigh laughingly observed that it was more like going home from a nineteenth-century dinner than leading the forlorn hope they had looked for.

Hardly were the words out of his mouth than a rocket again shot up from the Mormon stronghold and described an arc over their heads, and, turning to look behind them, all saw a singular spectacle.

From the roof of the Novices' Convent shone a small *cross of fire*, and, even as they looked, this signal was answered by the startlingly sudden appearance of an enormous emblem of similar shape posted upon the very top of a steep hill just behind the town.

By this time the sky had darkened considerably, the lustre of both moon and stars were dimmed by driving belts of angry-looking scud, which shut out both the town and the hill behind it, and gave this extraordinary signal an altogether terrible effect. Soon the cross upon the Convent died out, but the one upon the mountain-top continued to glow more fiercely than ever, hanging as it seemed between earth and heaven, instinct with a wondrous radiant brilliancy. All at once the light died out, as suddenly as it had appeared; but rocket after rocket ascended from East Utah, still following the direction of the bridge, conveying to the whole Mormon community, with the help of the fiery cross, the fact of an escape from the Convent, and indicating that the fugitives were flying by the central bridge.

Grenville afterwards ascertained that these crosses were made of a pure crystal cut in slabs from the mountain-side, and were lighted by the same natural gas which had startled him in the subterranean road.

After watching the Eastern heavens for some moments Grenville turned to his cousin and said—

"I don't half like it, Alf; the main body is already on its return journey, or an answering rocket would have been fired from the eastern bridge. You must push on with Miss Winfield and her father, and try to make the Table Rock. I think we are in for a storm, but never mind that I will stay by the bridge and stop any stragglers from pursuing; if you come across the Zulus, send one to me and take the other one on with you. Now be off, there's a good fellow," as Leigh was about to

argue the point.

“God bless you, dear old man!” burst from the other, as he wrung Grenville’s hand and turned away, for he knew that his cousin was facing almost certain death to effectually cover their retreat; and but for Dora Winfield’s sake he would have insisted upon taking his own share of the danger, as usual.

Another moment and Grenville was alone upon the bridge, the gathering gloom around him, and the weird whispering veldt stretching out behind, whilst beneath him the River of Death seemed to murmur hoarsely along its eerie and unwilling course.

All at once he became aware of a figure, apparently on horseback, approaching at full speed, and, challenging loudly, commanded the advancing equestrian to halt on pain of instant death.

The horse was reined up less than a score of yards from the bridge, and to Grenville’s astonishment a sweet girlish voice cried out, “Oh! do please let me pass, I want to go with Dora.”

Just then the moon shone out again for a brief space, and Grenville saw a lovely young girl, her luxuriant dark hair blown about her like a curtain by the wind, sitting on the back of an animal which he at once recognised as a quagga, and looking at him imploringly.

“Who are you?” he at length found voice to ask.

“I?” said the little creature, drawing herself up proudly, “I am the Rose of Sharon, queen of the Mormons by right of birth, but kept in the Convent prison by the wicked men who call themselves the Holy Three.” Then, in pleading tones, “You have a kind face, do let me join dear Dora; you would surely not separate the Rose of Sharon from the Lily of the Valley.”

The girl was not more than eighteen years of age, and shut up from almost all human intercourse as she had been for many years, her manners were almost childlike, whilst her form was so *petite* that Grenville might well be excused for taking her, as he had at first done, for a child of fourteen.

Catching the head of her strange mount, he quietly led her across the bridge, telling the young lady which direction to take in order to come up with her friend, and being much relieved to learn from her that this quagga was an altogether unique specimen in East Utah, as he had feared that the Mormons might have a cavalry troop so mounted, and this would complicate matters fearfully so far as his own party was concerned.

In a few seconds the hoof-strokes of her strange pony died out upon the veldt, and Grenville was once more alone with a mighty struggle before him, but with an additional reason to nerve his arm in the voluntary presence of this fair creature pleading for protection from the common foe.

This, however, was no time for sentiment, and the moon again making her appearance, Grenville looked carefully to his weapons and prepared to make the best defence in his power, determined that no Mormon should cross the bridge except over his dead body. The sky had partly cleared in front of him, and he was relieved to notice this, as his only chance of a prolonged resistance was to put in accurate shooting at a range quite beyond that of the Mormons’ rifles; behind him over the veldt the clouds stretched away to the horizon black as ink and ominous in their sudden death-like quietude.

In the distance he could see the outline of the Convent and the lights actively twinkling in the Mormon town, then some three miles to the eastward the sky-line was broken by a stream of fire, as a rocket sailed up on its errand of inquiry, and was answered almost simultaneously by a like vivid messenger despatched from the Mormon stronghold in the direction of the bridge.

Chapter Seven.

“In Yon Strait Path a Thousand may well be Stopped by Three.”

And now, as Grenville listened intently, he could distinguish the tramp of a body of armed men approaching, and with a beating heart he knelt down upon the bridge, projecting his rifle over the wooden parapet to steady it; and when the Mormon band, upwards of one hundred strong, came into view, debouching from the trees a quarter of a mile away, he, to their utter astonishment, challenged them in the most audacious fashion:

“Halt, or I fire!”

All the reply to this was a shout of derision, and the entire party commenced a jog-trot over the space which intervened between the trees and the bridge.

Grenville allowed the leaders to get within about three hundred and fifty yards, then his rifle vomited its deadly contents, and two Mormons, running one behind the other, bit the dust. With an angry cry the remainder pressed forward, intent on vengeance; but again and again, to their complete astonishment and utter consternation, did the unerring messengers from the bridge speed forth upon their fatal mission, and by the time the crowd had arrived within a hundred yards of Grenville’s position, seventeen men lay dead or dying upon the veldt, and he had still five shots left in his magazine. These were coolly but hastily despatched, and Grenville had the fierce gratification of knowing, in that supreme moment, that not a single cartridge had been thrown away—*every bullet had had at least one deadly billet*. Now, however, the Mormons commenced to use their guns, and though the bridge in some degree protected Grenville, still his head was exposed, and he could hear the musket balls whistling past him.

So close were his opponents now that he could distinctly see their faces, and his keen eye instantly detected a wavering movement upon their part; and realising that they ignorantly ascribed an unlimited number of shots to his strange and infernal weapon, he at once opened fire with his revolvers; and after two more men had fallen to the first three discharges, the attacking party broke up altogether, and simply scrambled into cover at top speed, whilst our hero—for such we may now fairly call him—heaved a sigh of relief, and proceeded with the utmost care to reload his rifle.

Then followed a desultory guerilla sort of warfare, the Mormons trying to creep into shooting range lying full length upon the grass, and this stratagem, owing to the number of dead bodies lying about, was comparatively easy work. Twice Grenville had narrow escapes of falling a victim to these crouching marksmen, one shot actually grazing his left ear and drawing blood; but not one of these individuals ever got a chance of a second shot, the list of killed and wounded soon totalling twenty-five, such difference was there between old-time guns and a modern engine of warfare placed in a single pair of cool and skilful hands.

Looking at his watch, Grenville found that his party had now had a start of just one hour; but he felt that to be on the safe side they ought to have another thirty minutes. Moreover, he well knew that the instant he moved from his present position to try and escape, the Mormon herd concealed amongst the trees five hundred yards away would make a unanimous rush at him.

Presently, the situation becoming monotonous, he sallied out into the open and began collecting the arms and ammunition of such of the dead men as lay in closest proximity to the bridge. The Mormons fired an angry volley, without effect; and after securing half a score of muskets, he was about to return to the bridge, when he espied what looked remarkably like a keg of gunpowder lying on the grass some fifty yards nearer to the Mormon position. Quietly walking forward, he took possession of this amidst a hail of bullets, all of which, however, fell wide of the mark, and "spotting" the flash of one gun he replied in kind, his shot being answered by the death-shriek, accompanied rather than echoed by a yell of vengeance.

Grenville carefully carried off his treasure, feeling considerably easier in his mind, as it was now competent for him to blow up the bridge, and thus secure his retreat; but the Mormons, who thoroughly understood his intentions, instantly resumed the offensive, with the object of keeping him otherwise fully employed.

Hastily hiding the keg of powder in the scrub on the outer side of the chasm, Grenville returned to his post, and made another determined effort to check the advance of the enemy, feeling that every additional minute gained for his friends was of incalculable value.

The Mormons, however, had learned a lesson by their dearly-bought experience, and instead of again advancing in one compact body, now spread out their force and endeavoured to "rush" our hero from several points at one and the same time, and so spoil the accuracy of his shooting.

Unfortunately for them Grenville was much too keen to be taken in by such a simple artifice, for seeing that all their varied lines of advance must finally converge upon his own position, he coolly withheld his fire until a considerable number of his foes had joined forces within two hundred yards of the bridge, and then poured it in with frightful effect, the heavy shell-bullets committing terrible execution at such short range.

The Mormons, however, kept on doggedly, and by the time that a score of them had arrived within a hundred yards of him, Grenville's rifle was empty.

Rapidly slipping cartridges into the magazine of his Winchester, he at the same time warily watched the advancing foe, and when one pulled up and raised his rifle, Grenville instantly dropped him.

Unfortunately, he had but had time to get in five cartridges, and when five men were accounted for, and the rest quietly, but in a determined manner, pulled up within fifty yards of him, and raised their rifles, he was conscious of a sudden sinking of the heart.

Grenville continued, nevertheless, to ply his six-shooters, and the instant the Mormon leader gave the word to his platoon to fire, threw himself forward on his face with the speed of light, escaping by a miracle almost unharmed.

Springing quickly to his feet, he deliberately emptied the remaining chambers of his revolvers into the approaching Mormons at point-blank range, as they rushed forward with their guns clubbed, and then, seizing his own rifle by the muzzle, he swung the weapon round his head and prepared to sell his life dearly.

Though bleeding from a wound in the shoulder and one in the fleshy part of the neck, Grenville felt little the worse, as the last-named had fortunately failed to touch the artery.

As he stood bravely waiting the onslaught of his remaining foes, our hero was dimly conscious that the air was growing dark and very still, and that the storm clouds were creeping up again in ponderous and wicked-looking masses; but ere he had time to reflect on the probable result of this, the Mormons flew at him like hounds on a stag at bay. Blow after blow was given and received, our hero at length getting in a sweep with his weapon that drove one opponent headlong into the awful chasm beneath, into which he fell with a horrid shriek. This blow, however, cost Grenville a nasty knock on the side of the head, and as his enemies redoubled their violence, he felt that the end was very near; the bridge, the sky, the veldt, were turning round and round with him, and he realised that his spirit was indeed about to speed its eternal flight; and now, as he made one glorious final effort to maintain his post, a glittering streak of steel whizzed past his face, and the nearest foe fell backwards, grasping in the death agony at the razor edge of the Zulu spear imbedded in his throat, whilst, almost simultaneously, a second of the attacking party was despatched to the shades by a similar weapon from another hand, and poor Grenville's sinking heart was cheered by the war-cry of Amaxosa and the cool voice of his brother Myzukulwa—

"Let the Inkoos load his rifle," said the latter, "and leave these low people to us."

The remaining assailants now turned tail and fairly ran for it. Too late! As well might they seek to outstrip the wind as to escape from the fleet-footed Zulus, and in less than two minutes every man was on the ground with his life-blood welling from the awful gashes inflicted by the broad-bladed spears of the savage conquerors, who stood chanting a rude note of victory.

Grenville reloaded all his weapons, and after indulging in a nip of brandy, felt more like himself again, though considerably knocked about, and a perfect mass of bruises upon the arms and shoulders. Amaxosa now approached, and saluting him gravely and deferentially, delivered himself as follows:—

"The Inkoos, my father, is indeed a great and very mighty warrior. In one short hour he has slain in fair fight more men than Amaxosa has killed in his whole lifetime; but my father is wounded and very weary after so great a fight, and it is meet that he should now follow on the track of the Lily of the Valley and the Inkoosis to the great black rock and the spring of sweet water; and when these evil men, my old masters, the wicked witch-finders, seek to follow on the road,

then it shall come to pass that my father's faithful war-dogs, the sons of Undi, shall slay them, and if perchance they should by force of numbers overcome the children of my race, then in the evening of his life will my father, the lion-hearted chief, sometime remember Myzukulwa and Amaxosa, the sons of Isanusi, who fought and died for him on the narrow bridge which spans the River of Death. Let my father's ears receive the words of the voice of his son, for they are good words."

Grenville, who was deeply touched by the devotion of the Zulus, shook hands warmly with them and thanked them for their timely aid, which had undoubtedly saved his life, but steadfastly declined to desert them or to yield the post of honour.

"Unless my rifle is here to keep the rascals out of range," he said to Amaxosa, "you would soon fall to their guns; a brave man, my friend, is no more proof against a bullet than is a coward."

"Fear not their bullets, Inkoos," was the quick reply; "the witch-finders will shoot no more to-night, the rain will stop them." And even as the Zulu spoke, the clouds over their heads, which had gradually grown denser and more threatening, were rent asunder by a vivid flame of fire which for one brief instant revealed the whole countryside in a dazzling, blinding glare of lurid light and then vanished into darkness which might be felt, and which was rendered still more awful by the terrific peals of thunder, loud as the trump of doom, which shook the earth and appeared to rend the very vault of heaven itself; the hellish clamour being returned in varying and deafening tones by every rugged rock and echoing glen in the mountain-range, till the whole craggy chaos quivered with the conflicting reverberations.

Flash succeeded flash in rapid succession, until the sultry air seemed instinct with blazing levin brands, whilst the forked streams of arrowy fire darted hither and thither, as if impelled by the hand of a giant.

Then all of a sudden came the tropic rain. Rain! It was simply a vast steaming sheet of vaporish water, which in one instant blotted out the landscape, flooded the veldt, and sent the sullen sluggish River of Death roaring down its active course, where it enlivened the rocks with hoarse and angry murmurings, and clothed the sides of the dreadful chasm with weird and ghostly echoes.

Grenville now suggested to his followers that it would be a good opportunity to blow up the bridge, before the powder, which they were protecting to the best of their somewhat limited ability, began to get damp; but when Amaxosa understood this wish, he replied—

"Why should my father destroy the bridge? Let him withdraw it, and keep the witch-finders on the other side. Amaxosa thought he wished to kill them all to-night."

On being questioned, the Zulu explained that these bridges all hinged on pivots which worked on the outer side of the river; this, he said, was to enable the Holy Three and their immediate satellites to effectually prevent any spying upon their movements when they undertook their murderous errands either inside or outside their own country.

"Good!" said Grenville; "the evil deeds of these scoundrels will recoil upon their own heads." And in a few moments more, with the help of the Zulus, the bridge was open and lying flush with their own side of the river, and Grenville and his two sable friends were stealing away with cautious steps, carefully carrying the powder and a score of Mormon guns.

Ere the party had reached the fringe of bush less than a mile away, the rain ceased, as suddenly as it had come on, the moon again shed her soft and beauteous radiance on mountain, veldt, and forest, sparkling in every direction with lovely raindrops, which glistened as if all Nature were smiling through her happy bridal tears. As the little party entered the scrub a wild, angry shout was wafted to their ears, and across the rolling veldt, and beyond the now protecting chasm, the Mormons could be seen ranging up and down, like bloodthirsty tigers baulked of their hard-won prey.

Chapter Eight.

A Night Attack.

Being perfectly secure from Mormon interference—at all events, for the moment—Grenville and the two Zulus proceeded somewhat leisurely on their way to the rock, for, truth to tell, all three were suffering from both hunger and fatigue, and their one single consolation consisted of a good smoke.

And now, as they gradually knocked off the weary miles which lay between the central river and the great rock, Grenville heard the details of the Zulu expedition to the eastern bridge.

These active children of the veldt had made a very wide détour during the first night, and safely reached the desired shelter of the timber about an hour before dawn, and had watched and slept by turns all day, having first satisfied themselves that no large force of the enemy was near at hand. On the bridge they found two guards instead of one, which, as they said, "made their hearts glad, as the fight would be a fair one," for the astute Myzukulwa had determined that *at least three rockets should go up*, by hook or by crook. Instead, therefore, of alarming the sentinels by showing their persons at dusk, they came upon the miserable men in the most approved Zulu fashion, and settled them out of hand, without even giving them the chance of firing a shot.

The pair had then coolly sat down and talked, debating how many rockets to fire, and had ultimately concluded that Amaxosa, who was quite *au fait* with the method of sending up these aerial messengers, should despatch *five*, and thus cause the Mormons to believe that Winfield and the escaped Zulu had joined themselves to the audacious invaders of their secret kingdom.

No sooner was this operation satisfactorily performed than the brothers prepared to set out for the central bridge, when they were all at once assailed by five or six Mormons, who had sprung from somewhere close at hand, and a desperate battle of course ensued. One of the attacking party, in trying to shoot Myzukulwa, had kindly missed that worthy and "potted" one of his own friends, and in less time than it takes to tell, three of the enemy were dead and the others retreating at full speed; but not knowing how many more might be lying hid, the Zulus for a wonder concluded discretion to be the better part of valour, and after turning off the bridge had come at a slinging trot all the way to Grenville's position, which, as we have already seen, they reached just in the very nick of time.

When the trio had put in nearly two hours' solid work, poor Grenville grew faint with fatigue, exposure, and loss of blood. The grey ghostly mists of dawn were now hanging over the party on every side; but, as far as Amaxosa could judge, they were still an hour's journey from the rock, and as the Mormons might have sent a fast detachment by the western bridge, it behoved our friends to lose no time.

For some way the faithful Zulus, themselves nearly dead beat, half supported, half carried Grenville, only to find, when they spoke to him, that he was fast asleep on his feet; laying him gently down, the pair looked at each other as if wondering what to do, when suddenly a colossal figure seemed to burst out of the mist and dash right down upon them at full speed; in one instant the Zulus sprang over their fallen chief and raised their spears to meet the foe, but all at once Myzukulwa lowered his weapon quietly. "Ow! Inkoos," he said. "Ow!"

The new arrival was Alf Leigh, riding the quagga, which had shortly before carried the lovely Rose of Sharon. Seeing his cousin's motionless and bloodstained body, he threw himself off the animal and fell on his knees beside it. "Dick! Dick! my poor old Dick—dead! dead! dead! Oh, God! oh, God! what shall I do? Would I had died for thee, my dear old Dick!"

"Stay, Inkoos," said Amaxosa gently. "My father the lion-hearted chief is not dead; he does but sleep the sleep of the wounded and the weary. At yonder bridge, by the dark River of Death, did the sons of Undi find their father, the mighty warrior, surrounded by heaps upon heaps of dead and dying men, and also by men yet living who thirsted for his blood; but his faithful war-dogs chased away these evil ones; even as the chaff they flew before the fierce wind; but they were not, for the sons of Undi slew them. And but now, as you came, had we laid the Inkoos our father on the grass, for he sleeps a sleep of weariness, of cold, of hunger, and of blood; and we, his weary children, are too worn to carry him; yet if the Inkoos will take our father on the horse, we will aid him gladly."

And so the noble fellows did; and Leigh, with fervent thanks to Heaven for the miraculous escape of his beloved cousin, lifted him on to the quagga, and held him there with Myzukulwa's help, whilst Amaxosa took the animal's head, and led the way at a quiet pace—not, however, before Leigh had first refreshed the Zulus with a strong nip of brandy.

At last they reached the rock, just as the sun rose, and laid the still unconscious Grenville down to have his rest out, whilst the Zulus flung their tired bodies down and were instantly asleep.

When our hero at last awoke, feeling stiff, sore, and very hungry, he stared about him in sheer astonishment, and wondered whether he still dreamed. He had no recollection of having reached the rock, yet he knew he was inside it, and quickly realised that he must have been in some way carried there.

To rest was soothing, but the pangs of hunger were gnawing his very vitals, and heaving a weary sigh he made a movement to rise. At this moment a small white hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a sweet voice, which he at once recognised, said in tones of playful command, "Lie still, sir; I can't afford to let you become an invalid."

"Ah! young lady," he said, "and how is the Rose of Sharon this morning, and did her curious-looking pony bring her safely here?"

"Thank you, I am very well," replied the young girl, coming round to the other side of the cavern and looking down upon him as he leaned lazily on one elbow; "only it isn't morning, but four o'clock in the afternoon; and don't you mock at my little horse—you would never have got here but for him. There now, don't talk any more. Just lie down again and I'll bring you some food, which Dora is getting ready;" but as Rose turned away Miss Winfield herself entered with a big plateful of boiled fish, the best food, she said, they could offer him at present.

Both girls looked fresh and hearty, and neat as new pins, much to Grenville's surprise, for the storm of the night before was calculated to have ruined every garment they possessed.

Whilst he ate greedily, the girls explained that the storm had hardly touched them until near the rock itself, and by dint of making the poor quagga carry double burden they had practically arrived in shelter before any serious harm was done.

"Very hard on the animal, Mr Grenville, I can assure you," said Dora; "two of Rose wouldn't have mattered so much, you know, but when I got on his back I felt certain I could hear him groan. When the poor little beastie got here he thought, I suppose, that he could rest, but the moment the storm began to clear off Mr Leigh insisted on mounting him and riding away to look for you. He found you lying so fast asleep that he took you for dead, and the Zulus were at their wits' end, not knowing what to do, so you were mounted and brought here in a state of unconsciousness."

"Well done, Alf," said Grenville; "it was a risky thing to set out by himself in this country so mounted and on such a night, but he always was a plucky fellow. Where is everybody, Miss Winfield?"

"My father and the Zulus have gone to Amaxosa's cave to bring up the rest of the dried meat at nightfall, and have taken the quagga with them, and your cousin is here to look after Rose and myself."

"And a very good judge, too," said Grenville, noticing that the fair girl blushed when she named his cousin; "but Miss Winfield—"

"Won't you call me Dora?" said the girl; "Mr Leigh does."

"With pleasure," said Grenville heartily, "provided you will play fairly and call me Dick."

This was agreed upon, as also that Rose and himself should be equally intimate for the future.

"You see," explained Miss Winfield, "we have been called Sister Rose and Sister Dora so long, that surnames sound odd to us, and I really think they are somewhat out of place in the African bush."

"Well, Dora, I was about to say," resumed Grenville, "that I have enjoyed the fish very much, and am extremely glad to know that we can procure such a valuable addition to our scanty bill of fare; but haven't you been unwise to light a fire in the daytime? Believe me, these Mormon bloodhounds are to be feared, and we are by no means out of the wood yet."

Both girls laughed, and then quoth Rose: "You forget I am a Mormon bloodhound, sir, and that this is my country; and

let me tell you we own many strange and wonderful things—amongst them, a boiling spring, which bubbles up close to the rock, if you know where to find it, and therein we have cooked all our food. Seriously, I must thank you very, very much for helping me yesterday, and let me add that all the annals of our race contain no instance of such determined bravery and devoted heroism as you exhibited at the bridge last night. You saved me from death or worse than death, at the hands of the detested Holy Three; and when the time comes, remember that the Mormon queen will pay you life for life." And with the tears starting from her fine eyes this strange girl swept imperially away, followed almost immediately by Dora, after she had first instructed Grenville to sleep again, which he did, dreaming alternately of fair-haired and dark-browed maidens, and Mormons thirsting for his blood.

All that night Grenville again slept soundly, and when he awoke in the morning he was quite his own man again, much to the relief of all concerned.

His first act was to make several necessary provisions for the comfort of the young ladies, after which he again inspected the defences of the rock with a dissatisfied air.

"What's the matter with the place, Dick?" said Leigh; "it's impregnable."

"Not a bit of it, Alf," was the reply; "if they attack any night before the moon rises, they can shoot us through our own loopholes like rats in a cage."

"I never thought of that," said Leigh, pulling a long face; and having called the rest of the fighting brigade into council, this serious difficulty was discussed at considerable length, but the only, and to Grenville unsatisfactory, conclusion arrived at was to lay on the ground after nightfall a number of small fires made of resinous wood, and connected with the rock by trains of powder. The Zulus were to patrol the neighbourhood from dusk until moonrise, and give notice of any hostile approach, when the trains would be fired and the beacons lighted, to enable the besieged to shoot accurately. This scheme had weak points about it which disturbed Grenville, who now knew the fighting qualities of the Mormons. Still he could suggest nothing better, and could only hope their enemies would altogether fail to discover the present position of the devoted little band. Scouting parties had several times been seen outlying on the adjacent veldt, but it was only after the lapse of three full days that Myzukulwa found a Mormon skulking in the woods, and clearly watching their movements: him he slew, but it was evident that the man was only an advance guard, for that very night, as soon as darkness set in, both scouts gave the danger signal within a few moments of each other, and as soon as they had regained the rock, Grenville lighted the fires, and sent his marksmen to the loopholes.

This movement was only executed just in time, for about three score Mormons were already half-way across the open glade. For another hundred yards they advanced steadily, under a murderous fire, and then gave way, and fled back to their covers, leaving upwards of a dozen men on the ground, having failed in getting within range to fire a single shot from their own guns.

"Alf," said Grenville, "this won't do at all: three of our shots were thrown away, for on three several occasions we both took the same man; you keep the left advance in hand and I'll take care of the right."

Winfield, who had loaded all the captured Mormon guns, was anxious to join in the fray, but the enemy was of course quite out of his reach, and the two Zulus were fairly itching to use their spears, where they stood guarding the entrance to the cave.

Again the Mormons tried a rush, and again were driven back by the deadly hail of bullets from the repeating rifles, and quickly retreating into the woods, all grew still as death. And but for the corpses strewn about the sward no one would have imagined that a fierce and bloody fight was even now in progress.

Half an hour passed, and dashing the butt of his rifle on the ground, Grenville swore roundly.

"Just what I expected; the cunning rascals are waiting till yonder beacons are burnt out, and then they'll rush us."

"Can't we mend the fires?" anxiously suggested Leigh; "we've plenty of fuel."

"No, old man, they've got a rifle hidden in the grass less than 100 yards from every fire. Just watch, and you'll see. Yonder scoundrel is 500 yards if he is an inch, but I'll see if I can't rouse the snake out of that."

A careful sight preceded the report, and the concealed Mormon bounded from his hiding-place, with a bullet through his shoulder, only to be shot dead before he could move another yard.

A cry of astonishment broke from the forest—the range of the English rifles exceeded all they had feared or believed.

And now fire after fire died out, and Grenville commanded his little party to take up certain positions, where they would be more or less screened, and also confided the two girls to a perfectly safe corner, and then waited the result, straining his eyes through the darkness to catch a glimpse of the foe, as he felt sure the Mormon crowd must now be on their way across the open space and speeding towards the rock.

Just at this critical moment the beleaguered party was relieved, and at the same time fairly astonished by an extraordinary occurrence. Half-way between the rock and the fringe of forest the ashes of one fire had been quietly smouldering for some moments, after all the other beacons were clean burnt out; and now, as all listened intently, expecting to hear the cautious tread of the approaching foe, a curious rumbling sound was heard, and a single instant later a liquid column of fire suddenly burst from the ground, shooting up to the height of thirty or forty feet, where it uniformly hung like a gigantic fountain of living flame, whose waves, as they reached the ground, scorched the grass and rolled irresistibly towards the forest like a sea of blazing boiling lava.

The fire had burnt through the earth's crust and ignited a vast reservoir of petroleum, which now sprang heavenwards in a vivid pillar of lurid light, plainly revealing every stick and stone for fully half a mile around the rock.

All this Grenville realised as it were by instinct; but there was no time to observe the extraordinary natural phenomenon, for the whole Mormon army appeared to be rushing across the open glade within two hundred and fifty yards of the rock.

The fire of the besieged was close and deadly; and though upwards of twenty men fell to rise no more, whilst another

score or two turned tail and incontinently fled into cover, still some ten in number, braver than their comrades, gained the rock and attempted to enter, only to fall a useless sacrifice to the spears of the Zulus and the revolvers of Leigh and Winfield.

Thus closed the Mormon attack on the rocky fortress of the little band.

Careful watch was kept all night, but at dawn not a living soul was to be seen, and ascending the rock Grenville soon found that the entire party had gone clean away, leaving only their dead and their shame.

He had at first feared that the molten stream of fire would ignite the forest; this, however, was prevented by the river near the rock, into which the boiling oil poured, and was carried harmlessly away, incalculable wealth thus being wasted hourly before their very eyes.

Chapter Nine.

Mining and Counter-Mining.

The party at the rock now passed some little time in quiet and comparative comfort. They were not in any way molested, and though strict watch was kept both by night and day, the Mormons never ventured near their position, despite the fact that the oil well had apparently exhausted itself. This, however, caused Grenville no serious uneasiness, for Winfield had found that by superficially boring the ground near to the rock, he could easily get at and ignite several similar reservoirs of inflammable oil.

It was nevertheless patent that their enemies had quite determined they should not leave the country, for from the commanding height of a neighbouring tree Grenville constantly saw large parties carefully patrolling the wide stretch of veldt lying between the rock and the great subterranean roadway, by which the little party hoped to escape.

And now, having nothing else to do, Grenville turned his mind to the acquisition of wealth, and soon had Winfield at his favourite occupation, aided by Leigh and himself, whilst the Zulus kept watch and ward, and the young girls enjoyed to the full their newly-acquired and delicious sense of freedom.

A neighbouring stream proved to be prodigiously rich in alluvial deposits of gold, and at the end of a week of hard work, the mining party found themselves possessed of close upon sixty pounds weight of the precious metal, mainly in small nuggets. In one pocket alone, which fell to the lot of Leigh, *twelve pounds of gold was found and taken out in less than as many minutes*, the bed of the river being a regular Tom Tiddler's ground.

The method of procedure adopted by Winfield was somewhat curious, yet withal, extremely simple. Starting about two miles above their shelter, which was as far afield as the party dared to go, he followed the course of the stream down to, and even for some little distance beyond, the rock, and wherever he came across an eddy formed by the stones, placed a little flag on the bank to mark the spot; then damming up the narrow stream with rocks and fallen trees, he temporarily turned its course into an adjacent hollow in the ground, and set his party to work in the river-bed, on the spots where the eddies, as indicated by the flags, had formerly disported themselves.

The results were pleasing beyond their wildest anticipations, and in less than a fortnight the little river was again running peacefully along its former course, and our friends had acquired gold to the value of *nearly twenty-five thousand pounds sterling*—as much, in fact, as they could well carry. Only the Zulus looked on stolidly, and internally wondered how such a mighty warrior as "the Inkoos their father" could trouble his head about the "shining yellow sand." Winfield told the cousins that the mountains in which the stream had its source had always, amongst miners, borne the reputation of a veritable El Dorado, but the insuperable difficulty—indeed, impossibility—of access from the outside world had rendered it the reverse of likely that Nature's stores—at least in this place—would ever be rifled by the rude hand of man.

"When the alluvial workings pan out like this," he said, "what must the fountain head be! A wretched old Kaffir once told me that he had seen an entire mountain of solid gold in these parts, and, i' faith, I begin to believe that he was not telling such a colossal he as I at the time gave him credit for. If we could only carry the stuff away, I would risk a good deal to get at the spot; but as it is, we have quite as much as the quagga can well carry, and if we ever succeed in getting through again to the cave under the waterfall, it will puzzle us to raise either the animal or the gold up to the surface."

These days of restful peace were, however, suddenly and rudely disturbed by an accidental discovery, which once again brought home to our friends the cunning and unscrupulous nature of the fiendish enemies with whom they had to deal.

Amaxosa, with the perversity of a native, had always insisted—all danger to the contrary notwithstanding—in sleeping outside the house of rock, in a sort of hollow in the scrub which he had dignified by the name of "bed"; but one night, just as Grenville was comfortably dozing off to sleep, whilst Myzukulwa kept watch, a hand was placed on his shoulder, and the voice of Amaxosa whispered, "Let my father rise and follow me; there is danger and witchcraft afoot."

Springing to his feet, Grenville instantly joined the Zulus outside the cave, and heard strange and terrible tidings. It appeared that Amaxosa, when on the point of falling asleep in his "bed," had been disturbed by singular noises, which apparently issued from the very bowels of the earth. Concluding, however, that the "spout of fire" was again about to burst out, he had paid but little attention, until the stroke of some iron instrument upon a rock and the muffled sound of a human voice had brought him to his senses in an instant.

Following the Zulu to the place indicated, Grenville listened for some little time, and clearly heard the sounds of mining underground, with now and then a word evidently of command or direction, the purport of which it was, however, impossible to guess, the voices being too deeply buried to admit of the words being heard.

After a moment of paralysed stupor Grenville realised the extent of the frightful danger to which his party was exposed by this diabolical plot. The Mormons *were undermining their position, and in a few hours would blow them sky high with Winfield's blasting powder.*

Hastily, returning to the rock he awoke Leigh and Winfield, and explained matters, calling forth ejaculations of dismay

from both men.

"In four or at most five hours," said Grenville, "they will be under this spot, and unless we are clear away, Heaven help us; but on the other hand you may be certain that the forest is full of these outlying devils ready to cut off our escape."

After a short but excited argument it was determined to try and *counter-mine the foe*, and starting to their feet the little party set to work to dig through their own floor with the home-made picks and shovels which they had used when seeking for gold.

All worked like blacks, and soon sank a hole forty feet deep in the soft yet firm clayey sand, and then commenced tunnelling, still, however, tending downwards. The labour was enormous and the heat stifling; still the stake, beyond all price, was the life and liberty of the whole party; and when the tunnel had been unceasingly bored for three hours Grenville pronounced it long enough, and ordered his party to strike work. He then carried down the keg of powder taken at the central bridge, which proved to contain about thirty pounds, and the contents of which were found to be in capital condition.

Then sending all back into the cave with instructions to awake the girls, pack the gold on the quagga, and prepare for a running fight to Amaxosa's Cave, in the not improbable event of the rock being demolished, he returned to his burrow, bored the keg and laid a thick train of powder for thirty feet along the tunnel.

Then came a long anxious wait; but when our hero had been alone for nearly forty minutes, he at last heard the sound of a pick.

Gliding back to his friends, he found them ready for a start, and after seeing all outside in a safe place well on the leeside of the rock, he again crept into the tunnel. Here he waited for some little time in a fever of anxiety. He could distinctly hear the Mormons now, almost above him, and was in deadly fear lest the floor between their tunnel and his, should give way, when all would be lost. This, however, did not happen, for their enemies, overlooking the fact that the ground outside sank gradually towards the rock, and boring their shaft on the level, had approached dangerously near the upper crust of the earth.

At last the time came, and hearing the foe well above his position, and guessing by the sound of their voices that they were discussing the advisability of executing their diabolical scheme, our hero coolly stepped back some thirty feet, placed a light to his train, and as he saw the fire spurt forward along the sinuous inky-looking line of powder, darted out of his burrow, and reached the exit from the rock as the whole place seemed to be rent and torn by an ear-splitting report, and the outside air, which was for one brief moment lighted by the awful glare of the explosion, resumed its normal blackness, the silence of which was instantly broken by the groans of agony from the mutilated and dying Mormons, who had indeed been hoisted with their own petard. Quickly calling his party back to the rock, which, to his delight, was uninjured, Grenville directed Amaxosa to fire one of the oil wells, feeling sure that a Mormon rush would now be made under the impression that the audacious little band of invaders had perished.

Scarcely was this done than a small army of Mormons debouched from the woods at a run. Grenville let them get within three hundred yards of the rock, and then his party opened fire, knocking the astonished cowards over like ninepins, and in less than ten minutes the blazing pillar of fire showed only the open glade, strewn thickly with corpses, its sickly glare revealing also a mighty gaping rent in the ground, from which smoke still issued, looking as if Nature had herself prepared a Stygian grave for the dishonoured dead.

Seeing that all fear of another attack was over for the present, the little party thankfully regained the shelter of the rock, in order to discuss at their leisure the probable result of the latest Mormon disaster; and in a very short time the tired and hungry quintette of miners were enjoying a hearty breakfast, if a meal served at about three in the morning merits such a denomination.

The men were all so utterly worn out that the girls, upon their own earnest entreaty, were for once allowed to keep guard whilst the fighting brigade took their much-needed repose. Grenville felt that the watch was a mere matter of form, and so the result proved, for it was ten in the morning before he was awakened by the soft hand of Rose, who came with the astounding news that a Mormon had appeared on the edge of the forest belt, where he now stood waving a white flag, and signifying his desire to communicate with the besieged.

In a moment all had shaken off their sleep, and every man was standing at his loophole rifle in hand, the two girls being also directed to project the muzzles of two guns through the loops, whilst Grenville, from outside, guarded the opening to the rock.

Picking up his rifle, Grenville passed through the aperture, and waved his white handkerchief to the messenger as a sign to him to advance. This he did with a cautious mien, stopping altogether, however, when he had got half-way to the rock, and beckoning our friend to come and meet him. Seeing that the man was quite out of range of the rifles of his comrades, who were, no doubt, outlying in the bush, Grenville thought the proposal not unreasonable, and first, in a low voice, cautioning his little garrison to keep a watchful eye on the clearing in their rear, he strode boldly forward until he found himself within a few paces of the Mormon chief, for such he unmistakably was. A handsome man with an evil-looking face, and restless eyes, which seemed to avoid your own by instinct. A fine powerful fellow too, not much under six feet, and armed with a sword, a musket, and a brace of pistols.

The pair looked at each other for a few seconds, and then the Mormon reached out his hand with an affable smile, but Grenville contemptuously rejected his offered courtesy, saying coolly—

"No offence, my friend, but it will be time enough to indulge in handshaking when we understand each other better."

Fire flashed from the Mormon's eyes at this affront, for such he evidently considered it; he, however, suppressed all outward exhibition of feeling, and replied in English, as pure as Grenville's own—

"You are right, sir! Now to business. I believe I am addressing the leader of your party, which is composed of brave men, and has given us a great deal of trouble."

"You may consider me the head of my party," replied Grenville.

"Well, sir, I am here by command of the Holy Three, and now propose, before matters go beyond the possibility of arrangement, that we should become allies. If you and your friends will take the oaths of our fraternity, you shall receive high personal rank in the nation, and yourself and friends will be liberally endowed with wives, with lands and cattle; Winfield the Englishman, and also the black man Amaxosa, must die by our laws, which they have transgressed; the Rose of Sharon becomes my property as Commander of the Forces, and the Lily of the Valley will fall to the lot of the Holy Three. All these munificent offers must be accepted before sundown, or—his voice growing hard and stern as it had hitherto been winning and courteous—Englishman you die, you all die like dogs, without the hope of help or mercy. I am but the mouthpiece of the Holy Three; they have spoken, and they will not repent."

For fully half a minute Grenville looked the Mormon in the face, and gave no answer; he could not trust himself to speak.

Then in tones of thunder he uttered the one word. "Go!"

"And my answer?" snarled the Mormon.

"Tell your wretched Trinity that what Richard Grenville gets, he keeps with a strong hand, and that the English rifles which have already decimated the cowardly Mormon nation, will very shortly sweep the Holy Three themselves from the face of the earth. Go! I have spoken."

The Mormon's face worked convulsively, and his hand made a movement towards the pistols in his belt, but at that instant he happened to glance towards the rock, and saw the fervid sun glinting on the browned barrels of three rifles, whose muzzles were pointed directly at him, and shaking his fist at Grenville he retreated, hissing out, "Englishman, we shall meet again—beware!"

To which Grenville answered coolly, "The sooner the better, my friend; and when we do, look out for yourself—that's all I have to say." He then coolly retook his way to the rock, which he reached just as the Mormon regained the forest.

To the male portion of his friends Grenville gave the purport of the Mormon message, together with his answer, Leigh swearing by all that was holy that he would never quit the country until the insult from the Mormon Trinity to Miss Winfield was wiped out in rivers of blood.

Winfield ruminated upon the message for some time, then turning to Grenville, he said, "Look here, my boy, just let me advise you, in Yankee parlance, to keep your eyes skinned. That fellow who spoke to you just now—Radford Custance by name—is one of the hottest-tempered men I have ever met with in the course of my whole life; he twice kept his temper with you to-day under intense provocation, and let me tell you that that's record for him, and I infer from it that the scoundrels have got a trump card to play; what it can be, Heaven alone knows."

"Look here, Dick," said Leigh, "things have got to such a pass that I for one should like to see the English flag over us—can't we manufacture one?" At first the idea seemed rather foolish, but after consideration, Grenville could not but feel that his cousin was right, and with the help of the ladies, who produced all sorts of curious and unexpected odds and ends, as well as needles and thread, and assisted by the loan of several handkerchiefs, a rude Saint George's ensign was contrived, and soon floated on the summit of the rock, over the heads of the little party, who saluted its appearance with three hearty cheers, and a volley from their rifles, Grenville, as they did so, taking possession of the country in the Queen's name, with a laughing apology to the Rose of Sharon. This act was answered almost instantly by a salvo from the enemy, and a flag was hoisted on the very top of a huge tree, some six hundred yards away. This ensign was a curious production—a dead black ground, ornamented with three horrible-looking eyes, and having also a motto sewn upon it in white letters, which proved to be their usual legend about the eyes of their unsleeping Trinity. Taking a careful sight, Leigh sent a shell-bullet from his Winchester clean through the flag, in which it tore a hole about a foot long, entirely destroying the effect of the basilisk-looking eyes. Upon this, the symbol was at once run down, and did not again make its appearance.

Chapter Ten.

"All Hope Abandon, Ye Who Enter Here."

Throughout that day perfect quiet prevailed, but Grenville, uneasy, he knew not why, and unable to get Winfield's warning out of his mind, took his sleep early in the evening, and determined himself to keep watch until dawn.

For hours he strained every faculty, but could neither see nor hear anything to cause him anxiety, and when the moon rose he felt much relieved, but after patrolling carefully round the rock he at length heard a curious sound he could not account for, so mounted up to the top, from whence he could see far and wide under the bright moonlight. The rock, as already said, was situated in a hollow, with belts of trees on almost every hand, one exception being on the side furthest from the veldt, consequently nearest to the Western range, and from this quarter a wide channel of rocks seemed to run for miles in the direction of the mountains. To Grenville it had the appearance of a roadway upon which giants had, here and there, flung heaps of stones and enormous masses of rock in the wildest confusion. Winfield, however, had pronounced it to be a quartz river, pregnant with gold beyond the dreams of avarice. Machinery would, however, he had said, be required to work the ore profitably, so that it was extremely improbable the locality would ever be disturbed. Grenville had more than once, in the last few minutes, been rendered uneasy by a distant sighing, souging noise, such as is caused by wind among fir-trees, and as there was not a breath of air stirring, it was partly the anxious feeling generated by this unknown and uncanny sound which had caused him to ascend the rock.

Even from this coign of vantage he could see nothing alarming; all around and beneath him, bush and veldt and forest, lay sleeping peacefully under the lovely radiance of the African moon.

Still unable to conquer, yet secretly despising, the presentiments which oppressed him, Grenville raised a small silver whistle to his lips and blew a low call upon it, and in a few moments later was joined by Amaxosa, who stalked forth from his lair at the first sound made by his chief indicative of a wish to see him.

Grenville directed his attention to the curious sound, and for some little time the Zulu strained both sight and hearing, but could offer no suggestion as to the cause of the unusual noise. Our hero then sent him to fetch Winfield, who, when he came, listened intently for one brief instant and then wrung his hands in despair.

"My God!" he cried, "those hellish scoundrels have burst the rocky side of the great mountain lake and let loose thousands of tons of water, and in an hour's time, or less, we shall be drowned out like rats! Whatever shall we do?"

"Go quickly," said Grenville: "awake everyone pack the quagga with the gold and all the food we can carry. We must be gone in ten minutes. We are down in a hole here, and this place will be a lake in less than no time if you are correct as to the volume of water up yonder."

"There can, I regret to say, be no doubt about it," replied Winfield. "I have seen the place myself, and I feel certain that they have done as I say."

"You are quite right," rejoined Grenville. "I heard distant explosions once or twice this evening, but thought nothing of them, only congratulating myself, like a fool, at the waste of gunpowder which was going on." Then, turning to Amaxosa, "Now, what does my brother, the Chief of the Sons of Undi, advise?"

The Zulu thought for a few moments, and then made answer. "Let my father with all the party make a big push for the great stairway; there will be but few guards there, and we will slay them and escape from this fearful country by the dark rood through the mountains; and if the evil ones be too many for my father's sons, we can but take to the hills beyond the stairway until the water be gone, for it will surely pour itself into the River of Death until there be none remaining, and go far away to the great salt sea from which my father came."

"Thou art a shrewd man as well as a brave one," said Grenville, shaking the gratified Zulu by the hand; and instantly descending the rock, they rejoined the others, who were now quite ready, and telling all to follow him and look out sharply for the enemy, our hero, to the surprise of all, led off at a quick pace in the direction of the very danger they sought to escape.

Grenville, however, showed his wisdom by this action, for he thus kept the rock between his party and any prying eyes, and he well knew that large bodies of the foe would be posted on or near the veldt adjacent to the rock, expecting the party—if they were fortunate enough to detect the approach of the water before it overwhelmed them—to make a desperate effort to cut their way through to the stairway. This knowledge had decided Grenville to make a *détour*, which he successfully did, and the party gained the open veldt some miles further on, without their escape from the rock having been observed by the enemy, and were soon pushing across this rolling prairie, with the terrific sound of the advancing water in their ears, and hoping to gain the stairway without having been perceived.

Vain hope!—when, after some hours of unmolested and ceaseless travel, the little band arrived within earshot of the stairway, a blazing thread of light shot upwards to the sky, and the hissing of a second rocket was heard preparing to take its aerial flight. The Mormon in charge of this incautiously showed himself for one second, and promptly received Leigh's bullet through his brain; and then, without waiting for orders, the active Zulus rushed up the steps and broke into the cavern, uttering their fearful war-cries, and a moment later were joined by Grenville and Leigh, and an awful battle took place between these four and seven heavily-armed Mormons. Fortunately a torch was burning, and, equally happily, the Zulus had taken the men by surprise and given them no time to prime the pans of their rifles; but even as the cousins entered the cave two men were diligently performing this interesting occupation, and instantly went down with revolver bullets through them. In a couple of minutes the Mormons were all disposed of, the only casualties being a pistol bullet through Myzukulwa's shoulder, which had fortunately not injured the bone, and a nasty slash from a cutlass which Leigh had received on his left arm. Quickly the whole party passed up the cavernous road, again taking the precaution to carry away all the torches, and congratulating themselves upon the complete and unexpected success of their plan; for Winfield, with the help of Rose—to whom the beast was sincerely attached—had actually got the quagga up the staircase, when suddenly Grenville called a halt, listened carefully, and then turned to the others with the horror of a living death imprinted upon every line of his face.

"Back!" he said, and his voice sounded but a hoarse, dreadful whisper; "back, all of you, quick; *the lake has broken out on both sides of the mountain, and the water is racing down, our road, and will be here directly!*" With a cry of agony, Winfield seized his daughter by one hand, Leigh grasped the other, and all ran for the stairway, which fortunately was not far off; and having once seen the women safely down, and directed them to hurry on towards the Eastern Mountains with Leigh and Winfield, Grenville and the Zulus, after infinite trouble, succeeded in pushing and pulling master quagga on to *terra firma* once more, and they then put their best foot foremost, and rejoined their companions.

Soon gaining the shelter of the forest and the rising land, they watched carefully, and could see across the veldt a Mormon host speeding forward to the stairway, in answer to the rocket's message, and not far behind them was a dull, angry line, which Winfield pronounced to be the advancing water. The band, which numbered some twenty men, was evidently uneasy at its near approach, and anxious to gain the stairway, and now, even as they reached their desired haven, an awful thing happened, and the wicked certainly did fall hopelessly into his own net for once—there was a rushing, roaring sound, and then, with a thundering boom, the torrent came sweeping through the mouth of the cavern in hundreds of tons of water at one awful burst, hung for a short second, as it seemed, in mid air, and then plunged down in one mighty, irresistible volume right upon the luckless Mormons, who were instantly lost to human ken, and in less time than it takes to tell, the two forces of water had combined, and the veldt far and near was blotted out in one vast rolling, tumbling sea of agitated foam, upon which nothing could be seen save here and there a corpse bobbing up and down as it took its gradual and apparently unwilling course towards the River of Death.

After searching for some little time our friends discovered a cave about a mile from the great stairway, into which they thankfully entered; and after setting a watch, though the precaution seemed a useless one, lay down to sleep. The rest of the night passed uneventfully; and when the sun again shone out, the eye rested only upon what was seemingly a vast and wandering waste of waters, for a thick steaming mist, which was already rising from the surface of this suddenly-created inland sea, caused one's range of vision to be limited to a few miles.

One thing, however, our friends did notice, which filled them with dismay. Grenville had calculated that as soon as the volume of water was quite exhausted in the natural reservoir on the mountains, their way through the subterranean road would be clear, and they would have a long start and be able to get clean through the River Pass before ever their enemies had a chance of moving from their own side of the chasm. Now all hope of escape seemed to be cut off, for the mighty rush of water falling from the subterranean road had entirely demolished the great stairway, not a single step of which they could now see, and it was obviously impossible for them to ascend several hundred feet of a precipitous wall of solid rock, which was what they would now have to do in order to regain the rood.

After two days had been spent hopelessly and aimlessly in the cavern, the water was observed to abate as fast as it had risen, and on the third day the veldt could again be seen in every direction, steaming in a most unpleasant manner under the rays of a vertical sun. Our friends were, however, well situated at some height above the plain, and Amaxosa spent that day in prospecting for a safer hiding-place, which he found about three miles off, along the mountain-side, and

which consisted of a three-roomed cave, quite two hundred feet above the veldt, in a commanding position, approached only by narrow paths, a wall of solid rock behind, and blessed with an ample supply of water. Grenville unhesitatingly approved of the place as a temporary residence, and thither the party removed at nightfall.

The following morning smiled down upon East Utah in all its revived loveliness—the veldt looked greener and fresher for its wholesale bath, and a newcomer would certainly have had no idea of the awful tragedies which had recently been enacted in this country, where all looked so quiet and peaceful.

On this morning a band of Mormons, some fifty in number, arrived at the great stairway, and appeared struck dumb by its destruction, for they ran about gesticulating madly, and wringing their hands over the great blocks of stone cast hither and thither about the adjacent veldt. It was, however, evident, as Grenville had foreseen, that they did not believe the enemy had left the country by the roadway. The river had broken through too soon after the rockets had been fired to admit of any possibility of their escape in that direction. The only doubt they entertained was if the invaders had really been drowned and their bodies, together with those of their own ill-fated comrades, carried away by the River of Death.

The Mormons now examined the neighbourhood, with a keen scrutiny which let nothing escape unquestioned; but, having foreseen this search, Grenville had acted with the utmost caution, and no trace of their movements had been left behind, so that he was not in the least surprised when the Mormons—who were, he observed, led by Radford Custance—turned their backs on the stairway early in the afternoon, and set off across the veldt in the direction of their town.

On the day following, our friends went into council. Their position was fast becoming a dangerous one; food was running out and none coming in, and it was evident that unless steps were taken to replenish their larder at an early date, starvation must overtake them in the very midst of plenty, for on the eastern side of the mountains the streams were small, and so far had not even produced fish, which would have helped to eke out their stores.

After a long and earnest consultation it was decided to beard the lion in his den—in other words, Grenville and Amaxosa were detailed to cross the river, penetrate into the enemy's country, and there endeavour to find in the rear of East Utah a strong position, which they, surrounded by plenty, could defend until they fairly wore the Mormons out and compelled them to make peace and let the party go.

It was a desperate venture; and when our heroes set out at nightfall the Rose of Sharon wept piteously, saying she never expected to see poor Dick again; and Leigh and Winfield, who were left in charge along with Myzukulwa, wrung Grenville's hand in silence, and also felt the tears starting to their eyes.

The parting between the Zulus was a characteristic one.

"Let my brother," said Amaxosa, "remember that the great chief our father will look to the sons of Undi for the safety of the gentle Rose of Sharon and the lovely Lily of the Valley. Amaxosa will bring back his father, or will die with him."

And so the pair set out, instructing those they left behind, to have no uneasiness about them, as it was likely they would be gone at least ten days.

Pushing steadily on all night and lying hidden all day, Grenville and Amaxosa reached the neighbourhood of the eastern bridge just after dawn on the second morning, and crept up as close as they dared under cover of the heavy fog, which hung like a curtain upon the veldt. When the sun's welcome rays had cleared away the mists, the pair saw, to their surprise, that the eastern bridge was still open, and lying flush with their own side of the chasm, just as the Zulus had left it weeks ago. The Mormons had evidently been too busy to pay any attention to that part of their country, and had considered care in that direction unnecessary whilst they knew the foe to be fifty miles away upon the western mountains.

This was in some degree unsatisfactory; for if our friends turned the bridge and crossed, as they were obliged to do, and the locality was visited by the Mormons in the interim, they would of course realise immediately that the obnoxious little band was still at large, and had, moreover, had the audacity to cross the river. This was an awkward position; yet there appeared to be nothing else for it, and Grenville lay down to sleep at four in the afternoon, determined, at all hazards, to proceed that night. On being awakened at dusk, however, Amaxosa had good news for him. About an hour ago, he said, several of the "witch-finders" had arrived by the outside of the veldt, and, turning on the bridge, had crossed over, laughing and talking. They were apparently in splendid spirits, and, having left two men to guard the bridge, had pressed on at a good speed in the direction of East Utah.

This simplified matters a little, and our friends were arranging in what manner they should rush the guards, so as to avoid the possibility of their getting at the rocket apparatus, when the quick-eared Zulu announced the approach of another party by the eastern veldt. The moon was now rising, and the pair ought to be gone before the advent of the new arrivals; but the guards, having also heard the approach of their comrades, were on the alert, and the only thing to do was to lie quiet and watch their opportunity.

Chapter Eleven.

The Death-Shot.

Gradually the band approached, and at last joined forces with the guards, and, to Grenville's horror, he now saw that the whole of his own party were prisoners, with their hands bound behind them; and by the clear moonlight he could see that his cousin's head was bandaged, whilst Winfield's arm was in a sling. A second look, and he noticed that one person was missing, and that was Myzukulwa. Grenville could have sworn he had seen the Zulu an instant before, and glancing at his companion, he heard his low expressive "Ow!" and in another moment Myzukulwa presented himself before them with his hands tied. He was promptly cut loose and armed with a spear and one of Grenville's revolvers; but at that moment his escape was discovered, and a tremendous commotion took place, Radford Custance commanding the guards to open the bridge again, so that the fugitive could not cross. He then walked up to the helpless Leigh, pointed that worthy's own rifle at his head, and threatened to blow his brains out unless he told where the Zulu had gone. Leigh briefly replied that he neither knew nor cared, upon which the other brutally struck him in the face with his fist. It was the cowardly bully's last act Grenville's rifle leaped to his shoulder, a stream of fire divided the bushes, and the Mormon leader staggered back with the life-blood spirting from a ragged hole in his breast.

Then ensued a scene of horror and carnage. The Zulus uttered their terrible war-cry, and dashed into the fight,

followed by Grenville, after he had first picked off five more of the enemy. Amaxosa had quickly freed Leigh, and put his revolver into his hands; and in less time than it takes to tell, Winfield was at liberty and hurrying the girls into the bushes, whilst the others were fighting desperately.

Here Grenville's old coolness stood him in good stead. He never gave a single Mormon the chance to prime the pan of his musket; and having emptied his own rifle, he flung it down, and betook himself to Leigh's weapon. It was the old story—the cowardly Mormons, finding themselves reduced to six, became demoralised, lost their heads, broke, and fled; but the Winchester effectually put a stop to that game, and in less than ten minutes from the commencement of the fight, the re-united friends were in undisputed possession of the ground.

A hasty explanation ensued, from which it appeared that the Mormons had stolen upon their position in the grey dawn, while Winfield was on guard. The poor fellow fairly broke down when Grenville questioned him sharply, and said they seemed to have sprung from the earth, and that he never heard them till they actually had their hands on him. He attempted to make a defence, and in the scuffle was shot through the wrist, whilst Leigh was knocked senseless with the butt of a rifle, and Myzukulwa overpowered by a dozen men, two of whom, however, he killed with his war-club. The Mormons had kept up a forced march through the heat of the day, and the two girls were more dead than alive. Grenville, therefore, turned on the bridge again and got all across, telling the Zulus to bring along such arms as they could find, as well as the case of rockets from the bridge, as he foresaw that when the runners who had gone on ahead found that the main body did not appear in due time, they would return to see what had happened.

Three miles from the bridge a strong position was selected upon the hill-side, and hardly had the party settled down than Amaxosa, who had left them at the bridge, rejoined them with some choice cuts from a fine young deer which he had killed; and getting well amongst the rocks, a fire was lighted, and all thoroughly enjoyed the first meal of fresh meat which had passed their lips for at least a month.

And now, having refreshed the inner man, the girls went off to sleep in a little cave close by, whilst Leigh and Winfield, who were both wounded, kept watch, and Grenville and the two Zulus made their way back to the bridge. Here Grenville coolly took up his post as if he were the guard, ordering the Zulus to lie down behind the timbers.

His calculations had been nicely made, for in less than a quarter of an hour four Mormons came up at a run, and walked blindly into the trap, and, without a shot being fired, were all disposed of—two falling into the chasm and the two others being accounted for by the Zulus. Rapidly rejoining his party, Grenville awakened the women and insisted upon their proceeding, which they did cautiously and with weary feet all night long. Just before the dawn our friends reached a position of which Amaxosa had told Grenville, and which the latter saw with delight was simply impregnable, and was, according to the Zulu, in the heart of the very best centre of the game resorts of East Utah.

To reach this desired spot the party had to ascend a steep narrow path for upwards of a hundred feet, and this brought them on to a grassy plateau some fifty yards square, the back of it being formed by the rocks, which towered away thousands of feet above their heads, and seemed to soar into the very heavens. The base, however, was pierced with several caves, in one of which was a tiny spring of water. The place was in fact like the huge grass-laid initial step of some giant stairway leading up the precipitous face of the mountain.

Amaxosa led away the quagga and hid it in a safe locality, where he thought it improbable the beast would be found, where it had food and water, and was walled in with a zareba of thorn-bushes—anyway, it must take its chance with the rest of them.

When the Zulu reappeared he brought a small deer on his shoulders, and indifferent now whether they were seen or not, the party cooked an excellent breakfast, which was duly appreciated, and then all, with the exception of Grenville, lay down to sleep. Upon his iron constitution the effect of the night's work was simply nil, and as he had slept the previous afternoon he was fortunately still comparatively fresh.

Grenville now examined the new position of his party with increased care, and found that he could wholly approve of it. The place was admirably adapted for a sustained defence, so long as they had food; and as the game runs were, according to Amaxosa, less than three hundred yards away direct to a small stream, and as there was no scrub that would afford the enemy any cover against their rifles operating from such a height, he could only repeat to himself that the plateau was impregnable. Here neither fire, water, nor gunpowder could touch them, and the Mormon Three would have to devise some further hellish and wonderful scheme before they got the little band into their power again.

On inquiry it had turned out that someone at the cave near the stairway had incautiously knocked the tobacco ash out of his pipe into the little stream, and that the fragrant weed, absolutely still smoking, had been carried down the hill-side out on to the veldt, under the very noses of the astonished Mormon band, who, unknown to Leigh and his party, were camping out below to watch the neighbourhood. The rest, of course, had been a mere matter of careful advance and complete surprise.

In this quiet spot the party remained unmolested and apparently undiscovered for a full week, in which they not only recruited their health, but amply replenished their store of meat. On the eighth day, however, a change took place, for a small band of Mormons, evidently on a hunting expedition, espied our friends, gazed wildly at them for some little time, and then took to their heels in the direction of East Utah, whilst the party on the plateau prepared their arms.

In about three hours' time the Mormon host appeared, sure enough, and drew a semicircle round the position, keeping about six hundred yards off; then coolly set to to pitch a large tent, upon which their standard was erected, and instantly replied to by the Saint George's ensign of the beleaguered party.

Leigh was anxious to try his hand at the Mormon flag again, but Grenville would not permit it. "No, Alf," he said; "I've an idea that that tent is meant for the infernal Mormon Trinity; and if it is, we'll make them wish they'd planted it elsewhere; the impudent beggars evidently fancy they are clean out of range."

Soon, however, a little diversion occurred; there happened to be only one spring available in this neighbourhood, and towards this water, which lay a shade over three hundred yards from the plateau, a Mormon now took his way, carrying a large water-ewer. When he neared the spring Grenville fired a couple of shots across him and shouted to him to keep away; the man, however, was obstinate, and this resulted in his getting himself shot. Then another pluckily tried the game, running as fast as he could, but was also knocked over. Lastly, the cowardly Mormons, relying on the gallantry of their foes, chased a wretched woman out to obtain the precious fluid. She filled the vessel, then, looking at the rock and seeing Grenville's rifle raised, set down the water and fell on her knees, lifting her hands to the plateau in an agony of entreaty. This was just what Grenville wanted, and the next instant his bullet struck the water-vessel, which it shattered

into fragments, and the woman hastily rushed back to her people, who vented their anger in shouts, curses, and gesticulations.

"They'll get water at night," said Leigh; "is it worth wasting powder on them, Dick?"

"I think so, Alf; for if we can only anger them into making an attack and coming into easy range, we'll treat them to another dose such as we gave them at the Table Rock."

The Mormons, however, were not to be drawn, and when darkness came down, they had made no further hostile movement. The Zulus now begged leave to slip down to the spring with their spears, and before they had been gone many minutes a fearful shriek was heard, announcing the death of another Mormon. A discharge of fire-arms followed, and by the flashes of the guns those on the plateau could see that a number of Mormons were quickly falling back to their own encampment, and upon these Grenville and Leigh opened fire with their Winchesters, doing considerable execution.

The Zulus were soon back again, bringing three more rifles and ammunition, of which they had forcibly despoiled the late owners.

Soon after this the moon rose, and the little party on the plateau found that the war was only about to begin according to the Mormon calculations.

The great tent was fully lighted up, and near to it the defenders of the rock could see what looked like a stand of arms. On this head they were quickly undeceived, for all at once a rocket rose from its rest and came directly at their position, striking the wall above their heads and falling upon the plateau, where it hissed about quite harmlessly, but alarmed the girls very much indeed.

Grenville ordered them into the cave, and had all the ammunition carefully stored away, and before half-a-dozen of these fiery messengers had reached them, sent two or three of the Mormons' own bridge signal rockets into the very midst of the mob, the last one setting fire to the tent and causing several people—presumably the wondrous Holy Three and their iniquitous satellites—to scuttle about in a most undignified fashion.

The little band then sent a few shell-bullets into the enemy's camp, where it was evident they caused fearful damage and confusion, the whole crowd promptly rushing off until they were nearly a mile distant from the Rock.

Our friends now lay down to rest again, as if nothing had happened, Grenville still keeping guard. The night passed away, however, without further disturbance, and when morning came, there was not a single enemy in sight.

After breakfast Winfield elected to go hunting with Amaxosa; his wrist was now practically well, he said, and he felt as if a little exercise would do him good. Grenville, whilst lazily smoking his pipe, was watching the motions of the pair, who were endeavouring, a quarter of a mile away, to stalk several head of game, when he sprang to his feet with a hurried exclamation of fear, and seizing his rifle, pitched it forward, and apparently taking aim at Winfield, fired quickly. Even as he did so a puff of white smoke shot up, apparently from the ground, within forty yards of Winfield's position, and throwing up his hands he fell prone upon his face. The Zulu promptly sprang forward, and lifting the body in his arms commenced to carry it away, whilst two more shots spirted out from the ground, both fortunately being wide of the mark.

In another instant Leigh was down the rugged path and helping Amaxosa to carry Winfield up to the plateau. Grenville anxiously came forward as they reached their destination and laid down their ghastly burden. "Is he dead?" he asked in broken tones.

"Not quite, my father," replied the Zulu, "but he cannot live, the evil men have shot him through the chest." Winfield, as Amaxosa said this, opened his eyes, coughed up some blood, then faintly asked for water; and after receiving this, spoke very feebly to Grenville.

"Thank you for trying to save me, but you were a second too late this time—you have saved my life so often, and I hoped to live to save yours; and now let me say good-bye to Dora, for I am going, going fast;" and again he coughed up great streams of blood.

Leigh broke the awful calamity as gently as possible to the poor girl, and a moment later she sat with her father's head upon her knee, with the scalding tears running pitifully down her cheeks, and in her heart the awful knowledge that in a few short minutes she would lose the only parent she had, and who was dear to her beyond anything else upon earth.

The end was coming fast; poor Winfield could only whisper, "If you ever get away from here, go home to England, my darling. Oh! how shall I leave you in the hands of strangers. Gentlemen, God be with you as you are kind to my friendless little girl."

"Not friendless, old fellow," said Leigh, kneeling beside him. "Winfield, will you give Dora to me? I love her very dearly."

The poor fellow gazed fixedly at Leigh, then at his daughter, who smiled through her tears at him who had so boldly claimed her without even having asked her consent to the bargain. Leigh held out his hand.

"Won't you say yes, darling?"

"Oh! yes, yes," she sobbed, taking his hand for one brief instant.

Winfield smiled feebly.

"God bless you both, my children;" then with a wild choking cry, "Dora, my child, where are you? All grows dark with me, and I go—I go to her I love. Yes, my own sweet wife, I come—at last;" and choked by another awful rush of blood, poor Jack Winfield fell dead.

Who can describe the anguish of the poor orphan girl? Her father had for years been all in all to her, and the love

which had lately sprung up in her heart towards Alf Leigh was still too young to act as a consolation to her; in this dread moment she felt as if the world for her was at an end.

Gently and tenderly her lover led her away, whispering words of comfort, and handed her over to Rose, who was weeping mournfully in concert; then leaving the girls sobbing in each other's arms, he returned to the others, to find the body covered with the British ensign, and Grenville sternly examining the locality from which the death-shot had been fired.

"Alf," he said, "they have burrowed a hole in the ground, put up an earthwork overhead, and thrown three rifles into it. One is dead, and now you shall see Jack Winfield avenged." As he spoke a rocket directed by Amaxosa was fired straight into the cover chosen by the enemy, which in one second more was enveloped in a sheet of flame, the foolish Mormons having built it amongst the dried grass. Unable to stand the heat and smoke, both marksmen made a dash for life, but were tumbled over by the cousins before they had run a dozen yards.

Chapter Twelve.

Stormed at with Shot and Shell.

The next few days passed slowly and sadly on the plateau. Winfield was quietly buried close by, his grave being concealed from view, as it was most desirable that the Mormons should be kept in ignorance of the fact that the little band had lost a man.

The gloom of Winfield's untimely death hung over all, and it was all Leigh could do to keep poor Dora from breaking down entirely; and when the Mormons, a week later, made a desperate attack on the plateau, it was a relief to the party to feel that the call for prompt and unanimous action had taken them out of their thoughts, and brought them back to their old ways of living and working.

The attempt of the Mormons proved utterly futile, as the main body never even succeeded in getting within shooting distance of Grenville's party; and after some twenty of their bravest men had been sent to the shades to swell their already awful list of casualties they sullenly drew off and troubled our friends no more for a considerable period.

On the occasion of this attack Dora Winfield developed unexpected qualities. She calmly came forward, insisted on having Leigh's rifle, and used it with a coolness and precision that astonished no one more than the Zulu Amaxosa. "Ow," he said, "the lovely Lily of the Valley has slain two of the witch-finders. See! my brother, there they lie kicking like wounded oxen—ow! my sister, it is good." Her face was set like a flint; and when the Mormons fell back, she returned the weapon to Leigh, expressing the hope that she might yet have a chance of avenging her father's death by shooting at least one of the Holy Three.

All this time the Rose of Sharon was comporting herself very quietly, and though he knew it not, a passionate love was growing up in her heart towards Grenville. To Dora only was this revealed. "I would die for a kind word from him," she said.

"Rose, you mustn't say that," remonstrated Miss Winfield; "poor Dick is very kind to everybody, but he has such a weight of responsibility on his shoulders you can't expect him to think of love-making; only let us get clear of this horrible country, and I'm sure he will soon see what a lovely little woman my dear sister Rose can be. I think, too, he has some great scheme on hand, for of late he has asked me very many questions I have been unable to answer with regard to the Mormon city; and it was only yesterday that I referred him to you, dear, for information; so I daresay he will soon want you for a private conference;" and Dora slyly pinched the cheek of the blushing girl.

It fell out exactly as Miss Winfield had said, for that very evening Grenville led Rose apart, and sitting down beside her, began to question her very closely with regard to the position, defences, public offices, and so forth, of East Utah—particularly asking in what portion of the city the Holy Three resided.

As Grenville catechised her he wondered at the eager comprehensive answers, and the blushing face of the young girl, particularly when he thanked her warmly for the information, and noted the tears which started to her eyes. Still, it never occurred to the stupid fellow that this lovely flower of the wilderness had lost her heart to him. Grenville was, as a matter of fact, one of those unimpressible men who rarely fall in love, unless moved by some mighty and overmastering passion. All his life he had made honour and fame his mistress. The path of glory looked none the less inviting to his intrepid soul, because he well knew that sooner or later it would, in all probability, lead to a premature and bloody grave. He was fond of saying that he knew no grander record in English history than that of the famous warrior of the Elizabethan period whose name he bore, and though he was unrelated to him he should consider it sacrilege to mar in any way a name which would be written in the annals of England in golden letters as long as the nation existed.

Miss Winfield, moreover, was right. Grenville had a deep-laid scheme which was just now hatching in his fertile brain, and what this superbly audacious project was, will presently appear. Do not, however, gentle reader, go away with the idea that Dick Grenville, for the sake of a little cheap glory, bought perhaps with his life-blood, was willing to sacrifice all his friends. Far from it; his scheme meant salvation to them, and to his Mormon foes destruction and death in their most awful forms.

Grenville's next move was to turn Amaxosa inside out by a simple method of cross-questioning, which was yet complete enough in its results to satisfy even an astute detective.

One of the points he was particularly anxious about was the presence of Game in this curious country. Grenville had now recognised almost every known species of deer, yet had seen no destructive beasts, such as lions; nor was there, Amaxosa assured him, a single one in the place, nor yet an elephant, though he had once trapped and killed a rhinoceros. Eager questions with regard to this latter animal resulted in the Zulu going off next day and returning late in the evening with the rhinoceros hide, which was the very thing Grenville wanted. Putting this up at twenty yards, he fired two or three of the Mormon muskets at it, the balls all failing to penetrate its horny thickness, and in a short time he had contrived a regular suit of clumsy armour out of the hide—armour which, he felt sure, would prove absolutely bullet-proof, unless hit in the seams where he had had to shave it to a mere skin in order to unite the edges with cord.

However, to return to the subject of the deer. Amaxosa declared that the animals were not in any way preserved. On the contrary, the Mormons killed them off freely; but he had always noticed that in the driest season the herds seemed to

increase; it was also at the latter end of the dry season he had settled the rhinoceros, and this season was now rapidly drawing to a close—in fact in six weeks, at the outside, the rains would begin.

Over this information Grenville puzzled his brains for days without coming to any satisfactory conclusion. His own opinion coincided with Amaxosa's, and from the vantage ground of the plateau he carefully watched the animals feeding, and on several days noted entirely new classes arriving. Did these beasts migrate from some other feeding-ground in East Utah, or had they some means of entrance into the country as yet unknown to man and undiscovered even by such keen instinct as that of the Zulu chief?

Amaxosa reiterated his assurance that he had searched every foot of the country for a way of escape, and had never found one. Still, remembering that the Zulu had never hit upon the subterranean roadway, Grenville thought it possible that some other exit might exist without him having any knowledge of it.

Putting aside this important subject for the nonce, however, our hero's mind reverted to his pet scheme, and to the best methods of carrying it out he now directed all his faculties.

Night after night, accompanied by Amaxosa, did Grenville creep up to the walls—ay, into the very streets of East Utah—until its ways and buildings were as familiar to him as were the streets of fashionable London. The Zulu accompanied his chief in utter wonder, but his splendid training withheld him from asking any explanation—indeed, if "his Father" had asked him to jump into the River of Death he would have complied without hesitation, such power can a brave and fearless leader wield over the heart of any true follower, be he white or black.

Dawn after dawn saw the pair cautiously retaking their devious way to the plateau, comforting the anxious watchers there, who heaved a sigh of relief on being assured of the safe return of the wanderers.

Devious their way certainly was, for the pair invariably went and came along the course of a river which they struck a few miles from the town, through which it ran and emptied itself into the River of Death. By means of this small stream they were able to pass the walls unseen and obtain access to the very heart of the city.

One morning, however, soon after Grenville had lain down to rest, being exhausted with the labours of the night, he was awakened by Leigh, with the news that the Mormons were again approaching in force; and on taking up his position on the plateau our hero found that the enemy had brought with them a new engine of warfare in the shape of an enormous catapult somewhat after the ancient Roman style, but worked with india-rubber springs, the country being of course alive with rubber-trees. The operators, moreover, were securely ensconced behind a sheet and roof of the same product, the thickness of which must have been immense, as the rifle-bullets of the little party had evidently not the remotest effect upon it. This curious-looking half-house on wheels was moved forward by its defenders to within fifty feet of the rock, and after some little time had elapsed the engine correctly pitched its first missile right upon the plateau, where, to the horror and consternation of our friends, it revealed itself fuming and hissing, in the shape of *an explosive shell*. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" still, the sight of that infernal bomb must have roused suspicions as to its capacity for evil in even the ignorant mind of Amaxosa, and he could read a confirmation of some unknown horror in the countenances of his friends. Coolly stepping forward, he took up the shell in his powerful hands, and with a mighty effort threw it, with the fuse still smoking, right on to the top of the covered catapult, where it spontaneously exploded with a fearful roar, tearing the entire engine to pieces and killing its miserable occupants. The Mormon band, watching at a distance to see their foes destroyed, at once made a stampede in the direction of the town, and disappeared from view.

On descending to the plain it was found that the catapult had been worked by five men, all of whom were fairly cut to pieces; and lying close by, Grenville discovered two more shells with fuses attached. These bombs were evidently home-made, being simply a lead casing filled with powder and ball, and ignited by a long fuse. They might, however, come in most useful in case of a concentrated Mormon attack upon the plateau; so these instruments of destruction were carefully stowed away in one of the smaller caves, and Grenville was again able to betake himself to his prematurely-disturbed slumbers.

The effect of this last attempt was, however, an added determination upon his part to read the whole Mormon community—and particularly, if it were possible, the Holy Three—such a salutary lesson as would forcibly and unpleasantly bring them to their senses, and teach them for the future to leave our friends severely alone, if it did not indeed deprive them of all power to render any future attack upon their position otherwise than sheer waste of human life without the very faintest hope of success.

As yet Grenville had not given anyone upon the plateau an inkling of the deadly project which his fertile brain had matured, and the putting into operation of which was only hastened by the latest ingenious and vindictive though futile effort of the enemy.

On that afternoon, being anxious to draw a small plan of the city for the purpose of defining his exact intentions to the party, Grenville applied to everyone for a scrap of paper on which to work his diagram. No one was, however, possessed of the desired commodity. All at once Leigh recollected that he had a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds in his purse, and this was forthwith produced, and was the outcome of a curious statement.

Taking the note with a laugh, Grenville laid it out upon a rock to remove the creases, and then proceeded to delineate with pencil upon its back his *modus operandi*.

Rose, however, suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! how did you get that?"

"Get what?" asked Leigh, mystified.

"That wonderful paper money which belongs to the Holy Three."

"Holy Three be hanged," replied Leigh. "I got it from my bankers, Rose."

The young girl was then questioned, and stated that amongst the treasures of the Community was a box which had formerly belonged to her father, and of which she had been deprived by the Holy Three; and this receptacle was, she averred, filled with this paper money, which her grandfather had, her father said, obtained in exchange for gold dust.

"Why then, Rose, you are an heiress," said Grenville, laughing, "and we must get you back your inheritance."

"I don't want it," said the impulsive girl; "I will give it to you if you can get it, Dick; but don't run any risks, I implore you."

Wondering inwardly where the old Mormon could have found the opportunity of converting his gold into English bank paper, Grenville resumed his operations, and for the instruction of Leigh drew on the back of the note a small plan of East Utah and its principal streets and offices, and then in an undertone said a few words to his cousin which made the other turn pale with fear and dread.

"The scheme is a grand one, Dick," he at length gasped out; "but even if it succeeds, I don't see how you personally can possibly make your escape from the town. Don't risk it, old man," he pleaded; "we can't afford to lose you. And if you got caught, what am I to do? I shall never be able to keep these scoundrels off, or get Dora and Rose out of the country with only the Zulus to help me."

"Now, Alf," replied Grenville, "you know I always make my mind up beforehand, so it's no use you arguing; besides, I really think I can escape from the place. Remember, the confusion created will amount to a positive wholesale panic, and a man less or more in the streets will never be noticed. Moreover, if the plan succeeds, it will mean at all events practical immunity from interference in the future, and will probably result in our finding an exit from the country. Of this I am determined—either I will find a way out or I will make one."

In vain Leigh urged his view of the question—our hero had indeed come to a determination, and met all opposition, remonstrance, and entreaty with the same inflexible resolve.

His cousin next pleaded to be permitted to share the danger, but neither would Grenville allow this.

"I will," he said, "risk no one's life or liberty except my own upon such a fearfully hazardous expedition. I intend that Amaxosa shall accompany me inside the walls, to carry my heavy armour; and when once I have reached my destination, he will return to you. And remember, Alf, that if I happen to be taken or killed before or, possibly indeed, after the execution of my project, the Mormons will at once deliver a tremendous attack upon your position. Keep them off as long as you can with the rifles—for I shall leave you mine, as also my revolvers—and then when they are massed together and absolutely climbing the rock, light those infernal machines of theirs and throw them into the crowd. Let the fuses burn at least thirty seconds before you throw them down, though; and I guess you won't have much more trouble with the Mormons. And if you, or I, or both fail, God help us, old man."

"You don't mean to tell me you are going unarmed amongst those devils, who are raging for your blood?" remonstrated Leigh.

"Not a bit of it," was the reply; "I'm going to take that heavy revolver of Myzukulwa's. If needful, it will come in handy as a club after it is emptied. Besides, my game this time is not fighting, but hiding and then running; and I am specially anxious that should I have the ill-luck to fall into their hands, they may not along with me obtain any of our own modern weapons of warfare. Had I not had the luck to drop Radford Custance before he had time to hand your Winchester over to the community, we should all have gone under a month ago. Let me tell you, these fellows are not bad shots—remember the man who nearly dropped us in the Pass; and above all, don't forget poor Winfield's end."

"I see, nothing can move you," groaned poor Leigh.

"No earthly consideration will induce me to forego the attempt, Alf," was the quick reply; "so help me, instead of seeking to divert me from the end I have in view; and above all do not mention my project to the girls. It will be time enough for them to hear it when the result is a matter of history."

Chapter Thirteen.

Guy Fawkes Redivivus.

All the following day Grenville rested and slept, and when the night closed in he saw with growing satisfaction that there was likely to be a heavy storm, and this in itself indicated the probable advent of the rainy season at no very distant date.

Not wishing to be delayed in any way, he set out early with Amaxosa, and by midnight, when the storm broke, had arrived within pistol-shot of the town.

By this time everywhere had grown dark as pitch, and looking up, Grenville saw that all the stars had disappeared, whilst at that very moment the surrounding landscape as well as the town stood revealed in a blinding glare of lightning, instantly succeeded by a terrific clap of thunder.

Quickly gaining the cover of the walls, Grenville hastily donned his protective armour, exchanged weapons with the Zulu, much to that worthy's astonishment, and then armed exactly as he had intended to be, and with a dozen spare cartridges in his pocket, commanded Amaxosa to return to the plateau as fast as he possibly could.

The indignation of the Zulu knew no bounds.

"Why," he said, "does my father distrust his faithful war-dog? Does he fear that when the time of danger comes his son will not be there? Has my father forgotten how the children of the Undi fought for him at the narrow crossing by the River of Death, has he forgotten the battle of the rock, the fight in the great black cavern, or the mighty struggle at the eastern bridge, where the red blood flowed in streams? Does he not remember how Amaxosa bore away the body of the Inkoos Winfield when he had fallen by the bullets of the witch-finders, or how, with his own hand and the box of lightning (Anglice bombshell), he slew five men and destroyed their moving castle? Why does the Inkoos, my father, doubt me? Amaxosa the son of Undi has but one heart, which beats true with the heart of his father; and the poor Zulu war-dog has but one body, but it would fain stand between the great white chief and the death he seeks to meet."

Grenville was sincerely moved by this impassioned burst of feeling, exhibited by a man usually so dignified and self-contained, and it took him quite ten minutes before he could convince the chief of the wisdom of his plan; but when he had at last succeeded, and somewhat pacified his friend by accepting the loan of his war-club, the Zulu raised himself to

his full height, and shaking his spear at the city, delivered himself thus:—

“Beware, witch-finders—beware, ye evil men! Touch but one hair upon the head of my father, the great white chief, beloved of his faithful children, and the sons of the Undi will rip open every fighting man in your accursed land.”

Then, grasping Grenville’s hand, he stalked moodily away, and the last our friend saw of him, by the help of a vivid flash of lightning, was as he slowly entered the cover half a mile off, walking in a heavy and dejected manner, with his head sunk upon his breast.

And now our hero proceeded to effect his entry into the city; for if the rain came on, as it usually does in these latitudes, in the form of a vast sheet of water, the little river might become too much swollen for him to obtain his usual safe and easy access.

Had he been able to count upon the night being as dark as it proved to be, and had the lightning not been so much in evidence, Grenville would gladly have taken the Zulu with him; but he well knew that were a white man might possibly pass undetected amongst a half-paralysed and wholly terror-stricken mob of his own colour, the black skin of his faithful friend would at once draw down upon him stern and unflinching punishment, or rather retribution.

The thunder now sounded like one uninterrupted roll of heavy artillery, and the utter blackness of the atmosphere was cut by the almost incessant flashes of lightning, which, to our hero’s discomfiture, kept the whole countryside in a constant and brilliant state of illumination.

Creeping carefully on, Grenville soon gained the welcome shadow of the houses, and at this moment the storm broke with added fury, the wind howling as if all the fiends of hell were let loose, and, sweeping along the earth, carried with it a perfect avalanche of stones, leaves, and branches. Blast followed blast, and crash succeeded crash, until, with a shock like an earthquake, two large buildings suddenly gave way and came to the ground like houses of cards, crushing their wretched inmates under their ruins, and drawing half of East Utah to the scene of the calamity.

Silently gliding away like the spirit of evil, Grenville at last approached the public offices of the town, which consisted of a large rough building pierced with one small door below, at the rear, and entered from the front by a handsome flight of steps through a portal of commanding appearance.

Towards the back door, however, Grenville directed his tortuous course, constantly hiding, yet cautiously and continuously approaching, until, hidden by a stone buttress, he stood within a dozen feet of the little door, and within half that distance of the guard pacing up and down before it with his musket on his shoulder, and from time to time casting uneasy glances at the sky. Waiting for the next flash, Grenville sprang upon the sentry and felled him like a log with a blow from Amaxosa’s war-club, and with a second blow from the same weapon burst open the door and dragged the man’s body inside.

The first drops of rain now began to fall, and in another moment the water was coming down in sheets, and Grenville knew that for some minutes at least, the absence of the sentry was likely to remain unperceived.

Striking a light, he found himself in a sort of low cellar, and seeing another door before him, he burst this in, and, to his complete satisfaction, found himself exactly where he had hoped to be, yet feared the possibility of penetrating. There before his eyes lay piled up barrel upon barrel of what—wine? No, gentle reader. Richard Grenville’s desperate scheme was now realised beyond his fondest hopes, and he stood *in the powder magazine* of East Utah.

Grenville lost no time, but knocking in the heads of a number of barrels with his club, he filled his hat with powder, and laid a thick train across the ground to the outer door; this operation, however, took some little time, for it had unfortunately to be performed entirely in the dark; and when our friend thought he had reached the door he was considerably taken aback to find he was pouring powder on the dead face of the hapless sentinel. Quietly striking a match, Grenville with the utmost caution inspected his work. He found the train perfect, and was about to leave the place, when a low horrified exclamation caused him to turn, and find himself confronted by several Mormons.

These men were not slow to see through his intentions, and with an awful yell rushed out of the place, and tried to close the door upon him. Grenville was, however, too quick for them, braining one man, who fell across the door and blocked it open.

The street beyond, he saw, was already alive with his foes, who were rushing away from him in every direction, and dashing outside he fired his revolver into the train and flew along the street towards the river. For one instant the success of the plot hung upon a thread, and that thread was the dead sentinel. His death in point of fact almost saved the Mormons from the fearful calamity which was now rushing madly upon them.

The miserable man’s blood had trickled along the floor and damped the powder, which fizzed and sputtered in the gory stream, and for one brief instant seemed to be extinguished; then a single spark caught the dry material beyond the tiny crimson rivulet, the serpentine flame spurted across the rooms in one lightning flash of fire, and in the next moment East Utah was shaken to its foundations by the explosion of fifty barrels of gunpowder, which rent the earth and seemed to dwarf into utter insignificance the thunder of the heavens, which still pealed and crashed overhead.

For the succeeding moments nothing could be heard but the crash of falling houses, accompanied rather than succeeded by the awful cry of “Fire! Fire!” And almost immediately the whole city, or rather what was left of it, could be plainly seen in the fearful conflagration which broke out.

Fortunate was it for the hapless Mormons that that night of terror was a night of storm, for had the tropic rain not stood their friend, every soul in the place would have been left houseless and homeless; as it was, however, the sheets of water which were teeming down, soon extinguished the fires on every side, and the city once more settled down into ominous and tangible darkness.

The author of all this ruin was meantime speeding in the direction of the river, but as he turned the last corner, only a hundred yards from the water, he ran right into a mob of Mormons, to whom a vivid flash of lightning revealed his hated and now well-known personality. With a hoarse cry like the angry roar of wild beasts they went at him, looking for an easy victory, but planting his back against the wall Grenville used his revolver freely, laughing in their faces as they discharged at him gun after gun at point-blank range without penetrating his singular armour. Then, taking advantage of the darkness which succeeded an unusually brilliant flash of lightning, he charged through them, killing two or three with his war-club, and then dived boldly into the stream, which was now boiling down its angry course towards the River of

Death. Thither Grenville dared not go; against the stream he found it impossible to swim; so, rather than be drowned like a dog, he sprang out of the water and again faced his enemies, determination in his countenance, strength and activity in every nerve of his body, but without a shadow of hope in his heart. Once more getting to the wall, Grenville fought desperately with his club, killing man after man, and then, when he felt himself getting weak, pitched his revolver into the river and again prepared for a final charge. At this moment, however, a cowardly Mormon who had gained an adjacent roof, dropped a great piece of rock full upon our hero's defenceless head, and he fell to the earth stunned and unconscious.

When Grenville regained his senses, he found himself pinioned hand and foot, and lying in a great hall, which was thickly packed with Mormons of both sexes.

Anxious to get an idea of his position he did not immediately open his eyes, but he was keenly watched, and detecting him in the act of trying to look through his half-open eyelids, Grenville's guards brutally jerked him on to his feet, one of them calling out, "The prisoner has come to, your Holiness." Pulling himself together, though feeling very weak, our friend saw he was gazing down upon a perfect sea of faces, and this multitude, as soon as he stood up, gave vent to one common roar of vengeance and execration.

Coolly turning his back upon them with a gesture of ineffable contempt, Grenville found himself face to face with the Mormon Trinity, and for a few moments the Holy Three gazed wonderingly upon this man who had penetrated their secret kingdom, worsted and defeated them at every turn, held them up to the ridicule of their own people, slaughtered at least one-fourth of the whole nation, and finally had, single-handed, almost entirely destroyed their town, and at one fell swoop wrested from their grasp the precious gunpowder which was to have sustained and defended them for many years to come.

On his part, Grenville was quietly saying to himself that these three men were very much what he had expected them to prove.

There was one venerable old man, with snowy white hair; his age must have been quite eighty years, and his countenance, though stern, had a certain appearance of benevolence upon it. The next man—his son beyond a doubt—was possessed of all his father's bad features without any of the good; taken all through, he had a cruel face and one which was, moreover, weak and vacillating, as well as sinister and sensual. The third member of this singular triumvirate was an enormous fellow, standing at least six feet three, and broad in proportion, a repulsive countenance, with villainy, murder, and rapine written upon every line of it—a man with the face of a satyr and the manners of a bear. Such was Ishmael Warden, the latter day Saint who clearly dominated the Mormon Trinity in East Utah.

For fully a minute Grenville waited the pleasure of his captors, and then the oldest member of the Trinity addressed him.

"What is your name, prisoner?" he asked.

"Richard Grenville, a subject of her Britannic Majesty," was the answer, given in clear and contemptuous tones.

"You are accused of the crime of wilful murder, and will be tried in three days. Guards, remove prisoner."

"And," bellowed the Satyr, "if he should escape, remember your life goes for his."

Grenville was then dragged away by his captors, who threw him into a damp underground cell, apparently cut out of the rock. Here, without food, water, or light, they left him, and, fastening the door upon him, placed an armed sentry outside.

As he was led away from the Common Hall, Grenville had noticed that the night had become clear and fine again, and through the grated door he could see the rays of silvery moonlight, and thought regretfully to himself that it was now shimmering down upon the plateau in all its radiant glory, and lighting up the anxious faces of the friends waiting for one who would return to them no more.

He thoroughly realised his awful position. The Mormon prophet's words meant that in three days' time Richard Grenville would be but dust and ashes, and that fearless and generous spirit of his would have returned to the God who gave it.

Even so, he had played for a desperate stake and won, but the victory was to be paid for with his life; a light price, it seemed to him, in return for the practical destruction of the Mormon town and the perfect future security of his own friends.

Grenville tried to engage the guard in conversation, but the surly brute began to whistle a tune instead of replying. Our hero then laid himself down on the rocky floor, and worn out with fatigue, and still weak from the effects of the blow he had received, slept soundly, until he was aroused by the entrance of the guard in the morning, with breakfast for him, which, it need hardly be said, was most acceptable.

The door was left open whilst Grenville ate, and the guard, who had been relieved by an officer, supported by two subordinates, seemed to be quite a different class of man from the surly warrior of the previous night. The new sentinel, in fact, commenced to chaff Grenville while he ate, saying that he was surprised that a man of his ability, who had killed so many people, should have allowed himself to be floored with a stone; but our friend laughingly responded that he never was remarkable for being thick-headed.

He then asked the officer when and how he was to depart this life.

"Oh!" said the other, "don't be in a hurry, we've hardly begun to like you yet."

And in this manner he fenced with all the questions put to him.

"And now," said the Mormon, when Grenville had finished eating, "I am commissioned to place these irons upon your hands and feet if you choose to be at liberty in the Square here; but you are to have the option of staying in this black hole of a prison if you prefer it."

Grenville gladly accepted the alternative of being fettered, thinking he might as well see as much of the sun as he could while he had the chance.

The day passed quietly enough; he was well fed and carefully guarded, but the men round him seemed decent people, and not at all of the bullying type.

Just about tea-time, as Grenville was sitting listlessly thinking, the dull boom of a distant explosion broke upon his ear. The guards stood still, gazed inquiringly at one another, and at that moment another smothered report followed.

Seeing Grenville smile, one of the men turned to him quickly, and asked him what the joke was.

"Why," replied he, "I was just wondering, when I heard the first explosion, how many of the men you sent against my friends this morning would come back alive; but when I heard the second one, I came to the satisfactory conclusion that not one of them would ever see East Utah again."

The guard looked angry for a moment, but then smiled and said, "You are a bold man; however, we shall see."

Soon after, Grenville was hurried away to his prison, and that night he heard wailing and lamentations in the city, and knew that he had guessed the truth, that another fearful calamity had befallen the Mormons, and that his friends at the plateau were now practically safe from further molestation.

Chapter Fourteen.

Dark Days.

Leaving poor Grenville in his dismal prison, we must now return for the time being to our friends at the plateau.

Despite the awful storm which followed Grenville's departure, Leigh and Myzukulwa kept diligent guard, for both were determined that they would never again be caught napping. One of Grenville's last instructions to Leigh had been to keep a double watch every night, and to at once get an enormous pile of thorn-bushes up to the plateau, "when," said he, "you can make a *chevaux de frise* at the top of the path, which will keep the whole Mormon nation fully employed whilst you shoot them."

In the very height of the storm the watchers, by a flash of lightning, saw a figure approaching their position, and Leigh at once challenged, but received no reply. The next flash, however, showed him that the nocturnal wanderer was Amaxosa. The chief stalked up the path, shook himself like a great dog, and then, without saying a single word, entered the cave, deposited Grenville's weapons on the floor, and lay down by the fire.

Now, however, this extraordinary and unexplained return penetrated the reserve of even the well-trained Myzukulwa, who, after waiting in a state of suppressed excitement for some moments to give his brother time to speak, at length burst out with a torrent of questions.

"Since when has a child of the Undi learned to desert his chief? Thou didst go out into the dark night but a few short hours ago with my father, the great and mighty warrior; where is my father now? Myzukulwa asks thee. Is he perchance dead? Then will I, Myzukulwa, the son of Isanusi, follow on after the spirit of my father, and cry, 'Behold, my father, thy faithful war-dog of the race of Undi. Turn thine eyes, my father, towards Zululand, and wait for thy son Myzukulwa, who follows after thee, and is thy man to the death, ay, and ever after.'"

And the splendid fellow sprang to his feet, took his spears in hand as if ready to set out, and fixed his eyes, glowing with inquiry and fierce determination, full upon his brother.

For a short space Amaxosa answered not, then his words came low and sadly:—

"The great white chief my father has chased away from his side his faithful dog, and the heart of Amaxosa is sad, my brother, and his breast heavy with fear that the evil men, the witch-finders, being so many, will overcome my father and prevail against him."

Then he broke out into a sort of funereal wail which made Leigh's blood run cold, it sounded so like ill-omened prophecy.

"Ow, my father, why hast thou left me? The stormy night is wet and cold, but the hand of death is colder—colder, and the mists of the grave are still more wet and deadly. Let my father call his sons to him, and they will follow along the dark and fearsome path that leads to the hereafter. Inkoos, the heart of Amaxosa is split in twain, and he fears the unknown evil which will befall the mighty chief he loves."

Leigh was about to answer the Zulu, when all of a sudden the heavens and earth seemed to meet in one vivid blinding sheet of flame, and as the astonished watchers held their breath, the very mountains were shaken to their pro-Adamite foundations, by the explosion of the magazines in East Utah.

For a moment the countenance of Amaxosa brightened, and turning to Myzukulwa, as the flames in the Mormon town shot up towards the sky, "See, my brother," he cried, "the great chief our father has destroyed the wicked witch-finders, and set fire to their kraals. Oh that we, his sons, might be at his side to slay the evil ones who yet are left alive! Great is the chief, our father; let us also die the deaths of mighty warriors, and let our last end be even as his."

The girls now rushed in, affrighted by the explosion, and asked if the thunder had torn the mountain in two.

Leigh briefly explained the position, when his betrothed, who saw his anxious face, looked very grave, and poor Rose burst into tears and threw herself into Dora's arms, crying, to Leigh's astonishment, "Oh! my darling, my darling, I have indeed lost you for ever!"

The grim Zulu Amaxosa turned to Leigh as Rose was led away by Dora, saying, "It is even so, Inkoos; the Flower of

East Utah is laid low, for she loved my father, even as his sons loved him, and my heart is very sad for her." And then changing his manner to the old warlike tones, "And now let the Inkoos, my master, say what he wishes the sons of Undi to do. The storm is breaking, and if perchance my father has escaped from the evil men he will be here by daybreak; but whether he be here or no, the remnant of yon witch-finders will attempt to take our kraal before the sun is again at rest. Let my master open his ears that he may hear my words. With these bushes we will build a wall of thorns, which no living man can force—it must be placed below the rock, not upon it—and it shall be that when the whole army of devils are gathered in one place to uproot the bushes, then will the Inkoos my master command the sons of Undi, who will cast upon these low people the lightning-boxes—surely they are bewitched—which will tear them in pieces, even as they would have destroyed ourselves when last they came; and if any shall yet be left alive after the lightning of the thunder, then the spears in the right hands of my master's servants shall slay them; so will the faithful sons of my father, the great and mighty lion-hearted chief, revenge his death and make smooth his path to the shades as he views the bleeding, senseless bodies of his evil-minded foes."

After some little discussion Leigh accepted this cunning scheme in its entirety, subject, of course, to the approval of his cousin should he return.

The night wore on, and the grey dawn broke upon East Utah smiling and lovely as ever, but the poor watchers upon the rock sat haggard and anxious, for he whom they loved and waited for came not.

Almost broken-hearted, Leigh at last laid himself down and slept an uneasy and troubled sleep, from which he was awakened by the welcome news that the enemy was close at hand and advancing in considerable force. Welcome the news indeed was, for every man and woman upon that rocky shelf felt that at that moment they had but one object in life—vengeance of the most awful character for the death of him they loved beyond all earthly considerations.

Disregarding the deadly fire of the Winchesters, which thinned their numbers in every direction, the Mormons marched on, a solemn silent mass. At one hundred yards they began to fire their guns, but did no execution of any kind; and now the party above fairly hailed bullets upon them from rifles, revolvers, and from the Mormons' own captured guns, and the ground was thickly strewn with dead and dying men.

Volley after volley the attacking party fired, till at last their salvoes dwindled down to a few sputtering shots, and then ceased entirely. *The Mormons had exhausted their last kernel of powder*, and now prepared to storm the plateau, sword in hand.

The matter fell out exactly as Amaxosa had foreseen, and when a full hundred of the enemy were busy with their swords trying to cut into the zareba, the Zulus plunged the two shells into the mass of living men, which was promptly transformed into an awful heap of bleeding, groaning, human pulp. A few wounded men tried to limp away, but the Zulus were down the rock almost as soon as the shells, and of one hundred and fifty men who had left the Mormon town that morning, not one returned to tell the awful tale of shame and woe.

The wounded were soon put out of pain by the unconcerned Zulus, who then brought up to the plateau a perfect mountain of weapons in the shape of guns, spears, swords, and knives, all the time chanting victorious notes over their fallen enemies, and adjuring their father, the mighty chief, to smile upon his children.

As Leigh had supposed, the Mormons had entirely exhausted their powder before they made the final charge which proved so fatal to themselves—not a single grain of powder could be found in any of their flasks. Thus ended another attempt of the Mormons upon the plateau; they had, as Grenville had foreseen, no more stomach for such desperate work as this, at present.

As soon as night fell, Amaxosa set out for East Utah, armed with Grenville's revolvers, and determined if possible to discover what had happened to his beloved chief.

Obtaining access to the town, as before, by the river, which was now reduced to its normal state, he prowled about in the shade, running awful risks, but hearing and seeing nothing, and was just about to leave the place in despair, when observing a number of Mormons approaching, he shrank back into a dark alley between two houses.

The band he sought to avoid was met at this point—in fact, directly opposite to his hiding-place—by a detachment travelling in the opposite direction, both parties stopping and entering into conversation.

The Zulu watched them like a lynx, but what was his astonishment and even delight to behold the master whom he had believed to be dead, standing amongst his enemies; with great chains upon his hands and feet, it is true, yet still alive and well, and preserving upon his face the impress of that habitual coolness and determined bravery which had so won upon the heart of this untutored savage.

With longing eyes Amaxosa gazed upon his friend, but he was a shrewd man as well as a courageous one, and he foresaw that any attempt at a rescue could at this moment have no good result, but rather the reverse.

Just as the two bands parted, Grenville was forced up against the wall, and quick as lightning the Zulu shot out his hand and dropped a small pistol into his friend's coat-pocket. So neatly was the action performed that our hero, who had been roused out of his sleep, and led away to be interviewed, he was told, by the Holy Three, did not know what had happened, thinking he had only knocked his side against a corner; but on moving his hand directly after, his forearm struck something heavy, and carefully feeling in his pocket, his fingers closed like a vice on his own favourite Derringer, and in an instant he realised that he had stood within a foot or two of his devoted Zulu friend without knowing it. Cautiously hiding the pistol in his breast, where his chained hands could more easily reach it, he found himself once more ushered into the presence of the Mormon Trinity.

As soon as the guards had retired, which they did at a sign from the Mormon prophet, the triumvirate commenced to question Grenville upon the number of his friends, the quantity of their ammunition, the range of their weapons, and so forth.

To all these reiterated inquiries he made no answer save an amused smile.

Then Brother Ishmael Warden, as usual, lost his temper.

"Dog of an Englishman!" he thundered, "answer or you die."

"Death," was the cutting reply, "is the home which welcomes brave men, the shadow which frightens cowards. Our rifles are more than sufficient to sweep from the face of the earth the few men your nation has left."

The Prophet now interposed, and, to Grenville's amused disgust, offered him life and magnificent terms if he would throw in his lot with them and conform to their laws, bringing his party and his weapons with them.

To all these offers he had but one answer:—

"I am the conqueror, you the conquered—it is for me to offer terms, not for you; and if I must die, why the sooner the better; but merely to save my life I will never consent to herd with murderers, thieves, and vagabonds. Listen, you three misguided men. Here are the terms Richard Grenville dictates, and think well ere you refuse them:—This country is now the property of her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India. You, the so-called Holy Three, will at once abdicate and give up your power to the young girl known as the Rose of Sharon, Queen of the Mormon people by hereditary right, returning to her all her moneys, lands, and property feloniously retained by you. To me, and to my party, as your conquerors, you will pay twenty thousand ounces of gold, and provide us with bearers for same, and guides out of the country forthwith. I have spoken."

Suddenly Warden sprang to his feet, fairly foaming at the mouth—

"Here!" he yelled, "is your passport out of the country and direct to hell!" and levelling a pistol at Grenville's head, he fired. The bullet missed our hero by a hair's breadth—indeed, it grazed the side of his face—but the very next second Brother Ishmael Warden, the most universally-hated member of the Mormon Trinity, fell to the ground with a bullet through his heart, and Grenville coolly threw his pistol down, saying as he did so—

"The fellow was a dog, and like a dog he died;" then he quietly looked his remaining judges in the face, and waited their action.

Father and son had sprung to their feet in fear upon seeing Grenville in possession of a weapon, but they now quietly sat down again, and his keen eye noted that upon the face of the old man there sat an expression of indifference, whilst the younger man obviously eyed the corpse of his late colleague with unconcealed relief, and looked at our hero with absolute approbation. Another circumstance, however, was significant to Grenville, and he had not failed to notice it; this was the fact that the guards could be heard pacing up and down outside the room, never seeming the least disturbed by the pistol-shots. It was, therefore, clear that murder in the presence of the Holy Three was far from being uncommon; indeed, when some minutes later the men entered, by order, to take him away, even before they observed the body of their late tyrant, Grenville saw looks of astonishment cast upon him.

And now an honour as unexpected as it was unsought was offered to the young Englishman, for father and son, having held a private conference, the elder man turned to Grenville, and in brief but distinct language offered him the seat of the man he had just killed, together with all its emoluments.

"Nay, my son," said he, as our friend was about to speak, "take time to think before you give your answer. I much wish to save you alive, but our laws are as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and by them the Holy Three, who have power of life and death, are obliged to condemn you, and you are too young to die. In the one way indicated we can save you. Live, then, and become the prop of our Holy State."

"Sir," replied Grenville, moved by the kindly manner of the patriarch as no threats would ever have moved him, "I appreciate your kind wishes, and God forbid I should insult the beard of a man old enough to be my grandsire, but I regard your faith and your own exalted office here with utter abhorrence and loathing. I have a most healthy contempt for your laws and your nation, and having the courage of my opinions I prefer to die for them."

The old prophet eyed him sadly for a moment; then his face grew stern, and drawing himself up proudly, "'Tis well," he said, "ere long, foolish headstrong youth, thou wilt regret thine impetuosity. At sundown, three days hence, you die by the rifle—farewell." Then touching a small gong, "Guards, remove the prisoner;" and as he noted the looks of the officer directed at Warden's corpse lying in a pool of blood, "Brother Harper, remove this body, and see that the Saints are notified of the decease of a member of the Holy Trinity, and the necessity of choosing out one of the elect to supply his place."

The officer merely bowed, and the guard then removed Grenville; but as soon as they got outside the officer turned to his prisoner, asking eagerly, "Did you kill yonder fiend?"

"I did," replied our hero coolly, "and I'm sure I never killed a greater scoundrel in all my life."

In reply the officer seized Grenville's hand and shook it heartily. "You are a plucky fellow," he said; "if you *have* killed about half our people, you've prevented that scoundrel from making away with the other half. Tell me, did you shoot Radford Custance?"

"I did," was the stern reply; "the coward struck a man who had his hands tied."

"Well," rejoined the other, "taken all through we owe you a debt of gratitude. It's a shame to shoot you; but what must be—must be, you know."

"Quite so," responded Grenville, cheerfully, "don't let us fall out over that; I see the necessity, I have done my work, and I am ready to go. But look here, my friend; your prophet—very nice old chap he is, too—told me I was to die by the rifle. Now as you've no powder, how will you work it? Shall I give you a line to my people asking them to let you have a flask of your own powder for the occasion?"

"See here," replied the officer, "I owe you some information, and as you are to die I don't mind telling you we have just twelve charges of powder left in the whole community, and as you've used up all the rest we've decided to give you the benefit of what little we have left—it's a great compliment, let me tell you."

Thus laughing and talking they drew near the prison; but though Grenville had engaged in conversation with the Mormon, he had nevertheless been straining every faculty to try and discover the whereabouts of his Zulu friend. Nowhere, however, could he see him or detect any sign of his presence.

On seeing the prisoner into his cell, the officer again shook hands, and Grenville, with the intention of giving information to his friend if he were lying hidden close by, called out, "You'll come and see me to-morrow, won't you? I'm to be shot at sundown on Friday, you know; so you'll have to entertain me until then."

"With pleasure," was the laughing rejoinder. "Good-night!"

Grenville's precaution was well taken, for it so happened that Amaxosa had at that instant arrived within earshot of his friend's words, which he heard with a grunt of satisfaction, as he had feared that after causing the death of Warden—of which act he had been an unseen and exultant witness—his chief would have been executed at daybreak.

The audacity and self-abandonment of the Zulu on this night had been simply magnificent. He had fearlessly climbed to the window of the room in which he believed Grenville to be, and had watched every movement of friend and enemy with eyes like coals of fire; and ill would it have fared with the two remaining members of the Mormon Trinity had they attempted any further violence against their prisoner.

As it was, Amaxosa had watched the movements of the patriarch, and having seen him, after the departure of his colleague, open a strong box and take out a lot of papers similar to that which his friend, the Rose of Sharon, had recognised as her own, he had quietly slipped in, brained the venerable "witch-finder," and walked off with his possessions, coolly setting the house on fire before he departed, as silently as he had come. And now his fingers itched to slay the man who held the key to his friend's prison, but knowing that in a few minutes the whole place would be agog with the fire, and the death of the prophet, he decided to postpone his operations until the following night. "His father" knew he had been at his side, and Amaxosa was content.

Hardly had Grenville laid himself down to sleep than his prison door was torn open, and he found himself the centre of a raging mob of human beings, all clamouring for his life; and had his friend the officer not been at his side, our hero would have been lynched forthwith. Finding out at last that he was in some way accused of causing the death of the Mormon Patriarch, Grenville asked to be permitted to speak; and when silence had been obtained he briefly and succinctly related the night's events to the crowd—omitting of course the presence of the Zulu—and added meaningly, "You say your prophet has been murdered and the treasures of the Holy Three stolen. Believe me, I would never lift my hand against an old man who could not defend himself—I murder not, nor do I rob. With whomsoever you find the treasure, let him die; but do not attempt to sully my good name, which is all that is left to me now."

Finally, after the officer had harangued the crowd, he succeeded in getting rid of them; and congratulating Grenville on his escape, he again took his leave, when our friend once more laid himself down—not, however, to sleep at once, but to reflect on the events of the night.

Truth to tell, he was inclined to ascribe the murder and robbery of the Patriarch to one of the Mormon's own people, for though he knew Amaxosa hated the triumvirate with a bitter hatred, yet he, strange to say, was not given to "looting" in any shape or form; and Grenville was wholly at a loss to understand, moreover, how the Zulu could possibly have obtained access to the treasure chamber of the Mormon leader. In any case, he felt that whether Amaxosa was or was not responsible for the affair, he personally had lost a friend at Court, but that the Mormon community had at the same time been deprived of their best and wisest head.

Clearly there was nothing for the prisoner to do but to watch and wait. He had made up his mind to die, but with sublime confidence in his friends he felt certain that some effort would be made to save him, and he was fully determined that when the attempt came off, it should at least not fail from lack of readiness on his part.

Chapter Fifteen.

In Durance Vile.

As Leigh and his betrothed sat talking by the fire that night, and keeping watch until Amaxosa's return, they were surprised to see the sky suddenly lighten in the distance, and finally to observe great sheets of flame springing up in the direction of East Utah. These, however, soon died out, for, as it happened, the Mormon prophet's house stood entirely apart from the other buildings in the town, and so burnt itself out harmlessly in a very short space of time.

In due course the Zulu arrived, and gave them in detail the events of the night, cheering the heavy hearts of Grenville's friends by a full account of his every word and action, and delighting poor little Rose, who had joined the party, by his recital of the scene in the Trinitarian room, where the man she secretly adored, had so courageously insisted upon her own hereditary rights, and then, though heavily ironed, had slain her pet abomination in the shape of Ishmael Warden.

A greater surprise was, however, in store for the young girl when Amaxosa coolly handed over to her the bundle of papers, telling how he had disposed of "the ancient and cunning man of the witch-finders," and brought away the property which he knew belonged to his "little sister, the Flower of East Utah."

The papers in question, which Rose perfectly recollected as having been her father's, consisted of a memorandum of contents, in which was folded what proved to be an immense bundle of paper money of almost all nations, the bulk, however, being Bank of England notes; and if the statement of account which enveloped these was correct, the entire value amounted to something like 150,000 pounds sterling.

The young girl received the congratulations of her friends very indifferently, being of course wholly ignorant of the value of money, only saying that if she thought the Mormons would give Grenville up in exchange for the papers, she would send them back at once, but that she knew that with the exception of the Holy Three, no one in East Utah ever appeared to attach the slightest importance to the valuable documents.

After Leigh had consigned Rose's fortune to a safe place all retired to rest, with the exception of Myzukulwa, who kept guard until daybreak. When breakfast had been disposed of, a council was called, into which the girls were, for once, admitted, and Amaxosa submitted a plan which he had formed, and which had for its object the release of Grenville that very night.

Dangerous it certainly was, and superbly audacious, but, nevertheless, extremely simple. All the Zulu proposed to do was to obtain access to the town in the usual way—by the river-bed, that is—and leaving Myzukulwa to watch outside the

walls, he himself would steal in and kill the guard, unlock his friend's prison, and spirit him away, and so by a forced march to the plateau. With regard to arms, he declined to take any except his own and his brother's; the risk of their falling into Mormon hands was too great; but it was agreed that the pair should carry half a dozen of the Mormons' guns ready loaded, and hide these in the bush on their way down, so as to be handy at about half distance if required. It was, of course, very desirable that Grenville should be provided with his own weapons; but still, should these fall into the hands of the enemy, the destruction of the little band on the rock would become a mere question of time, and Leigh well knew that his cousin would be the very last to counsel him to run such a fearful risk on his account.

The plan, which seemed feasible enough, was discussed in every detail, and all, with apparently one exception, felt sanguine of its success. That exception was the Zulu Myzukulwa. Not that he had anything to urge against the scheme, but he seemed dull, drait, and cautious, and would only express his *hope* that it might succeed, and that "the sight of the great chief, his father, might make his heart glad before he died."

In the afternoon the brothers lay down to sleep, and as Leigh sat and watched them, and smoked his pipe, he could not help thinking that any of the miserable Mormons who got in their way that night would have a rough time of it. At sunset he awoke the pair, and after they had indulged in a hearty meal, hands were shaken all round, and the Zulus, slipping down from the plateau, were instantly swallowed up in the eerie shadows of the veldt and mountain, and proceeded on their way to East Utah, followed by the prayers and good wishes of their friends upon the rock.

We must now return to poor Grenville, who had spent the day, as usual, surrounded by his guards, and occupied with the all-absorbing topic provided by the death of two members of their Trinity. Our friend learned that the Mormons would have been very awkwardly placed had the prophet before he died not given instructions to issue the necessary proclamation of the death of his colleague Warden, and the consequent need for the appointment of some member of the community in his place. Had this not happened, it was more than probable that the last surviving representative of the Trinity would have arrogated supreme power to himself, and declined to co-operate with anyone else, and he being as universally despised, as his father had been respected and as Ishmael Warden had been hated, a revolution would in all probability have resulted, by which the remnant of the latter day Saints would have suffered more severely than ever. To his friend the officer Grenville could not help remarking that he was surprised to find a people so intelligent as the Saints allowing themselves to be guided and led by the nose by their false prophets through the medium of their superstitious fancies.

The officer, however, grew quite stern, and ordered him not to blaspheme; then unbending again, "Come," said he, "you are to die, so I don't mind convincing you before you go of the genuineness of the power conferred upon our Holy Three;" and leading Grenville along, still in chains, he brought him to the top of the hill overlooking the city, and upon which stood the signal of the Fiery Cross, fixed above a curious pepper-box-shaped wooden house.

Entering the door, the Mormon signed to Grenville to follow him, which our hero did, wondering to find himself in a darkened room containing a table surrounded by wooden seats, upon one of which last his guide, whispering in awe-struck tones, instructed him to place himself.

This done, the Mormon gave muttered utterance to a doggerel rhyme of some kind, the words of which Grenville could not catch, but which was evidently supposed to act the part of a spell or incantation; he then pressed a knob in the woodwork, which admitted a dim religious sort of light through some aperture apparently in the roof, and reverently withdrawing a cloth from the table, motioned to Grenville to look thereon. This he did, and had much ado to restrain his laughter at the utter simplicity of the fraud thus foisted—as a holy revelation—upon grown and intelligent men.

The place our friend sat in was *neither more nor less than a very poorly contrived "camera obscura,"* such as can be seen in so many seaside and other places of holiday resort any day of the week.

Here it was that the Mormon rulers sat, carefully watching and noting all that went on in East Utah during the day, returning to the town at night-time and oracularly relating to their superstitious subjects all that had taken place in their absence. This, however, was not quite sufficient to satisfy some of the more inquiring spirits among the saints, and the Mormons found themselves obliged to resort to *prophecy* concerning men and things in general; and however awful these predictions were—and awful they certainly became when Ishmael Warden was elected a member of the triumvirate—*they never failed to prove correct*, the prophets took good care of that.

The guard soon withdrew his "holy wonders" from the unhallowed gaze of the Gentile before him, and when outside again heaved a breath of relief, asking our friend in solemn yet triumphant tones what he thought of that. This was really too much for Grenville, and he burst out laughing in his companion's face.

The Mormon eyed him with evident doubt as to his sanity, but Grenville noticed that he was careful to drink in every word of the explanation of the "mystery" subsequently given to him by this strange and well-informed prisoner.

Our friend really began to like the man, and could not refrain from looking sadly at him, knowing but too well that the Mormon was so closely involved in his own fate that he would be the first to fall when the attempt, which he felt certain his own friends would make to release him, came off.

The officer, noticing these looks of his prisoner, asked him if he were thinking of the near approach of his death.

"No," replied he in a melancholy tone, "I was but regretting the certainty that you yourself would die before I should."

"What," said the other mockingly, "are you too a false prophet?"

"Would to God I might be in this case," said Grenville, holding out his hand to his jailer; "but I fear it is truth I speak. Never mind; you are a brave man—and what is written, is written for you and for me; so don't let us trouble our heads about it till the time comes."

The pair soon gained the town, and Grenville heard his friend the guard call a number of his companions together and detail all the prisoner had said with respect to their "holy wonder;" and after that first one and then another would ask him, himself, leading questions on the government of his own country, England, and so forth; and it struck our hero forcibly that had he but a week or two before him he might, in spite of the old prophet's precaution, get up a very pretty little insurrection against the mystic Holy Three.

He did go so far as to say that if the Mormons were men they had only one course open to them, and that was to dethrone the wretched impostor who was now at their head, and re-instate their beautiful queen, the "Rose of Sharon,"

the Flower of East Utah, in her hereditary rights; and he noticed that these words seemed to find favour among the guards, though no reply was made to the remark.

Grenville next endeavoured to find out if the community had some concealed way out of their secret territory. This end he attained by chaffing them about knocking down with their own hands their only ladder of communication with the outside world. The men, however, were perfectly frank, and at once admitted that they had done so, giving him likewise details of the work of reconstructing the stairway, which was to be commenced as soon as the invaders were satisfactorily disposed of.

Asked how they accounted for the continued supply of game, the Mormons said they could not account for it at all; but their prophets had told them that the good gifts of Heaven should be thankfully accepted, and not refused simply because the eyes of blinded mortals could not detect the precise manner of their arrival. A very strict inquiry had nevertheless been made into the matter, and a body of men appointed to scour the country in every direction, with the view of ascertaining if there were any other way of ingress into the territory; but after two months of careful searching the band had returned with the news that they were absolutely walled in on every side by impenetrable and inaccessible rocks and mountains.

Grenville was, however, by no means satisfied with this statement, as, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, his common-sense told him that the herds of game must have some way of getting in at certain seasons of the year or the animals would long ago have been exterminated. Still, cudgel his brains as he would, no solution of the difficulty presented itself to him.

Chapter Sixteen.

Faithful unto Death.

And now night once more descended upon East Utah, and the prisoner knew that he had one day less to live. Still, he kept up heart and remained on the *qui vive* for any opportunity of escape; and this at last presented itself, as he had feared and yet hoped, through the medium of his friend the officer.

The Mormons had again withdrawn the night guard, taking only the precaution of leaving Grenville's irons on him even while in prison, and the officer, having said good-night and locked him in, quietly took his way home; but he never reached it, for in another ten seconds his brains were strewn about the roadway, his corpse thrown into the river, and Amaxosa, possessed of the key, had opened the prison and was shaking hands with his chief. He was, however, much taken aback at finding his friend in chains; still, neither hesitated to plunge into the water, which of course drowned the clanking of the irons, and both were soon outside the walls, receiving the suppressed congratulations of Myzukulwa.

Progress now proved very slow indeed, owing to our hero's fettered state, and after a mile had been compassed in the water, unavailing efforts were made to break or loosen the chains; then, seeing that much valuable time was being lost, Amaxosa went ahead at a run to fetch the quagga, whilst his brother assisted Grenville in his slow progress towards liberty.

Never before had restraint appeared so irksome to our friend. It was certainly probable that he was considered safe in his prison for the night; but, on the other hand, should the prophet wish to talk with him—a not unusual occurrence, as we have seen—at night, or should the officer be missed by his friends, a search would of course be instituted, the hue and cry raised, and knowing that he would strike out for the plateau, the Mormons would immediately pursue him at speed. Grenville fairly groaned at the thought of being again recaptured in consequence of their miserable and cowardly cunning in keeping him so heavily ironed.

In East Utah it fell out precisely as the fugitive had feared; the officer was wanted, searched for, and, as he could not be found, his prisoner was next looked up; then finding the bird flown, the community at once determined that treachery had been at work, and an hour after Grenville's escape fifty men were on his trail, vowing deadly vengeance upon their recreant officer, whilst he, poor soul!—or, rather, all that remained of him—was bobbing up and down in the River of Death as it glided sullenly along its course, carrying to the vast and wandering ocean the message of the peaceful sky. When not quite half-way to the plateau, and just as the fugitive pair reached a narrow forest track where bush and timber was piled up like an enormous tangled wall on either side, the Mormons overtook them, and Myzukulwa faced round as a noble stag turns at bay, and determined to “die in silence, biting hard amidst the dying hounds.”

The moon streamed in at the entrance to the forest path and shone full on his magnificent warlike figure, his stern forbidding face, and his glittering spear, and for a moment the Mormons, being without fire-arms, hung in the wind. Seeing this, the Zulu shook hands with Grenville. “Let my father escape,” he said; “he cannot fight with his hands tied, and his faithful son, the child of the Undi, will stop this path—ay, and pile it up with the dead bodies of these evil dogs, even as my father slew them in hundreds by the dark River of Death; and when the whole nation of these cunning witchfinders is dead, and my father is free to come and go as he will, then let him think of his son Myzukulwa, the son of Isanusi, and take away his body from these low people, and bury him with his face towards the land of the people of the Undi. I have spoken;” and giving Grenville a long and yearning look, which made the tears start to his eyes, the Zulu turned to face the foe, and, uttering his awful war-cry, struck down two of the Mormons who had approached within reach of his spear.

Man after man went down, but coming at the splendid fellow so many at the time with their long spears, the cowards continually wounded him, and Grenville, who stood by, grinding his teeth in impotent rage, at last had the pain of seeing his faithful friend borne to the ground, fairly overpowered by numbers. Again springing to his feet, however, the Zulu dashed up to the leader of the party, who was none other than the last remaining member of the Holy Trinity, stabbed him to the heart, and with a cry of victory fell dead across the corpse of the foe, his life-blood welling out through a hundred gaping wounds, and the dead bodies of upwards of a dozen Mormons bearing ghastly testimony to the fact that Myzukulwa, the son of Undi, had died even as he had lived, as a warrior, magnificently brave and fearless, as a friend faithful unto death. Peace be with him!

The Mormons, having disposed of Myzukulwa, ordered Grenville to follow them back to East Utah, which he did, first kneeling down and taking from round the dead chief's neck a curious amulet which he always wore, and which Grenville transferred to his own.

One of the guards, more inquisitive than the rest, asked why he did this, and our friend boldly answered, “I'm not

dead yet, you know; and if I do get away, I swear to you I will kill a man of you for every drop of blood that it has taken fifty of you cowards to draw from yonder brave and true-hearted man."

For a time his captors preserved impassive silence, only hurrying him along as fast as he could move whilst hampered by his fetters, and then at length he was asked "what had become of the traitor."

"What traitor?" asked Grenville.

"What traitor? why, your late guard of course."

"Mormon," was the stern answer, "I might by admitting the truth of your suspicion strengthen the position of my friends in your eyes, but I cannot dishonour the memory of the brave and upright dead. Your officer's corpse will be found in the River of Death, whither the hand of the Zulu sent him. He was far and away the best man you had, and his loss is an infinitely greater one to your community than that of the wretched Prophet, as you call him, whose corpse you are at so much trouble to carry now."

When at length the party reached East Utah, Grenville was at once re-introduced to his prison, which was guarded by a patrol of ten men, who were kept on duty for the remainder of the time of his imprisonment, with drawn swords in their hands—such terror had the warlike address of the little party at the plateau struck into the craven souls of the Mormons; indeed, so much afraid were they of losing their prisoner that a grave consultation was held as to whether he should not be killed at once, to prevent any further risk arising from his escape. This, however, they dared not do without the consent of the whole nation, the Trinity having ceased to exist; and for the sake of saving one day it was of course foolish to think of convoking a general assembly of the Saints.

Chapter Seventeen.

Vae Victis!

For the rest of the night Grenville lay racked with mental agony. Before another dawn came stealing over the Eastern Mountains he was to die a violent death; still, the thought of that did not trouble him nearly so much as the loss of his faithful Zulu friend. The fact that he himself had been unable to lift one finger to assist Myzukulwa against the common foe was gall and wormwood to Grenville. Again and again he pictured to himself the anguish of those at the plateau when they learned not only of the entire failure of the plot for his own release, and the consequent necessity of abandoning him to his fate, but also of the death of one of their trusty defenders. Had the Mormons been now aware that Winfield was dead, Grenville felt sure they would have delivered an immediate and probably overwhelming attack upon the spot occupied by the little band of invaders; and he could find it in his heart to wish that a few more explosive shells had fallen into the hands of his party, whose position would then have been impregnable.

Soon after dawn the prisoner fell into a troubled sleep, from which he soon awoke to find himself crying and moaning bitterly. Directly after this, however, nature re-asserted her claims, and he slept long and peacefully, dreaming that all had ended quite satisfactorily, and that he, poor fellow, was at liberty. When aroused to eat his breakfast, this impression was strong upon him, and he astounded the guards by asking if the order for his release had come down.

They first smiled, and then said significantly that *he must not expect that before sundown*.

Grenville then asked where he was to be executed, and was told about a dozen miles from East Utah, near to the western bridge.

"Why there?" he inquired.

"Oh! only because our graveyard is there, and we first bury the Holy Three," was the answer, which certainly appeared the reverse of reassuring.

"Will you bury me when dead?" asked the prisoner, who seemed to take a gruesome interest in all the details of his own fate.

"Of course we shall," replied a guard; "what did you think we'd do?"

"I was afraid you'd crucify me like those poor devils near the great stairway; and I didn't enjoy the idea," was the reply.

The men looked wonderingly at one another, and, as Grenville thought, with awed faces, as if asking what new and unknown horror this was; but not one of them had a word to say.

The prisoner now inquiring who in East Utah was at the head of affairs, was soon apprised of the fact that it was Ishmael Warden's own brother, a man as much feared and hated for his cruel villainies as that worthy himself had been. Clearly there was no mercy to be looked for from him, and one of the guards, who appeared well disposed to Grenville, told him as much.

"I see," replied he. "Well, if he is such a scoundrel as it's easy to see you think him, I hope my friends will wipe him out for you at an early opportunity. I'd make another attack on the plateau if I were you, and get Brother Warden to take a front place and try the quality of those excellent bomb-shells of ours. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, my friend; I should never have tried on such an unsportsmanlike game, unless you had first treated me to it, and the result just serves you right."

In the afternoon Grenville was led out; his fetters, much to his delight, were taken off; and, escorted by a guard of a hundred men, he was marched away to the place of execution.

Arrived there, the prisoner found it to be a perfectly level forest glade about half a mile across—open sward in the centre, with the forest fringing it on all sides but one. The one remaining side was, however, guarded by the dreadful River of Death, which at this point flowed with a slow hoarse murmur between rugged cliffs which, nearly three hundred feet above, seemed to brood over the stream as it glided beneath. If it be an accepted fact that still waters run deep,

then the depth of the River (the chasm being some thirty feet across) must at this point have been considerable; whilst, to add to the dreary solemnity of the place, the dark shadows of the trees in the background seemed to keep friendly and untiring watch over the graves of the Mormon dead.

On looking round him, Grenville came to the conclusion that positively the entire community of both sexes had assembled in this forest glade, partly to swell the funeral cortege of the Holy Three, and partly, no doubt, drawn by curiosity, or by vengeful feelings, to see the very last of himself personally.

Of the burial rites our friend saw but little, as his guards kept the unbelieving Gentile at a respectful distance from the remains of the holy dead; but the moment the funeral was over, there arose from the whole of that vast crowd one mighty earth-shaking yell for vengeance on the common foe. Men, women, and children alike lent their voices to this fearful cry; and well, in sooth, they might, for there were few families in the comparatively small community of the latter day Saints which had not recently been rendered houses of mourning by one action or another of the prisoner or his friends.

On hearing the cry of the people thirsting for his blood, Grenville started; then, drawing himself up proudly, he took a long farewell glance at the setting sun, the distant mountains, the dense dark forest, and the green and rolling veldt, and then, walking to the spot indicated by his guards, the prisoner folded his arms across his breast and faced his executioners with haughty contempt in every line of his expressive and handsome countenance.

Just as the last few rifles which alone remained loaded in East Utah were about to be discharged at him, at one dozen paces, he suddenly held up his hand, and his clear voice went ringing across the veldt and into the silent forest glades.

"I, a subject of her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria, hereby protest against this murderous outrage committed against the English flag, under which I and my friends have fought since our entry into this country."

Again there was a death-like silence, almost instantly broken by the incisive words of command—

"Ready! Present!"

Grenville now gazed unflinchingly right into the muzzles of the rifles; an unearthly calm had come over him, and briefly, yet earnestly, commending his soul to God, he waited the fatal word, blind and deaf to all else but the rifles, which seemed to exercise a curious fascination upon him.

Then, just as he heard the final word of command, "Fire!" he was conscious of a shriek, and someone seized him round the neck, threw their person upon his breast, and endeavoured to drag him down.

Too late! Ah, God, too late! The fatal tubes vomited a sheet of angry flame; the deadly messengers sped forth upon their cruel errand; and a body, lately instinct with life and health, lay writhing on the greensward, gasping in the death agony.

But whose body? Bewildered and confused, called back to life when he believed himself already dead, Grenville bent over the person who had so nobly and uselessly given a precious life for him, and uttered a wild and bitter cry of anguish as he recognised the lovely Rose of Sharon. Dropping on his knees, he raised the apparently inanimate corpse in his arms, crying—

"Rose! Rose! speak to me, my darling."

And instantly her eyes opened, and a sweet and radiantly lovely smile seemed to break up the stony countenance before him—to chase away the very shadows of death and leave her face even as that of an angel.

"Dick, dear Dick," she panted, "I have saved you. Kiss me, my own dear love, and—good-bye."

And even as poor Grenville bent over her the sweet young girl's face stiffened; there was one brief spasm, and all was over.

Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, and the spirit to God who gave it. Weep on, brave heart, thou shalt go to her, but she shall not come back to thee. Yet, even so it is well, and hereafter thou shalt know that for thee and for her all roads lead alike to peace and rest.

Reverently Grenville kissed the marble forehead of this loveliest flower of East Utah, and then drew himself up, facing his judge and executioners; and dashing the scalding tears from his eyes, he threw back his head, and his face became as the face of an angry lion, whilst his voice rang over the darkening plain and echoed amongst the forest's secret aisles.

"Cowards and traitors," he cried, "villains who shoot and crucify their womenkind, Richard Grenville is not dead yet—nor will he die until every craven soul in East Utah has died miserably. Ay! for every drop of blood shed by yonder innocent girl ye shall die a thousand horrid and fearful deaths. I swear it, by the Eternal God above us."

Then, dashing from the spot, he threw himself upon the quagga, which Rose had left close by, and, riding up to Brother Warden, struck him a heavy blow across the face with his open hand, and next, as the whole Mormon nation went at him, sent his strange mount flying down the veldt, and headed directly for the yawning chasm.

A wild astonished cry broke from the crowd behind the escaped prisoner as they saw him urge the quagga to speed, and put it fairly at the awful leap before it. The gallant little brute seemed to know what was expected of it, and went at the chasm with the most unflinching pluck. In the rays of the setting sun man and horse could for one moment be seen outlined against the sky, and for a brief instant there was a dead silence, broken by one tremendous shout, "Over—he's over!"

No! one more struggle, gallant brute—one more effort, brave Grenville! Alas! it was not to be.

The quagga reached the further bank with its fore hoofs, sank gradually back, and, in spite of all its rider could do, was sliding down, down into the yawning gulf, when Grenville flung himself from its back, grasping at a bush which overhung the edge of the precipice, and in another second the sure-footed, nimble little animal was trotting away over

the veldt, unharmed.

But Grenville? Alas! it was hopeless; he felt the bush tearing out by its roots, and realised in one bitter instant that Rose's sublime sacrifice had been all in vain. At this moment he swung face outwards, and in the gathering gloom confronted his enemies on the opposite side of the chasm. Unrelenting to the last, he shook his fist at them in grim defiance, and the next instant the Mormons saw his body cutting the air feet downwards as it passed with the speed of lightning the three hundred feet which lay between it and the awful horror of destruction below. Just then the sun went out, and plunged everything into utter tangible darkness.

Chapter Eighteen.

More Dark Days.

We must now return perforce to the little party at the plateau, and observe the actions of its members which led up to the awful dénouement portrayed in the preceding chapter. After the departure of the Zulus, Leigh had spent a dreadful night of it, the suspense and anxiety of these long silent hours almost driving him mad.

It was the last cast of the dice, and he well knew that if his beloved cousin was not rescued now, he never would be, for the failure of one such audacious attempt as this would put the Mormons strictly on their guard, and any further trials would simply lead to battle and murder and sudden death for all his party.

His state, therefore, may be better imagined than described, when Amaxosa returned alone in the grey dawn with lagging steps and dejected mien, and without even raising his head to look Leigh in the face, quietly said, "All is lost, Inkoos." Then with an exceeding bitter cry, "Alas! my father, why did I leave thee? Alas! my brother, the people of the Undi has lost its leader, the oak-tree has lost its strongest branch, and I, Amaxosa, am the last surviving chief of the ancient race. Ow, my brother, why didst thou leave me? Thou, Myzukulwa, the chief of the Undi, wast a man after my own heart; thou wast swifter than an eagle, and stronger than a lion. Pride of the Undi, why hast thou left us? Thou art gone, my brother, though thy glory has been even as the sun in his noonday brightness; who that saw thee yesternight would have believed that thou couldst thus have died? Yet hast thou fallen like a warrior, and thrice one hundred foes of the evil men, the witch-finders, have gone before to do thee service and to clear thy path to the shades. The face of the sun is hidden by storm clouds, and the heart of Amaxosa is very heavy. Pride of the Undi, how art thou fallen!"

The Zulu then sat himself down, with his face between his knees, and never moved until the girls, who had been awakened by his arrival, put in their hurried appearance and tearfully begged him to tell them all.

Pulling himself together, the Zulu related the events of the night, adding his own account of his arrival at the glade with the quagga, only to find Myzukulwa lying in a great lake of gore, surrounded by the Mormons he had killed.

Leaving the animal tied to a tree, he had hurried after the party, but could not overtake it; he had, however, seen Grenville's returning footprints on the grass, and knew he had been retaken and carried off to the Mormon stronghold, whence it would be hopeless to again try and rescue him.

Amaxosa had then returned and buried his brother, taking good care to leave the Mormons lying where they had fallen; and having performed the last kind offices to his dead, he had at once returned to the plateau with the news.

"Did my cousin not foresee the possibility of his recapture?" asked Leigh.

"Ay, Inkoos, that did he, and I now see that he even feared it; he told me to say to you that, if need be, you would do well to try and make more lightning-boxes (bomb-shells), as he thought another attempt would be made on this strong place when he was dead. Much more, therefore, will it be made now that the cunning men, the witch-finders, know of the death of the chief, my brother. Let the Inkoos, then, follow my father's advice, for it is very good."

"But what of him?" asked Leigh angrily; "are we to desert him and leave him to die like a dog?"

"Inkoos," was the ominous answer, "do thou but say the word, and Amaxosa goes willingly to die with his father; but if he leaves the rock, then will the Rose and the Lily fall into the hands of these evil men, and thou Inkoos wilt be but as we are, even amongst the dark and misty shadows of the long-forgotten past."

Rose listened to all this, and more, with flashing eyes, and heard the Zulu say that at sundown that night the man she loved would die, and die without knowing that she loved him; and she stole away to her little cave again, and sat down to cudgel her poor little brains for a way to save him.

That day had been indeed a day of utter prostration and misery to those at the plateau, but early in the afternoon Leigh had resolved at all hazards to go into ambush near the Mormon town, taking Amaxosa with him, in the hope that they might cause confusion amongst the executioners by a well-directed and unexpected attack, and thus give his cousin one more chance for life and liberty.

Of course this plan necessitated leaving the plateau to the females; but Dora Winfield, armed with a Winchester repeater rifle, was considerably more formidable than she looked, and it was the reverse of likely that any attack would be made until Grenville had been finally disposed of.

Leigh and his faithful friend had accordingly lain in wait all evening, a quarter of a mile from the town, at the unusual quiet of which they wondered, and had of course seen nothing, and returned to the plateau broken-hearted, late at night, only to find Miss Winfield nearly distracted, and to receive the dreadful news that Rose was missing.

The girl had stolen quietly away, leaving behind her the package of valuables, on which was written in pencil, in a school-girl's hand, "For dear Dick, with Rose's last and dearest wishes."

The poor girl's infatuation for his cousin was already known to Leigh, through the medium of his betrothed, and he now quite broke down; his sorrow, however, was nothing to the lamentations of the warlike Zulu at this fresh and overpowering calamity. "Ow! my little sister," he cried, "why hast thou left thy brother? Thou wast to me the chiefest among ten thousand friends? Alas, alas, for the lovely flower of Utah!"

Slipping down the rock, Amaxosa quickly followed the young girl's tracks, and soon ran out of sight, only to return shortly after with the news that she had evidently taken the quagga, and ridden off at speed towards the far west.

The perceptions of this sweet little woman had been keener than the affectionate cousin's, keener than the crafty Zulu warrior's; all her faculties had been sharpened by intense and self-denying love, and instinctively guessing that the Mormon burial-ground would also form the place of execution, thither she had driven her strange mount as fast as she could ride him, arriving, as we have seen, just in the nick of time to save Grenville's life for the moment, at the cost of her own.

Quite at a loss to understand what object Rose could have had in taking the direction she had done, the party prepared to spend a wretched night, and just before midnight Amaxosa pointed out to Grenville that the Mormon city, which had lain in utter darkness all evening, was brilliantly lighted up, and very shortly a merry peal of bells came floating like music across the veldt, carrying woe and weeping to our friends, for they realised that this was a paean of triumph over their own departed comrade, and probably also over the capture of poor little Rose.

Early in the morning—in fact, by grey dawn—the Zulu was down the rock, building an enormously thick zareba of thorn-bushes, to be fixed on top of the plateau to constitute an additional, and by no means despicable, defence.

The day passed in anxious watching, and in attempts to make shells as suggested by Grenville, and that night Amaxosa actually again entered the Mormon town, and, keeping practically under water all the time, learned the whole crushing story of the disaster to both the friends he loved.

There was now nothing left, he said, but to revenge them, and on regaining the plateau, he was, along with Leigh and Dora Winfield, discussing what best to do next, when suddenly casting his eyes into the darkness by his side, the courageous Zulu, to Leigh's utter astonishment and consternation, uttered a frightful yell and rushed away to hide in the sleeping cave, whilst at that instant his beloved and lamented cousin Grenville calmly strode into the firelight, with the body of Rose in his arms, and, placing his precious burden tenderly on the rock, turned and offered Leigh his hand; but the other, with a stifled exclamation of joy, threw himself on Grenville's neck, whilst Miss Winfield sobbed on his shoulder, and Amaxosa, who had recovered his equanimity, timidly grasped the outstretched hand of "his father," and finding, as he said, that it was indeed the great white chief himself, and no spook—for he had a great objection to spooks (ghosts)—he fairly danced a war-dance, only moderating his exuberance to utter further laments over the body of poor Rose.

Chapter Nineteen.

Retribution.

Grenville was so obviously suffering from hunger, fatigue, and exposure, that his friends, eager as they were to question him, forebore, for his appearance was such—especially the corpse-like hue of his face—that Amaxosa might well be excused from being startled into believing him a ghost. Finishing the welcome food placed before him, Grenville went to sleep with the last morsel between his teeth, and would have fallen forward into the fire had the watchful Zulu not interposed his ready arm.

And now, with their hero amongst them, it was astonishing what a change had come over the little party. All were once again positively cheerful, in spite of the depressing effect produced by the sight of poor little Rose's body, which had been laid by itself in one of the caves.

The mere fact that Grenville's active and energetic personality was again present with them was such a relief that all slept peacefully, and at breakfast next morning the re-united ones were, Leigh said, even hopeful of their ultimate success.

Grenville smiled peculiarly, but merely told them that he had been in the water for the whole of one night, and had almost died of exposure; but, though weak and ill, had managed to scramble up the cliffs by a rocky path, and had eventually regained the glade, where he had found poor Rose's body lying among the tombs. How he had ever reached the plateau in his half-dying condition, still carrying his ghastly burden, was a miracle; but it was one of the finest traits in his character, which went to prove what a combination of pluck and determination the man was.

Leigh noted, too, that his countenance was harder now, and looked older; and knowing his cousin as he did, he felt certain that he had even now conceived a fearful vengeance, which nothing short of the cold hand of death would prevent him wreaking upon the wretched Mormons.

Stern though Grenville was, he fairly broke down and sobbed when Dora brought him Rose's packet, addressed to himself. "Ay," he said at last, "I will accept it, for her sake; and woe to every Mormon I come across, in any part of the world, now or hereafter. Dearly shall the whole accursed brood pay me for the loss of her who loved me so devotedly and gave her life to save me."

That day Grenville kept all employed in baking huge clay balls, which he filled with powder, balls, stones, and *débris* of all sorts—these being the best obtainable substitutes for hand-grenades.

"They will," he said to Leigh, "not meddle with us just yet; the attack will, I expect, come off in three or four days' time, the interim being employed in the manufacture of more infernal machines—but without gunpowder this time, for they haven't a grain of it left, thanks to the success of my gunpowder plot."

The result proved that he was right, and on the second night Grenville led Amaxosa on one side, and held a long and private conference with him—interrupted now and then, as Leigh and his betrothed could hear, by genuine bursts of astonishment from the Zulu. "Ow!" they heard him say, "ow, my father, thou art indeed a wise and cunning man, and I, Amaxosa, am thy faithful son." But when the conference terminated, and Grenville quietly opened the breast of his shirt, and withdrew the charm he had taken from Myzukulwa's neck, handing it to the Zulu, the chief's delight knew no bounds, and he poured forth in fluent and sonorous Zulu the thanks of the whole people of the Undi for the preservation of this mighty token, which belonged only to the chiefs of his own most ancient house, and which established his own precedence and seniority in the nation beyond the possibility of a doubt, and had indeed "made his heart very glad."

What, however, was the surprise of Leigh and Dora when Amaxosa, after shaking hands cordially with Grenville, gravely saluted them both, took his weapons, and disappeared down the face of the rock. Nor would our friend answer

any of their eager questions, merely telling them that the Zulu had gone upon an errand which, though fraught with some little danger, should, he thought, be easily and speedily executed; and if it were so, would, he believed, result, not only in the speedy release from East Utah of the whole party, but in the most fearful vengeance upon the Mormons for the death of poor Rose, whom they had reverently buried that very day.

“Our only difficulty,” said he, in conclusion, “will be to hold the plateau long enough to let Amaxosa execute his part of my scheme perfectly; but I could not spare him before, and he will make all the haste he can—so we must do our best.”

The men kept watch by turns until dawn, and then both slept whilst Dora kept guard for a couple of hours; and after all had breakfasted, the Mormons were seen approaching in a compact mass, which, as Grenville estimated, must contain the whole nation; and at this he, to his cousin’s surprise, expressed his satisfaction.

Our friend now descended to artifice, blackening his face and hands with burnt wood, in order to pass at a distance for one of the Zulus, as he had no wish at present to reveal his own dreaded identity to the enemy.

As soon as the masses got within a thousand yards, the repeaters opened fire, killing the Mormons at a longer range than they had ever before been treated to; still, however, the advance was steadily persevered in, and Grenville soon saw at least five hundred Mormons established within three hundred yards of his position, and almost entirely protected from his fire by immense rubber half-houses on wheels, which gradually, though continually, approached nearer and nearer to the rock. Watching these carefully, it soon appeared that the game was to get the shelter close up to the plateau and then charge up the path in an irresistible stream. The plan was well devised, but the thorn-bushes of Amaxosa ruined it, and the twenty picked Mormons who tried the first rush perished miserably to a man.

The shooting of the besieged was beautifully accurate, for, in no fear of their fire being returned, they were able to expose their persons at will, and aim with murderous precision.

Now, however, two houses were planted at one time, and as two men, even with Winchesters and posted behind a zareba, are rather short odds to cope with forty, Grenville washed his face, got ready a shell, and, as the Mormons charged, coolly stepped up to the very verge of the rock, and threw the lighted bomb amongst them. None who heard the awful yell of terror which went up from these miserable and superstitious men could ever forget it, and the whole Mormon army echoed the name of Grenville in a shout which almost drowned the thundering and deadly explosion of the first shell. For such decidedly amateur handiwork, the missile acted very well indeed and between its results and the Winchesters, which Dora and Leigh plied unceasingly, not half a dozen men survived the second charge.

A lull followed, but at three o’clock in the afternoon the foe again moved up, and fought with increased vigour and renewed cunning. A dashing charge carried three men out of ten up to the first line of thorn-bushes, into which they each slipped a lighted torch; and though all were instantly picked off by the rifles, their work was done, for in less than ten minutes the bushes were destroyed by fire, and an attempt to destroy the second line in the same way followed, but failed ignominiously, owing to the magnificent shooting of the beleaguered party.

Cunning, nevertheless, matched science, and by putting on rushes of thirty, forty, and even fifty men, the three lines of bushes were destroyed, the last charge alone costing the foe forty men, of whom more than a half were destroyed by one of Grenville’s bombs. Now, however, there was but the last line of bush which fringed the plateau, and with a terrific shout a full hundred Mormons rushed up the path and made for this, whilst the defenders rained shot and shell upon them. Still, what could two men and one woman do? Nearly forty men fell, but the bushes blazed; and now the whole Mormon army drew together at the foot of the slope, prepared to charge the moment the fire died out.

The cousins shook hands, and Grenville once again casting a longing glance down the valley, and at the now sinking sun, set his teeth, and prepared to die hard.

See, they come! Now to it, good rifles. Handsomely done, Leigh; shell after shell, brave Grenville. Ha! there goes Warden with a bullet through his brain. Well aimed, Dora Winfield! That shot has settled many an old score of thy dear father’s.

Alas! alas! all is lost. They are up—they touch the very plateau, when Grenville again drives them back with a terrific charge, crying out—“Hurrah, old man; bear up another moment—look yonder.” Leigh looks, and so do the Mormons, and with one accord they turn and fly down the rock—and why? Out yonder, under the setting sun, what do they see?—what do they hear?

Woe! woe! woe! to the Mormon host, for up the valley, at a long slinging trot, comes the crack regiment of the famous warriors of the Undi, led on to the charge by Amaxosa, the chief of their ancient house. The Saints form up in square against the rocks, heedless of their white foes above, as they try to meet the resistless charge of the Zulu impi, and stem the awful torrent which rolls up in a dark compact tide and flings itself upon them, even as the surf dashes itself against, against, up, up—ay, and right over the rocky shore. Then the awful battle-shout of the Undi is raised, and before the sun sets red in the western sky the entire Mormon army has been annihilated, and the victorious Zulu chief is grasping the hand of his “great white father,” whom he introduces to his brother-officers as the man who originated this mighty scheme of stern retribution and wholesale slaughter.

The Zulus respectfully take Grenville’s hand in turn, and gathering round our hero—whose magnificent exploits their chief has related to them, and whom they worship in consideration of the hundreds of bodies piled up on the slopes of the plateau—they give a tremendous shout, and announce that he has been elected their brother and a perpetual chief of the Sons of the Undi, and that his name henceforth amongst them will be “T’chaka, the great white father of his faithful people.”

As the little party of friends sat over their fire at the plateau that night, whilst their sable allies kept watch below, Grenville told the whole thrilling story of his plunge into the River of Death.

Being a practised diver and swimmer, he had gone into the gulf feet foremost; but dropping from such a fearful height, and knowing that the water was low, owing to its being the very end of the dry season, he had expected to be killed by being dashed against the rocks below the surface; fortunately for him, however, that portion of the chasm which he had selected for his awful leap, chanced to overhang a deep still pool, into which Grenville had dropped, and from which he had emerged almost unharmed; but, being immediately carried away by the river, he had, in the darkness, received several nasty knocks which almost deprived him of his senses. When he had been in the water for upwards of an hour, silently floating along with the stream, as he could nowhere find foothold upon the slippery sides of the cliff, our

hero detected the current quickening; soon the stream grew faster and noisier, and all at once he noticed that he was no longer able to see the sky above, but *was drifting along underground*. In the awful horror of that moment Grenville almost went mad. He commenced a mighty and useless struggle against the resistless current, but found himself borne along like a feather.

Just, however, as he was losing hope, he struck first his foot, and then his knee, against something hard, and dropping into an upright posture found that he had been, all the time, attempting to swim in less than three feet of water, which just here ran like a mill-race.

Groping about, our friend at last succeeded in getting on a rock half out of the water, and hung there for hours, with his person benumbed from head to foot, and his senses paralysed. "He had," he said, "come to the conclusion that nothing could be worse than his present position, and that he might as well drift wherever the stream chose to take him," when all at once he noticed the dark, swift waters changing colour, and with a cry of joy recognised the fact that instead of being absolutely underground, he was only shut in by immense cliffs, thickly wooded to their very summits, and which all but entirely excluded the glad light of day; and day it was, the sun was up, and soon sent his welcome shafts of light streaming through the interlaced branches overhead, lighting the gloomy chasm in dim and ghostly fashion.

Pulling himself together, Grenville slipped back into the water, and, plucky fellow that he was, waded down the stream for about two hours, "having," he said, "a hazy notion that he was doing the right thing by instinct."

At the end of this time he entered a tunnel, and having groped his way along it for about a mile, had almost decided to turn back, when he suddenly passed an angle, and again saw daylight glimmering in the distance. All this time the water kept a uniform depth of about twelve inches only, and was thick with a curious kind of subaqueous weed, which gave him the impression that he was walking on soft damp moss.

Finally he reached the end of the tunnel, and was about to emerge into open daylight, when his hurried footsteps were arrested by the sound of a human voice speaking in the Zulu tongue.

Creeping cautiously nearer to the entrance, Grenville found that the sound proceeded from two men, whom he at once recognised by their general "get-up" as warriors of the Undi; and listening to the conversation which ensued, he learned that a large portion of the tribe was outlying in that district, and had decided to camp for some days in their present position and prosecute hunting operations before the wet season set in.

For another hour Grenville waited, not daring to introduce himself to the Zulus, and, as soon as the pair moved away, stole out and found himself in a lovely valley, which, as he had anticipated, sprang almost directly from the mountain-range, and along which the River of Death, now glimmering bright and lovely in the sunshine, flowed on towards the sea. He had escaped from East Utah, *and was on the outer side of the mountains*.

Picking some wild gourds, he filled his empty stomach with these, and then quickly retraced his steps through the tunnel, feeling certain now that in some way he could ascend the cliffs and regain East Utah, as it was clear the herds of game were able to do so. The event proved that he was right, for less than a mile up the glen he discovered a steep, narrow, but well-trodden pathway to the higher inside lands, and finally reached the plateau as we have seen, bringing with him the body of poor little Rose.

Chapter Twenty.

The Last of the Mormons.

On the following morning Grenville was admitted to an Indaba (council) with the chiefs of the Undi, and learned that Amaxosa had induced them to come through the "great black hole" by promising them endless plunder; and they now waited, they said, for their "great white father" to lead them to the Mormon town.

At this juncture our friend had fearful evidence of the difficulty of controlling the savage instincts of these wild natives. Their one desire was to put all that remained alive of the Mormons—man, woman, and child—to a cruel death; but this Grenville would not hear of, and the discussion waxed so hot that it was only with infinite difficulty he restrained their lust for slaughter, and obtained a promise from the chiefs that if a wholesale and unconditional surrender and capitulation was made they would spare every soul now left alive in East Utah; but the Mormons must leave the country within two days, and should receive safe conduct through the Undi territory. Of their goods and chattels they might take whatever Grenville saw fit to let them have, but the country should be the property of the Zulus, under "their Mother, the Great White Queen; and in it their father, the great and wise white chief, the renowned and invincible warrior, would ever find a home in the hearts of his faithful children, and hands ready and willing to help him in his battles with the cunning witch-finders, or other low people against whom he might wish to make war."

The end of all this was that Grenville and Amaxosa, accompanied by a score of active Zulus, went down to the Mormon town next day—the intervening time being occupied in burying the dead, to prevent the place from becoming plague-stricken, an idea abhorrent to the Europeans when they remembered that in a peaceful corner close by their dear ones—Winfield and Rose—slept their eternal sleep under the protecting shadow of the great trees, where the little brook, which yesterday ran red with rivers of human blood, now sang its peaceful lullaby, and threaded its sinuous course through the forest and out into the rolling veldt, looking like a tiny riband of moving glistening silver.

On arriving within eye-shot of the town, Grenville was surprised to notice an unusual quiet about the place; and on hailing the place to surrender, received no reply.

Apprehensive of a surprise, the band gradually approached and cautiously entered the town, only to find it untenanted by a living soul.

The Mormons had evidently taken flight hurriedly, fearing the vengeance of Grenville and his Zulu allies, for the streets were strewn with their household goods in every direction; and on further examination it proved that the whole community had crossed the river by the central bridge, which they had closed against pursuers, and had betaken themselves to the great stairway with multitudinous ladders.

On discovering this voluntary capitulation, Grenville gave a sigh of relief, for he had feared lest some overt act of imprudence on the part of the Mormons should draw down upon them prompt and unsparing vengeance on the part of

his bloodthirsty allies, when he well knew that man, woman, and child would have gone down “in one red slaughter blent.”

The main body was soon called up, and that night, for the first time for many months, our friends slept with a genuine roof over their heads.

The Zulus, under the direction of Amaxosa, sacked the town, taking all they wanted, but bringing to Grenville all the gold they came across, which was to be the share of his party—and a very fair quantity they found, too—and as there was still some little time before the setting in of the rains, Grenville and his cousin visited the river near their old Table Rock, and going higher up the stream found it, as poor Winfield had predicted, a veritable El Dorado.

“You see, Alf,” said Grenville, “you’re going back to England, and you mean to be married; and take my word for it, old chap, you’ll get a dusting from your governor for getting spliced without his consent. Not that I would advise you otherwise; you’ve got a sweet little woman for a wife, and may God bless you both; but remember that every thousand pounds you can take home with you will lessen the old man’s wrath, so take my advice and carry in a decent ‘pile.’”

For ten days the cousins toiled, whilst Dora Winfield resided with them in their old quarters at the rock; and when the time came for them to say farewell to East Utah, they had amassed an enormous quantity of the precious metal, for which their friend Amaxosa gladly provided bearers.

Grenville said a last farewell to the grave of the girl who had loved him so well, and turned away with an aching void in his breast. The grand self-sacrifice of this poor young creature had stirred his noble nature to its very depths, and had he a hundred lives he would willingly have relinquished them all to bring her back again to her place, which, alas! would henceforth know her no more. As he moved dejectedly on towards the western bridge, a hand was laid upon his arm, and the voice of Amaxosa softly said, “Will my father turn aside and do the final honours to him who loved him, and who died for him?”

Without a word Grenville turned and followed the chief, only to find, in the very centre of the Mormon town, the body of Myzukulwa—or, rather, what was left of it—placed upon a funeral pyre, surrounded by a hundred of the chiefs and headmen of his tribe.

Seeing he was expected to say something, Grenville stepped forward, and laying his hand upon the cold brow of the dead warrior, he said—

“Amaxosa, my brother, children of the ancient race of Undi, my faithful sons, here you behold all that remains of him who was the bravest man in a nation where all are warriors and mighty men of renown. As he lived, so he died, with his face to the foe, and his victorious foot upon their stricken necks. My brothers, let us live as he lived, so that when our time comes we may die even as he died—ever faithful to the death—Myzukulwa, the son of Isanus, the son of Undi.”

Not another word was spoken; the warriors filed slowly past the corpse, and the last man lighted the funeral pyre as all left the town, leaving it in lonesome possession of the ashes of the mighty and unforgotten dead; but looking back some time later, Grenville saw that Zulu artifice had evidently set fire to the town in several quarters at once, for East Utah lay behind him one mass of smoke and flame, forming a glorious monument to the memory of the departed chief whom such a fiery couch for his final sleep befitted to a degree.

The descent into the bed of the river was accomplished with difficulty, but once down, the party—Dora mounted on the quagga—pushed steadily forward and reached the outer world just before the sun set, all heaving a sincere sigh of relief on finding East Utah at last shut out from view, and belonging only to the memories of the bitter past and the shadows of the hereafter.

Grenville that night asked Amaxosa how he accounted for the herds of game going through the water and all along the dark tunnel. For reply the chief signed to our friend to follow him. Gliding to the river-brink, they sought cover, and soon Grenville by the light of the moon saw several head of game enter the water and apparently commence *to browse there*, and he at once realised what was going on as the animals, feeding on the mosslike weeds which floated on the surface, gradually entered the tunnel and disappeared from view.

In this way they were undoubtedly led through the mountain, and on arriving at the further side, with their appetites satisfied by the luscious moss, did not care to face the tunnel, but took the first way that presented itself up to the daylight. How Amaxosa’s rhinoceros had ever got through was a marvel to all, but he had probably accomplished the journey during an abnormally low state of the river.

Next morning Grenville and his friends set out for Natal, taking with them their bearers, and bidding an affectionate good-bye to Amaxosa.

The chief was too much affected to speak; and when Dora Winfield clasped a gold bracelet of her own round his sinewy wrist as a keepsake, he fairly broke down, and with a final wave of his hand turned dejectedly away, following the last of his men back into the tunnel.

Little did the cowardly Mormons imagine that this wild and savage spirit, which for years had brooked their blows, their curses, and their ignominious service, would one day rise and crush them out of remembrance, and hold undisputed sway in their own kingdom, which would henceforth know them no more.

Chapter Twenty One.

“Vale, Me Ama!”

The rest of our story is soon told.

Grenville and his companions, after numberless hardships, owing to the unprecedentedly heavy rains, at last reached Natal, where our friend had the satisfaction of acting as best man at his cousin’s wedding.

A full notice of this interesting event was published in the Local Press by some enterprising reporter. On the following

day, a few hours after the issue of the sheet in question, Grenville, who was sitting listlessly smoking in the hotel, was surprised by the advent of a smart, dapper-looking little man, who asked him if he was the "gentleman known as Mr Alfred Leigh."

"No," replied Grenville; "do you really want my cousin?—for he's a newly-married man, you know."

"Yes, sir, I do want him," said the little man, bowing deferentially, "and he will wish to see me. Can you introduce me?"

"Certainly," said Grenville, rising lazily. "Whom shall I announce?"

"My name is Driffield, of the firm of Masterton and Driffield, solicitors," was the reply.

Leading the new arrival to Leigh's private sitting-room, Grenville circumspectly knocked at the door, and entering said, "My cousin, Mr Driffield.—Alf, Mr Driffield, who is a lawyer, is anxious to meet you, and says you will be glad to see him."

"You misunderstood me, sir," said the little lawyer; "I observed that your cousin would wish to see me. The news I bring you, sir, is both bad and good—bad, because your father and your brother are both dead; good, because I have to congratulate you upon your accession to the peerage, Lord Dreincourt."

Poor Alf! it was indeed cruel news to strike him at the very commencement of his wedded happiness; but his wife slipped her soft arms round his neck, and the lawyer considerably withdrew, Grenville whispering to him to wait his return in the smoke-room.

In few words Leigh told his cousin to find out all the solicitor had to communicate, and to do what he thought best; and then Grenville left him alone with his sorrow and his new-made wife.

The lawyer had little to tell. Lord Dreincourt and his son had been killed in a railway accident in Ireland, and advertisements had been inserted in all the South African papers for the missing heir to the title, as his wanderings had been traced as far as Natal.

Grenville was favourably impressed with the little man, who hurried away to cable his lordship's London solicitors, promising to return that evening, which he did, and made himself so useful that before the new Lord Dreincourt's departure for England he was made happy with a very handsome cheque.

Grenville next took passages by the Union Company's steamer *Tartar*, and saw his cousin and his bride safely off two days after, the former in possession of a bill of lading for gold dust to the value of *a quarter of a million sterling*.

Words cannot describe poor Leigh's distress when he found that his cousin had no intention of accompanying them to the Old Country.

"Dick, you're not going back to waste your life over her grave and amongst savages? Don't do it, old man," pleaded his cousin.

"Not I, Alf—I'm not made of that kind of stuff. If I do anything with reference to the matter, it will be in the direction of visiting Salt Lake City and exterminating the whole cursed Mormon breed. I cannot yet coop myself up in trim civilised England—I long for the keen breath of the mountain air and for the wide sweep of veldt as it spreads its expanse before me in all the weird mystery of the moonlight. No, dear old chap; you have someone else to take care of you now; but when you want Dick Grenville, you know you've only to ask for him. Adieu, Alf; good-bye, Sister Dora. God bless you both! Vale, me ama!"

The End.

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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK INTO THE UNKNOWN: A ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA ***

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