

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of An I.D.B. in South Africa, by Louise Vescelius Sheldon

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Title: An I.D.B. in South Africa

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Release date: August 29, 2011 [EBook #37265]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Nick Hodson of London, England

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Louise Vescelius-Sheldon

"An I.D.B. in South Africa"

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### Chapter One.

#### The Marked Diamond.

"Who is that beautiful woman in the box opposite us, Herr Schwatka?"

"Which one, Major? There are two, if my eyes may be trusted."

"She with the dark hair?"

"That is Mrs Laure, and the gentleman is her husband, Donald Laure."

"What a beautiful creature, is she not?"

"Yes, beautiful indeed, as many of the Cape women are. But the union of European with African produces, in their descendants, beings endowed with strange and inconsistent natures. These two bloods mingle but will not blend; more prominently are these idiosyncrasies developed where the Zulu parentage can be traced, and naturally so, for the Zulus are the most intelligent of all the African tribes. Now they are all love, tenderness, and devotion, ready to make any sacrifice for those on whom their affections are placed; again revengeful, jealous, vindictive."

"But surely that woman has no African blood in her veins," said the major.

"Yes," replied Schwatka, quietly; "but the fact is not generally known."

"What eyes! I should like to know such a woman. To analyse character moulded in such a form would be a delightful study. And the lady with her, who may she be?" continued the major.

"Miss Kate Darcy, an American lady now visiting her brother, a director in the Standard Diamond Mining Company. These Americans, turn up everywhere," and Schwatka lifted his shoulders with an expressive shrug.

"Then the gentleman with her is the brother, eh?" persistently continued the major.

"No, that is Count Telfus, a large dealer in diamonds, said to have made much money. There goes the curtain."

The preceding conversation between Major Kildare and Herr Schwatka took place in a box of the Theatre Royal on the Kimberley Diamond Fields. As Schwatka looked at Donald Laure, the latter glanced across the house; their eyes met and a sign of recognition passed between them. Presently Mrs Laure turned, disclosing an exquisitely beautiful face, but one apparently unconscious of the effect of its beauty. Her height was slightly below the average, and her form faultless. Her short, black, wavy hair adorned a small but beautifully-shaped head, crowning a swan-like neck, encircled by a necklace of diamonds and rubies sparkling like drops of dew. Her toilet was conspicuous by its elegance—an elegance that well became her unusual style.



Shortly before the end of the first act, while the attention of the audience was riveted on the stage, a man quietly entered the Laure box, and touching Count Telfus on the shoulder whispered a few words in his ear. The Count gave a sudden start, his face blanching perceptibly, but with perfect composure of carriage he arose, and, excusing himself to the ladies, retired from the box. The stranger had entered unnoticed by the other occupants, who were attentively listening to the music of the opera, with the exception of Donald Laure, who had been an observer of the proceeding. As the curtain fell at the end of the act he followed the Count.

Major Kildare, who had been interested in watching the face of Mrs Laure, observed this scene in the box and drew Herr Schwatka's attention. The latter sprang to his feet, at the same time exclaiming, in a voice low but audible to those in the immediate vicinity, "Detectives." Drawing the Major's arm through his, he led him out of the theatre, into the café adjoining, where they found Count Telfus in charge of two men of the detective force. The Count stood silent in the midst of the excited crowd that filled the room; but his pale face and the nervous manner in which he bit on an unlighted cigar plainly showed that he was suffering intensely.

"Count Telfus," said one of the detectives, "we have an order for your arrest, and you must also permit us to search you. We trust that we have been misinformed, but a marked diamond has been traced to your possession, and our orders are imperative."

"I have nothing about me not mine by a legitimate ownership," said the Count, in a cold, clear voice, "and I will not submit to the outrage of a personal search. It is well known that I am a licensed diamond buyer; here is the proof of it." And he drew a paper from his pocket.

"That you are a licensed buyer is the greater reason why your dealings should be honest," rejoined one of his captors, proceeding to search him. Even as he spoke he drew a large diamond from the Count's vest-pocket.

"Fifteen years in the chain-gang," cried an ex-Judge who had bought many a stone on the sly.

"Father Abraham!" exclaimed a sympathising Israelite, "how could he be so careless with such a blazer." Similar ejaculations rose from the crowd around him.

In those bitter moments a despair like, death fell on Telfus; for his life was blighted and his family name disgraced. He did not see that excited crowd of which he was the centre; he only saw, in his mind's eye, his mother's face filled with an agony of shame. And he heard, with the acuteness that comes only in times of greatest distress, the low

contralto tones of a soulful voice floating from the stage of the theatre within, and breathing out the words: "Farewell, farewell, my dear, my happy home."

Alone he stood, bidding an inward farewell to his own home—condemned to an infamous exposure.

His friends around him were powerless to aid, for the diamond had been found on him. "Sorry for you, old boy," said Dr Fox, an American, as he wrung the hand above which the detectives put on the bracelets of the law, which shutting with a click, struck on the Count's consciousness like a knell of doom. He gasped, and stifled a cry that rose to his lips. When his hands were secured, followed by a noisy crowd, he was led to a Cape cart standing in front of the door. He sank into the seat, a brokenhearted man, his thoughts far away in that home in Paris, which on the morrow would be filled with sorrow and anguish.

Suddenly arousing himself he asked to be taken to the telegraph office. Arriving there they found it closed.

"Fortune favours me thus much," he thought; "the only news they will receive will be that I am dead."

They reached the prison, and the Count was placed in a cell.

Before the sound of the jailer's footsteps had died away, the report of a pistol told that Telfus had passed beyond the reach of human law.

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## **Chapter Two.**

### **The Mystic Sign.**

Within rifle-shot of the "ninth wonder of the world," the great Kimberley Mine, stood a pretty one-story cottage nestling among a mass of creepers that shaded a wide veranda. The house, like many others on the Fields, was constructed of corrugated iron, fastened to a framework of wood. Beams were laid on the ground; to these were fastened uprights from four to six inches square.

In place of lath and plastered walls, thick building paper formed the interior covering, leaving a space between the iron outside and the paper within.

The interior of the cottage was in marked contrast with its outer appearance. A wide hall extended through the entire depth, with a door at each end. The walls were artistically hung with shields, assagais, spears, and knob-kerries, and in either corner stood a large elephant's tusk, mounted on a pedestal of ebony.

A small horned head of the beautiful blesse-bok hung over a door leading into an apartment, the floor of which was covered with India matting, over which was strewn karosses of rarest fur; a piano stood in one corner, while costly furniture, rich lace, and satin hangings were arranged with an artistic sense befitting the mistress of it all.

On a divan, the upholstery of which was hidden by a karosse of leopard skins, reclined Dainty Laure, a woman on whom the South African suns had shone for not more than twenty years. The light, softened by amber curtains, revealed an oval face, with features of that sensuous type seen only in those born in the climes of the sun. This clear, olive-tinted face showed a love of ease and luxury, unless the blood which seemed to sleep beneath its crystal veil should rouse to a purpose, and make this being a dangerous and implacable enemy.

Her eyes were closed; one would have thought she slept, but for the occasional motion of a fan of three ostrich feathers. The reverie into which she had fallen was broken by the striking of the clock. The pencilled eyebrows gave a little electric move, and the lids slowly unveiled those dark languorous eyes, which seemed like hidden fountains of love.



So expressive was the play of those delicate eyelids that one forgot the face in watching them, as they would droop and droop, and then slowly open until the great, luminous orbs appeared, and seemed to dilate with an infinite wonder, a sort of childlike fear combined with the look of a caged wild animal. This expression extended to the mouth, with its budding lips over small, white teeth. Should occasion come, she could smile with her eyes, while her mouth looked cruel.

A white robe of fleecy lace clung round her form, and from the hem of her garment peeped a ravishing little foot, encased in silken hose and satin slipper of the same bronze hue.

Bracelets of dewdrop diamonds encircled her wrists, and with the rubies and diamonds at throat and ear, completed a toilet which might have vied with that of some semi-barbaric Eastern princess.

Such was the woman in whose veins ran the blood of European and African races.

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In one of the numerous wars between the native tribes and English soldiers in Africa, Captain Montgomery, pierced by an assegai, fell wounded on the battle-field, and was left for dead. For hours he lay unconscious. Toward night he awoke to a realisation of his perilous situation, in the midst of a dense underbrush infested with reptiles and wild beasts, to which he at any moment might fall a victim. He attempted to rise, but his stiffened limbs refused their office; thirst, that ever-present demon of the wounded, parched his throat.

After many fruitless efforts he succeeded in rising to a sitting posture, but the effort caused his brain to reel, and all again became a blank. For a short time he remained in this condition, when perfect consciousness, like that which with vivid force precedes dissolution, returned, and revealed standing before him an aged Zulu chief, accompanied by an attendant. The supreme moment of his life seemed to have arrived, and with a final effort he summoned all his strength and made a sign—the sign known to the elect of all nations. The sign was recognised—understood—by that savage in the wilderness. There, in that natural temple of the Father of all good, stood one to whom had descended from the ages the mystic token of brotherhood.

At a signal the attendant Zulu bounded away, leaving the chief, who gently placed the soldier's body in a less painful position. The native soon returned with three others, bringing a litter made of ox-hides, on which, with slow and measured steps, they bore him to their kraal, situated on a hillside, at the foot of which was a running stream.

He was taken to a hut and placed on a bed of soft, sweet-smelling grasses covered with skins. Tenderly the rude Africans moistened his lips, removed his clothing, and bathed his wounds. For hours he lay unconscious; then a sigh welled from his breast, another and another. Gently the attendants raised his head, and administered a cooling drink.

Soon a profuse perspiration covered his body, and the strained look of pain gradually left his face.

The following day the chief, with his principal attendants, visited the Englishman. Forming a circle round his couch, they stood for several moments gazing at the sufferer in profound silence; then, passing before his pallet, they slowly filed out of the hut.

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## Chapter Three.

### Cupid's Arrow in an African Forest.

For several days Captain Montgomery's condition was extremely critical, but the careful nursing and devoted attention of the Izinyanga, or native doctor, aided by his simple, yet efficient remedies, soon restored the patient.

One morning he awoke quite free from pain, the fever broken, and with that sense of restful languor that attends convalescence, pervading his being. As he lay in this condition, with his eyes half closed, he saw standing in the opening of the hut a girl of perhaps sixteen years.

A leopard skin was thrown over her right shoulder, which, falling to the knee, draped her form. A necklace of strands of beads encircled her throat. Her arms and ankles were ornamented with bands of gold. For a moment she gazed on him, and then uttered to her two female attendants a few words consisting of vowel sounds and sharp notes made by clicking the tongue against the roof of the mouth.

On hearing her voice Montgomery widely opened his eyes, when, followed by her women, the girl fled with a springing step like a frightened deer.

Often, after that fleeting vision, during his waking moments would Montgomery feel that those dusky eyes were gazing at him, and when he lifted his own it would be to see her swiftly and silently moving away.

In a short time he was able to walk about in the cool shade of the great forests of paardepis and saffron-wood, where he would at times see the face of the Zulu princess peering out, like some dusky dryad, from behind the hanging boughs, only to disappear, when detected, into the depths of the wood.

After a few weeks had passed she grew less shy, and when he spoke to her she would stand a few moments listening to the unknown tongue, whose accents seemed to charm and draw her to the spot; but if he made a motion as if to approach, she would vanish swiftly as a thought flies.

One morning when his health had become fully restored, the chief who had rescued the captain in his hour of extremity, appeared, and by signs made him understand that he was to follow him. They proceeded to the outer edge of the gloomy forest, where speaking a few words in Zuluese, the native disappeared in the direction they had come. Understanding that the parting speech of his guide instructed him to continue in the course he had pointed out, Montgomery pressed forward on his journey. He had walked alone, perhaps an hour, when he was startled by the sight of the Princess, emerging from the shade of a tall boxwood tree, leading two horses. She motioned him to take one, and as he leaped on its back, she quickly mounted the other, and in a few moments they had passed away from the scene forever.

These two beings were the ancestors of Dainty Laure.

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Soon after his arrival in Cape Town, Donald Laure had met Dainty. She was little more than a child in years, but matured in form, and being possessed of dangerous beauty was attractive to this impulsive Scotchman from the cold North, where women of her radiant type are never seen.



From the first moment he saw her, he had only one thought, one idea, which grew to a determined purpose, and that was, to possess her. She was a wild bird and knew little of the world's ways, and as he was the first man who had laid siege to her heart he amused her, and she grew more and more interested in him.

When a few weeks later he asked her to become his wife, she consented with a half wonder, half delight; and when the marriage ceremony had taken place, and they were on their way to Kimberley, she could scarcely realise the fact that she was a wife; it was all so strange and sudden.

Four years after we find her dreaming on her divan, with nothing to do in life but to dream.

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## Chapter Four.

### The Unwelcome Letter.

The morning following the events related in our first chapter, found Kimberley in a high state of excitement.

Every man looked at his neighbour with a face like an interrogation point, as if to ask, "Who next?"

The diamond market was crowded with men, gathered in groups, earnestly discussing the *exposé*, and the fatal dénouement.

No one had stood higher in the esteem of the people than Count Telfus.

Among the first to engage in the diamond trade in Kimberley, he had enjoyed the confidence of his associates, and, up to the day of his arrest, no breath of suspicion had dimmed the lustre of his name. It was evident that the numerous thefts of precious stones by the Kafirs had aroused the authorities to their highest endeavour, and no one knew on whom the next bolt of discovery might fall.

With Telfus guilty, whose name might not be found on the list of I.D.B.'s?

There were few among those engaged in this unlawful trade whose minds were free from anxiety, for even the

guiltless might find his name in the Doomsday book as among the suspected. When Donald reached home that evening he found Dainty anxiously awaiting his return. The excitement caused by the arrest and death of Count Telfus had reached every class, and the unusual stir among the domestics had filled her mind with dire apprehensions. She immediately inquired if there were any further developments.

"The town is greatly excited. Dr Fox has written to the Count's family in Paris, that the Count was accidentally killed, but carefully avoided any mention of the true cause of his death. Poor Telfus!"

Dainty sighed, for the Count had been a frequent visitor, and his face always brought sunshine into the house.

"Do you think he was guilty?"

"Rumour says the police sold a marked diamond to a Kafir for a song, and then watched him. By some strange fatality it fell into Telfus' hands."

He paused, and looking into her eyes, asked:

"What would you do, if some great trouble should come to you?"

"Trouble? Surely no danger threatens us, Donald. You alarm me, what harm can come to us?"

He was about to speak, but checked himself, and turning on his heel, hastily left the room.

Donald was naturally of a buoyant disposition, and extremely popular in business and social circles: but of late he had grown moody and taciturn, and there was a marked change in his demeanour toward Dainty.

She believed that her husband adored her, and if his preoccupied and distracted manner sometimes raised a query in her mind, it was too short-lived to warrant any serious thought, and she quickly banished it. She was fond of her husband in a childlike, cooing way, and it was her delight to wind her arms about his neck, and, with a gentle twittering sound, like a dove caressing its mate, ask the question that every woman asks (who is sure of the answer): "Do you love me?"—and wait to hear the low, responsive sigh, or receive a fond embrace. This unusual question of Donald's alarmed her, and she stole softly into the adjoining room where she found Donald nervously pacing the floor.

His face was pale and his eyes glistened with a hunted expression. Laying her hand on his arm, she said:

"What is it that worries you, Donald?" He started and stammered: "Nothing—except a little business annoyance."

She saw a letter in his hand, bearing a foreign postmark, and gave it a questioning glance, to which he replied:

"A letter I have received from Amsterdam. There is a heavy decline in the diamond market."

"Don't worry about that; you have now more than enough of this world's goods to take care of yourself and your little wife as long as you live," said Dainty, as she laughingly rubbed her cheek on his arm with an action suggestive of a purring kitten. Without looking up, she continued:



“Why don’t you take me to England?”

He shut his eyes, and bit his lips, but oblivious to his emotion she went on.

“You have so often promised, and I so want a change. I long to visit the land you have told me of.”

“Some day, my dear, you will see that great country of mine, but not just now,” rejoined Donald, gently.

“Ah, Donald, why do you always feed my curiosity with the shadow of promises?”

Donald watched her with an idolatrous look until she passed from the room, and then with a groan sank into a chair, and buried his face in his hands. For a moment he sat in silence, then re-opened the letter. It was dated “London” and the passage in it that he had read and re-read, was this:

“The person you inquire about is in the city, and has learned—I know not how—that you are in South Africa, and is determined to hunt you down.”

Striking a match, he set fire to the letter, and watched it slowly burn, and crisply curl in his fingers. He then threw it on the floor, and crushed it with his foot, with the unspoken wish that this act could blot out its menace from his memory.

Growing calmer he arose, and passing his hand over his face as if putting on a mask, went out of the room to join his wife at dinner.

The dinner was served by a black dwarf named Bela, who in his fantastic proportions resembled a heathen idol in bronze.

After they had eaten sometime in silence, Dainty asked.

“Are you going out this evening?”

“I must go to the club, but I will return early.”



"I am often lonely, Donald, when I am left with only my thoughts for company," said Dainty, somewhat mournfully.

"You must be lonely sometimes," replied Donald. "Let us try a small diversion. Why not invite in a few friends for an evening? Make out your list, and send the invitations to-morrow. Don't get the blues while I am away," and kissing her, he hurried into the street.

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## **Chapter Five.**

### **Impressions.**

There are women who have no power of attraction until you meet them in their homes, surrounded by evidences of an individuality which belies your first impression. Then for the first time you discover new traits of character, and evidences of thought that fascinate and hold you; then for the first time they surprise and delight you with their real selves.

Again, there are those who shine abroad, but darken their homes. In the chilling atmosphere surrounding them, no life can expand. These women are dwarfed souls. Affecting the semblance, they know not the real. The lifeless imitation of their surroundings betrays them, and chills the sensibilities of their guests.

The wife of Donald Laure, was a woman whose surroundings seemed a part of herself—a bright, light creature, glorifying the materialities about her with a certain radiance, and none could enter her home without feeling the charm that pervaded it. With her warm heart and generous impulses she seemed born but to make beholders happy.

She was, as yet, unconscious of the powers that lay dormant in her; under her childlike exterior was a soul of which even her husband knew nothing. All her knowledge of the world was like the knowledge of a maiden, far from its busy actualities.

She mused upon its wonders as they were presented to her mind by her husband, but he would have been amazed at the panorama of her thoughts.

Greater amazement would have been his, had he known the strange truth of which she herself was entirely oblivious, that the great pulsating power of Love had not yet inspired her. To be loved, caressed, cared for, had so far made her content. But, born of the English soldier and the daughter of a savage warrior, there slumbered in her soul a possibility of passion that needed only to be roused to burst into flame.

The life of excitement that society offers, brings little contentment to a woman with Dainty's nature. She only beats the bars raised by its cold, formal laws, and sufficient unto herself, living a life within that soothes, she becomes a fascinating siren to the energetic nineteenth century man, who comes with his beliefs in materialism, and his doubts of any goodness that he cannot prove.

Such a woman is to him a creature to be tested by his methods, and broken on the wheels of his unfeeling Juggernaut of selfishness and animalism.

Being a delightfully untutored, trusting soul, she is not looking for this monster evil—self, that he has raised up and worships. At first attracted to him by a warmth of manner which has every appearance of generosity, she at last becomes interested in him so deeply, that the winning of her perfect trust, her whole heart, is an easy pastime, undertaken at seemingly accidental moments, but in reality pursued as steps in a long and carefully laid plan.

The evening set apart for receiving the "few friends" was a memorable one.

Herr Schwatka, accompanied by Major Kildare, was the first to arrive. Herr Schwatka was a tall, fair-haired Austrian, of distinguished appearance, and engaging manners. He was a cool-headed, strong-willed materialist, to whom human nature was a congenial study, who never allowed anything to thwart his purpose, and whose spirit of determination dominated most of those with whom he came in contact. To him, women had been but playthings; he laughed at such an idea as the grand passion—a figment of the brain for the misleading of boys!

As the two men entered the salon, Kildare, with all his English coolness, started with surprise at the beauty of his surroundings. Accustomed to the society which his rank as an officer in the British army gave him, he had seen much that was rich and alluring in many countries; but here, in an African desert, many hundred miles from the sea, to find such taste and elegance displayed, was to him surprising.



The crimson and gold hangings reflected from mirrors in the opal light, made a fitting background to a picture, in which stood as its central figure, the Queen of this home, Dainty Laure—a highly gifted woman, possessing that rarest of all gifts, perfect naturalness. Donald, standing by her side, presented the two gentlemen.

Had she been the daughter of a duke, she could not have done the honours with more grace.

The European in Africa has a deep-seated antipathy to the faintest trace of mixed blood. Yet, as Herr Schwatka bowed to Mrs Laure in his elegant way, he was conscious of receiving a pleasant impression entirely new to him.

As for Major Kildare, he was altogether charmed with her, and speedily opened conversation with the common-place question:

“Mrs Laure, how do you amuse yourself in this dusty town of Kimberley?”

“I do not amuse myself, but let what I see amuse me,” replied Dainty. “My horses and my dogs are company; everything that is beautiful pleases me; I make friends of the pleasant people I meet, and avoid the unhappy ones who carry their woes pictured on their faces.”

“But what do you do for a confidential friend? Woman must have them, you know, and you hardly find any congenial woman here!”

“You forget Kate Darcy,” replies Dainty. “She is a being to admire. I look at no one else when Kate is by.”

“Would it be wrong to be glad she is not here then?” said the major, gallantly.

“I think you will be pleased to meet her, you cannot fail to admire her,” answered Dainty. “She is not like me.”

Herr Schwatka smiled at the last assertion.

“Do you expect us to admire her when she is not like you?”

Dainty looked at the Austrian with a little deprecatory smile, as she said: “You will admire her for what she is, rather than what she is not.”

"It is pleasant to hear a woman praise a woman," said Herr Schwatka. "All women do it sometimes, for they all must have some intimate whom they can love, caress, and lavish themselves upon."

"Yes," said Dainty, "that may be true, but Kate is not the style of woman you imagine. She is strong and noble, though gentle withal—wait till you meet her."

Herr Schwatka felt a warm thrill at the enthusiasm and loyalty of the heart that loved its friends so wholly.

"It were well to gain you for a friend," he said.

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## Chapter Six.

### Kate.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Miss Kate Darcy, and Doctor Fox. They were a very handsome couple, at least so thought Major Kildare, for turning to Mrs Laure he said:

"I believe all you have said of your friend is true, and without the slightest exaggeration."

As the guests continued to arrive, Dainty appeared radiantly happy. At a request for some music, Miss Darcy moved toward the piano.

"What shall I sing for you?"

"Make your own selection and that will be your best," said Dainty, as she reclined in the depths of a chair, prepared to be captivated. Herr Schwatka took a seat at her side. Kate touched the keys caressingly for some minutes, striking a few chords here and there, with a little running accompaniment between, which expressed her indecision of selection, until finally striking a decided chord, she began, in a perfectly modulated voice, to sing that recitative and aria by Handel, commencing "Lascia ch'io pianga," incomparable for opportunity of expression, and for revealing the artistic sense of the singer. Sinking from the triumphant strains into a soft pleading accent, she sang the three stanzas with a pathos that moved her auditors to the depths of their natures.

As she arose from the piano, there was a murmur of regret.

"Don't rise, Miss Darcy," said Dainty, pleadingly. "Just think how hungry appreciative South Africans are for good music. We have never heard such singing here before. Please give us another selection."

Kate never indulged in affectations of reluctance, so resuming her seat, she sang a plaintive old negro melody from the plantations of American slavery, the only original music, some one has said, of which Americans can boast.



Kate's face was singularly attractive. Her eyes, inherited from an Irish mother, were dark blue shaded by black eyelashes. One might criticise her features, for they were not perfect, and might examine her dimpled face and say it was not pretty, yet it was so expressive, that a stranger on being introduced to her, when she was in a happy mood, would be fascinated, and think her altogether charming.

Major Kildare was attracted to Kate and completely captivated, when he learned in the course of conversation that they had mutual friends in his far away home, in merrie England. But he was not privileged to monopolise Miss Darcy, for others pressed around her, and Doctor Fox stood ever in the background, perhaps discussing some mining operation in the intricacies of which he was well versed, but never far from the sound of her voice. Having speculated in the gold and silver mines of California and Colorado, and being possessed of that sixth sense with which Americans are accredited, and which being evolved becomes, in a few, the gift of invention, Doctor Fox had won, by his knowledge of mining and his improvements in mining machinery, the favourable opinions of the officers of the Diamond Mining Company in which he was a heavy stockholder.

"Herr Schwatka," said Donald, "have you been down in the mine by the new shaft? It is now completed, and the cage is in perfect operation."

"I went down yesterday," replied Schwatka, "and I found it a wonder of mining enterprise. The ladies should visit it. Would you not like to go, Mrs Laure, and you, Miss Darcy?"

"We would be delighted; I will answer for both," said Kate, smilingly.

This evening was the beginning of a new era in the lives of these two women, who had felt singularly drawn to each other. Dainty realised that she gathered forces new to her from Kate, while the latter was fascinated by this beautiful wildling, who knew nothing of the great world, which the other had but recently left behind her.

As Major Kildare left the house that evening with Herr Schwatka, he enthusiastically remarked:

"By Jove! that Miss Darcy is a fine woman!"

Herr Schwatka took a pull at his cigar, and dreamily watched the rings in the bright moonlight as they slowly curled up into the still air. At last he said:

"She is, indeed, but I feel a little afraid of those fair '*Américaines!*' I can't keep pace with them. I met one in Vienna during the Exposition, and she was a revelation. Such a sight-seer! Her mother was with her, but she could do very well without her. If she wanted to go out of an evening, and her mother was tired from her day's peregrinations, that girl would say: 'Go to bed, mamma; we are going to the opera?' or whatever it might be. And off we would go, without protest from the submissive mamma. It was some while before I could comprehend her; her ways were so different from those of my own countrywomen. One evening while we were driving to a fête, emboldened by her unreserved manner, I attempted a little lover-like caress. You should have seen the American then! She sat as straight as a needle, and was equally sharp. 'You and I are friends, aren't we?' she asked.

"'Doubtless,' I replied.

"'Well,' said she, 'if you wish us to continue as such, don't attempt to ditto that. I have come to see Europe, and I haven't much time to spare. If we commence to make love, I won't see anything but you, and as there is not the slightest possibility of your being the whole of Europe to me, if you will just be my comrade, I shall like it better.'

"I shall never forget the satisfied expression that stole over her face, as she folded her hands, and looked straight ahead with a gleam in her eyes, and then turned the conversation in the easiest manner imaginable. It amused me immensely, but I didn't repeat the little indiscretion, and the few weeks she remained in Vienna were among the most delightful ones of my life. We were comrades, and I never understood till then how a woman could be perfectly free in her manners, yet perfectly true to her womanhood."

"By Jove! Schwatka, it isn't often that you find your match," said the major, laughing heartily, as they entered the "Queen's" Hotel.

That night the picture that only faded from the consciousness of Herr Schwatka, to reappear in his dreams, was that of a graceful woman—the wife of Donald Laure.

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## Chapter Seven.

### The Story of a Singer.

What a charming creature is the enthusiastic talented girl, who is ever trying to solve the riddle of life with a girl's avidity. How earnestly she follows the light on her pathway! Sometimes deluded, but always in earnest; even leaving the old roof-tree in the search for satisfaction, often returning to it, weary and travel-stained, content to have one little corner by the home fireside, where she finds more happiness and rest in a day, than in her years of wandering and chasing butterflies.

It is the clear-eyed, far-seeing girl, with a singing voice, that can thrill the hearts of her hearers, in whom we are now interested.

What a book could be written on the broken lives, the vanished hopes, and the lost voices, of American girls in Europe!

There, where the life is alluring, and maestros paid in gold; where Americans are looked upon as common prey by the Parisian shop-keeper, the student finds that Art is long, and not only time, but gold is fleeting.

There, many an enthusiastic girl possessed of ordinary talent, and led away by vanity and the flattery of over-zealous friends, is found living in a feverish belief in her ultimate success, and looking to her teacher to promote her interests.

He is more often but a shark, ready to devour her, body and soul. For he panders to her belief in his charlatany, and flatters her vanity, until the money is nearly gone. Not until then does she realise that no one but herself has been deceived.

Her pride comes to her rescue, and with her voice still undeveloped, she rushes hither and thither in her frantic endeavours to secure the position she desires.

Friendless, moneyless, and alone: what can she do?

A singer's life is emphatically a mixture of fulfilled hopes and bitter disappointments.

A famous teacher in Paris says to his pupils:

"Before starting out on your career, make for yourself two pockets; one very large, and the other exceedingly small; the large one for the snubs, and the small one for the money."

Talent is one thing, but management is another, and without the latter, talent goes begging. Art may become a classic in the hands of talent, but the singer must depend largely upon the manager (often ungrammatical of speech, and arbitrary of manner), if she would know practical success and be known of the world. Kate Darcy had both tact and talent, and the gift of knowing how to use them.

Her childhood was passed in the atmosphere of the theatrical world in New York City, where her father was a violinist, and earned his bread by the sweep of his bow.

When yet a child, she developed great musical talent, and possessed that rarest and most delightful of all voices, a rich contralto.

At fifteen the child was a rising artist, studying day and night, until, at the age of seventeen, being graceful and well developed, she became a leading contralto of an English Opera Company. Her voice grew in strength and richness, and with the growth of the voice came ambition to study under the best masters. That will-o'-the-wisp of art drew her on to Italy, to prepare herself to enter the lists of fame and win a high niche in the temple of song.

She felt that she could conquer anything. She believed in herself—a very necessary requisite for youth, when talented and ambitious. There were no “perhaps’s” or “might be’s” crystallised in the amber of her belief. She was vividly conscious that she possessed the great gift of a rare voice, and did not doubt that somewhere in the world it would be appreciated, and made to yield the wealth which Love always wants, in order to bestow gifts and comforts on its beloved.

On her last appearance on the concert platform in her native city, previous to her departure for Italy, she bore herself with such unaffected simplicity, and seemed so earnest in her efforts, that everyone felt like breathing a benediction for her future success; they realised that the goal she aimed at was only to be reached by years of labour, and by the patient pursuit of opportunities.

She sang several numbers, but nothing half so beautiful as the low, entreating tones in which she breathed out “Kathleen Mavourneen.” As the words rolled out, “It may be for years, and it may be forever,” many an eye filled with tears at the tender pathos in which she veiled the uncertainties of the future.

Kate went to Italy with her mother (who had become a widow), and studied under the direction of the great maestro, Lamperti. She had but few faults to overcome, but she applied herself unceasingly. The voice is a jealous mistress, and stands guard over every thought and action, demanding high recompense from the being who possesses the power to soothe or thrill a soul in darkness. Any letting down the bars of stern discipline of the intellect, finds that vigilant sentinel inquiring the cause.

The ear of the lover becomes aware that the divine voice has lost its love tones; those pure heaven-born messages come to him with a harsher sound. Then when the singer’s thoughts have drifted into some dark miasma, the sensitive instrument cannot attune itself in those dreamy poisonous vapours, and the delicate string loses its perfect harmony. The lover again wonders what powers of earth or air have taken possession of that erstwhile melodious instrument, now, “like sweet bells jangled and out of tune.”

Thus it is if, from looking and listening, with hearing keen and heart responsive, the eyes of the soul ever upward turned for inspiration (the only attitude that makes the spirit by and by victorious), she ceases for a moment, and, hearing the jingling of false bells, looks below; she sees the reflection of the sun on some tinsel-robed, fair, but deluded sister, and is attracted to her. The delights of dissipation in the society of thoughtless, undedicated companions allure her from the path where gleams the pure, white light of art. As she turns, thinking to live only for a little hour with her companions, the gates of the lighted realm, where few enter, close behind her. When she has wandered through the pleasures, which prove to be but the shadows of reality, the temple of that beautifully-tuned and soul-inspiring instrument is a wreck, and the angel-voice fled. Such is the result of neglecting that exacting sovereign, the goddess of music.

She demands the consecration of the whole self, in return for the prize she offers. And none realised it better than Kate. So she gained the excellence of real attainment.

After a brilliant career of seven years, she wearied of incessant travel, and longed to make her home in some quiet corner, away from the sound and whirl of the great busy world, and yet near enough to its heartbeats to feel the pulsation. She found such a spot near London, where she took her old mother, for whom she had an idolatrous love, and where she hoped to enjoy her life in semi-seclusion for a season. She furnished her gem of a house with rare taste, and filled it with souvenirs of the world she had conquered. There her mother fell ill, and demanded, in her nervous, irritable state, in which she would allow the service of no other nurse, constant, care from Kate.



Often when Kate returned home late at night from some concert where she had been the idol of the hour, she would sit and hold her mother in her arms until the cold night air had chilled her to the very bone, for the invalid could not endure a fire in the room. No murmur fell from Kate's lips, and when the dear sufferer succumbed to the disease and passed quietly away, her grief was overwhelming.

But joy trod on the heel of sorrow. A presence had come into her life which grew to be a part of it.

He was one whom everybody admired; a man of culture and refinement, an able musical critic and no mean musician.

He had won her heart, and they were soon to plight their vows at the marriage altar. Some weeks after her mother's death, he departed one morning for Paris, with her kiss on his lips. In a few hours came the news that a channel steamer had collided and gone down with all on board. Her lover was among them!

In a week's time she had left London for the Continent; six months later, she was seen again in the gay world of Paris: but her face was white and wan, and her spirit broken.

Her musical studies were kept up, but her heart was not in her work; and when one night she appeared at the Théâtre des Italiens, and received an ovation, she broke down at the end of the phrase, with stage fright. Without ambition to rise above this misfortune, she left the stage, her career ended.

A few weeks later, impelled by a craving for new sights and surroundings, and a desire for rest far from the scenes of her triumphs and disasters, she arrived in Africa.

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## **Chapter Eight.**

### **Horses and Riders.**

Donald Laure grew more and more morose; some grief was silently preying on his mind. He could not sleep, and often walked the floor of his room during the weary hours of the night.

He became at last so restless that he sought the society of a nature stronger than his own. This society he found in the company of Schwatka, who was now a daily visitor at the house.

Dainty observed his altered appearance, but was unable to fathom its cause.

As his manner grew more and more restrained toward her, she unconsciously turned to Schwatka, whose equable temperament seemed to invite her confidence and her friendship.

Gradually the Austrian made himself a necessary factor in the lives of both husband and wife, and he was her constant attendant in her rides and drives over the veldt.

All this time Dainty was only conscious that his presence made her supremely happy. He was always thoughtful of her welfare, always doing little acts of kindness, which, for the first time in his life, were spontaneous.

She was a refreshing rest to his blasé, worldly nature. When a man who has become selfish, and therefore cruel, in satisfying his own vanity, and pandering to his own appetites, meets with a fresh, guileless soul like Dainty's, he is at once enthralled, and, whether he admits it even to himself, sets about winning a new toy.

Herr Schwatka's new delight was a constant surprise to him; and as he drew out forces in her nature, of whose latent existence he had been ignorant, she more and more revealed charming little traits of character, which had been hidden from Donald.

She loved to ride, and heretofore Donald had always gladly accompanied her in these equestrian pleasures. But as solitude wrapped him up more and more, Schwatka began to take the place at her side. As soon as the outskirts of the town were reached, she would give rein to her horse, and together they would speed over the veldt. The colour came to her cheeks, and a sparkle to her eye, which made her look like an houri in the rosy morn.



Kate Darcy's early morning ride was also her chief delight. Seated on her horse "Beauty," she would leave the camp locked in slumber, and scamper across the barren waste of country, to greet the first rays of the rising sun. Fearless and independent in all her actions, she had learned to rely on her own judgment, and to adapt herself to her surroundings. On several occasions she had seen a couple of equestrians appear on the horizon; and as the outline of their forms became visible, and she recognised Herr Schwatka and Dainty, with a word her horse would shoot away in an opposite direction. She knew human nature, and perceived that the Austrian was gaining a mental ascendancy



over her friend. Was this to be the beginning of the too-oft repeated story of mistaken love? If so she would avoid seeing a human spider weave his web at that beautiful hour of the day. So she would shake off a sensation of depression, and, in love with dear old Mother Nature, free as air she would bound away, until they were lost to view; only so restored to mental quiet. With swift and graceful motions, "Beauty" flew across the shrubless plain, and when she talked to him caressingly, he would shake his head and lift his ears with as much expression in them as in a coquette's eyes, and dash forward with a sense of untrammelled delight.

As "Beauty" leaped ditches and hillocks, Kate would laugh aloud with the spirit of freedom which filled her; that spirit which fills the air of old Africa, with its spiky topped mountains and its barbaric elements, which exploration, civilisation, and Christianity have not conquered. The sleeping barbarian within awakens more or less in every human heart, attuned to nature, when in Africa.

At times, the hollowness and baubles of civilisation, with its art and science, its looms, wheels, and fiery engines, its conventionalities and restrictions, contrasted with the sun-baths, health, and ignorance of disease, in the Zulu mind, with its contented pastoral existence, its adherence to the laws of morality, virtue, and cleanliness, suggests the question: "What is gained by civilisation?"

On his arrival in England, old King Cetewayo innocently asked:

"When Queen Victoria has all this, why does she want my poor little corner of the earth?"

Herr Schwatka could have won hearts in his Vienna home, as food for his vanity. Why did he want to mesmerise this little creature? Why must he bring into her life the gewgaws of civilisation, the tales of wonderful cities where she would be happy, and shine like a meteor in a heaven of celestial beauties?

Could he, with his mesmeric mentality, which would at times rouse her to such a pitch that her spirit would become restless almost to agony, could he offer her the tranquillity of a life which would fold its wings in happy security from hidden enemies, and lull her to rest, safe from the cruel shafts of the tongues rooted in the mouths of those hideous moral volcanoes who, with the gusts of their smiles and flatteries, would overturn and wreck her innocent life?

Men sometimes act as if they believed themselves to be gods.

Few men live up to the reflection of their real selves. Few men are godlike; therefore, few are happy.

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## Chapter Nine.

### Poker and Philosophy.

There were few Americans on the Fields, scarcely a score, but you heard from each one of them, as an individual, and soon learned on what footing you must meet him. Were he a gentleman from the "States," if you had not heard of that country, he had, and could give you information about it, from its present commander-in-chief to the one who in early days first held aloft the screaming eagle—that invincible bird!—a man like himself in one particular—he could not tell a lie. That is to say, if you dared to doubt his word, you could immediately have a chance to choose your weapons.

He was celebrated for his talent in forming stock companies, then running up the price of shares and quietly selling out; after which, intimating that he needed a vacation, he would return to the States, leaving the bubble to burst after his departure.

Sometimes he was known as a physician who, with his patent medicines, pretended to successfully combat those African fevers which English flesh is heir to; or a surgeon of skill, with instruments acknowledged to be as keen as Damascus blades, compared with those with which his English professional brother was "handicapped."

He was not less renowned for playing a beautiful hand at the (so-called) American national game of Poker, and for teaching some highly intellectual emissary of Duke of This and Lord That, who had come out to speculate for their Serene Highnesses, how neatly the game could be played, provided they took a few lessons, and paid well for them.

Among the few Americans on the Fields none stood higher in public favour than the really skilful surgeon, Dr Fox, who took a deep interest in all public matters.

Dr Fox was sitting in his office puffing at his briar-wood, and thinking of—nothing; a subject which he made it a point to reflect on daily, at least one hour of his sixteen waking ones.

He had knocked around the world a good deal, and now, among people from everywhere, was "settled" for the time at Kimberley. Strange as it may seem, it was no less a fact, that right here amidst the most intense excitement of an easily excited population he had suddenly stumbled across a thought. That thought was not to think: here where everybody was thinking and thinking, he thought of the thought—not to think. To give his brain a rest, he stopped thinking in the very midst of a deep thought. Great scheme!

This idea came to him something in this wise. He had been walking until he became very tired. Wanting to rest, and not being near a convenient hotel, or at home, or in any place where he could go to bed, he sat down, pulled out his pipe, lit it, and smoked. As he smoked he thought; he had not yet learned how not to think.

"My body rests while sitting: I do not always go to sleep to rest. Why not sit down for an hour, and think of nothing, and rest my brain by vacancy, instead of sleep?"

He did so. While resting his body by keeping still, he rested his brain by not thinking. When the hour expired he said to himself:

“To think constantly on one subject, will relax our hold on it. Given a subject we think and think on it, until all the grip of the brain is lost. I’ll give the grey matter a rest.”

On this evening, his hour for meditating on nothing was interrupted by a visit from Herr Schwatka and Major Kildare.

“Good evening, Doctor.”

“Good evening, gentlemen; glad to see you. Cool night this, after such a hot day. These African nights are glorious. Step inside,” and the doctor led the way to his private room. “Now, with your permission, I will mix you a concoction, the secret of which I learned in New York; ’tis a nectar fit for—men,” and turning to the sideboard loaded with lemons, spices, and cooling beverages, he commenced to prepare the summer drink whose delights he had extolled.

“Do you know,” said Kildare, “I have not tasted a drop of palatable water since I’ve been on the Fields?”

“I have had many encounters with the water question, and have subdued, but not yet conquered it. I had a barrel brought from the Dam yesterday. The brownish liquid you see in that jar is some of it. Don’t look so disgusted, Major, the little water you will drink in the compound I am mixing has been filtered through that Faitje of powdered charcoal,” and the doctor pointed to a bag suspended from the ceiling of an adjoining room.

Major Kildare was a retired English officer, who had been sent, as Agent of his Grace the Duke of Graberg, to purchase from the unsuspecting Boers, at nominal sums, their Transvaal farms on which he knew there was gold. Many of these farms were valueless stone mountains, but if His Grace the Duke allowed his name to appear at the head of the great South African gold mining company, it must be a good thing to invest in.

The Agent had an original idea—so he thought—as to the way a certain game of cards should be played, suggested by an American Diplomat at the Court of Saint James, from whom he had taken several expensive lessons.

He unfolded his scheme to the two gentlemen present, and proposed a practical exhibition of his science. Dr Fox, having limited the game to eleven o’clock, at which hour he had an appointment with two other M.D.’s, for an important consultation, consented, and then proceeded to become initiated in the mysteries of the game of Poker, as taught by an Englishman, and in endeavouring to graduate in it, lost several large sums of money. The three played until Herr Schwatka protested that he was no match for the other two, and withdrew from the game.

The Yankee Doctor soon began to exhibit signs of having known—perhaps in some pre-historic existence which he was just beginning to remember—something of how the game should be played himself.

“Doctor,” said Schwatka, “if I could develop so great a talent as you have, in so short a time, at a game you seemed to know but little of, I should stop giving medicine for a living.”

“Ah! would you,” replied the doctor. “I rarely do give medicine. Five out of every ten physicians give their patients medicine simply to follow traditions. The friend of my boyhood, old Dr Snow, used to say, that giving medicine to a patient, is like going into a dark room where your friend is in mortal combat with an enemy. All is dark, not a ray of light to distinguish friend from foe. You raise a club and strike in the location of the struggle. If you miss your friend and hit his foe, your friend is saved!”

“The deal is with you, Doctor.”

“Excuse me for talking shop, though you’ll have to charge that to Herr Schwatka,” said the doctor, dealing. “How many cards, Major?”

“Two.”

“I’ll chance one.”



"What is it that makes people sick?" continued Schwatka.

"It is often fear that makes people ill. They fear this and fear that; their thoughts dwell upon a dread disease, or they apprehend some danger in business affairs, until their thoughts are so saturated with the dread, that it is impossible to escape from it."

"This looks good for a pound," put in the major.

"I'll see that and raise you five," said the doctor.

"I'll see that five and go you five better," said Kildare.

"I'll see that and raise you ten," returned the doctor.

"Call you, Doctor. You can't scare me with a bob-tail flush." The doctor threw his cards in the pack. The major smiled as he raked in the stakes, and asked the doctor to continue on his theory.

"Many men," he observed, "of supposed integrity on the Fields, are illicit diamond buyers. They are constantly haunted by the fear of detection, and they will try to deceive themselves into the belief that the dread that is eating them up is some liver or stomach trouble, and they come to the doctor for relief. That they are tracked by this invisible foe no further proof is needed than the fact that last year six of our leading business men committed suicide. Fear is a ghost which stalks to and fro over the earth, forever haunting the imaginations of men."

"Raise you a fiver," called the major.

"See that, and ten better," replied the doctor.

"Call you, doctor."

"Queens."

"Never bet on the women, Doctor; Kings."

"Heavy betting for so light a hand," remarked Herr Schwatka.

"I've won a thousand with a smaller. It's sand, not cards, that wins at Poker. Half past ten!—as I have to be present at an interesting surgical operation, within the next hour, I think we had better discontinue our game."

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## Chapter Ten.

## An Explosion or Two.

"We have time for a game or two yet, Doctor, and let us make it a Jack-pot," said the major.

"All right. I'll open it for a pound," said the doctor, looking at two cards.

"How many cards will you have?"

"I'll stand pat."

"I'll take three."

"Major, I think these are worth a fiver."

"Mine are worth ten."

"Well, let me see. I'll see that ten and raise you twenty."

"Kilters won't work in a Jack-pot. I think you're bluffing with that pat hand."

"It will only cost you twenty pounds more to find out."

"I'll see that twenty and raise you fifty," said the major.

"There is your fifty, and one hundred on top. Now your curiosity may be more expensive. I think it will take all that to make me even," rejoined the doctor. The Englishman hesitated, and raised it another hundred.

"Well, here goes; I'll call you. I don't like high play among friends, Major. What have you got?"

The major dropped three kings and two aces. The doctor showed four sixes.

"I thought you played with sand, and not with cards, Doctor," remarked the major, sarcastically.

"They are both useful in the game of poker," replied the doctor as he tipped back in his chair.

The major's face showed signs of annoyance, but with a forced calmness he said:

"It is early yet; shall we not continue?"

"I think we have played long enough for one sitting," responded the doctor. "It is eleven now; recollect my consultation. I trust you may have better luck next time."

"I hardly think it quite square to quit, and I so heavy a loser."

"I am not accustomed to having my squareness questioned, Major. My record here and elsewhere shows no entry of unfair play; but we will not continue this line of conversation. Gentlemen, you are my guests."

"Herr Schwatka is your friend, and mine. He shall settle the question," continued the major, turning to Schwatka.

"I beg you, gentlemen," said Schwatka, "to arrange this matter without any quarrel."

"Herr Schwatka," said the doctor, slowly, "there will be no quarrel. It takes two to make one, and I shall not be a party. I merely say, that long play, and high play, tends to mar friendship, and we cannot afford to be other than friends."

"Dr Fox, I regret that I have met a card sharper, instead of a gentleman," cried the major, choking with rage.

"Major, do not lose your temper so cheaply. Name your loss and I will return the sum to you."

The brow of Kildare clouded as black as night, and he fiercely exclaimed:

"Do you mean to insult me, sir? I am no beggar to ask alms. You add insult to injury, and shall answer for it."

He and Schwatka had risen to their feet during this heated colloquy. The doctor alone remained seated.

Leaning his arm on the table he said, in a low and firm voice:

"Major, you and I cannot afford to fight. All know you are a brave man. Your courage, as the world interprets that sentiment, no one would question."

The quiet, unimpassioned tone of Dr Fox seemed to subdue the fiery major, who resumed his seat as the doctor proceeded: "My definition of the word 'courage' differs widely from the general acceptance of its meaning. Why does the commander of a regiment rush to the front, and lead his men to the charge? Paradoxical as it may seem, fear, fear is the impelling force; fear lest he be thought a coward. I have looked down the barrel of a shot-gun, in a country where men go gunning for men, as you do for chance hits at fledgelings at the game of poker."

Here the doctor rose, and proceeded to the sideboard; as he mixed a drink, he continued:



"I am alone in the world, with no family ties. You have a wife and family. Would it be a heroic act for me to accept a challenge from you and perchance kill you? No, Major, I confess I am too much of a coward to meet the anguished looks of those whom my hand had widowed and orphaned. If you will drop in here any evening, I shall be pleased to give you the opportunity of getting even."

Before Kildare could reply, a terrific roar and cannonading smote the air. The three men gazed in silence at each other, with astonishment depicted on their faces. As the cannonading continued, they rushed to the door, and there in the bright moonlight perceived a column of smoke rising to the height of near a thousand feet.

Looking at it, Schwatka exclaimed: "The unexpected is constantly occurring in this town. Earthquakes shake the mine, causing the reef to fall, thereby covering up valuable ground which must be laboriously unearthed again. Explosions in the mines follow on the heels of some accident caused by machinery giving way, and so it goes on, *ad infinitum*. What's this last infernal noise about, I wonder?"

This disturbance was beyond the understanding of those men, who had forgotten all their differences of the evening, in gazing at that strange and monstrous cloud rising in the air, and hanging over them with threatening aspect, as if it would descend upon the town and destroy it.

As the noise continued, they went out into the compound, and walked in the direction of the sound.

The midnight hour is devoted to blasting in the mines, but it was not yet midnight. Hastening on their way to the scene of the cannonading, a man approached, leading Mrs Laure's favourite servant, Bela. He was covered with blood, and, holding his hand to his face, moaned piteously. The doctor perceived that the boy's face had been terribly torn by a flying missile.

"What is the cause of all this noise?" asked the doctor.

"The powder magazines are blown up," replied the man.

"Which ones?"

"The whole thirty."

"What do you say? Not thirty tons of dynamite?"

"Yes, together with the gelatine and the cartridges. You needn't go any further, this boy needs your attention. I will leave him in your care, Doctor, and return to the scene of the disaster."

"I will go with you," said Kildare. Dr Fox, accompanied by Herr Schwatka, returned to his office with Bela. On examining the boy, the doctor found it necessary to use his surgical skill on the boy's eye, which had been torn from its socket.

"Well, Bela," said Schwatka, "this is a sorry piece of business, but as one of your most interesting characteristics is lack of beauty, your value may be enhanced by the loss of an optic! Your mistress will be sorry to lose you, for she could not endure to see you around her disfigured in this way." He left Bela with the doctor, and sauntered out. After Schwatka had gone, Dr Fox gazed some time at Bela, then sat down and wrote a letter to a London oculist, ready for that day's English mail, ordering a glass eye for Bela, to be sent to him immediately.

"Yes," mused the doctor, "I can place an artificial eye in that socket, that will make you again presentable," and taking the boy by the hand, accompanied him to the hospital, and placed him in charge of those self-sacrificing women, who devote their lives to the alleviation of human pain, utterly forgetful of self, in the divine love which shines through them.

Although Bela was called "boy" by many, he was nearly forty years of age. It is the custom of the white men to call the blacks "boys," in speaking to them.

Bela was a "Bosjesman" or Bushman, with features of the negro type, and short crispy black hair. He was about four feet in height, being one of a race of pigmies, now nearly extinct. They are the oldest race known in Africa. Though living in the midst of foreign tribes of warriors of large stature, their traditions tell of a mighty nation who dwelt in caves and holes in the ground, who were great elephant hunters, and who used poisoned arrows in warfare.

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## Chapter Eleven.

### A Visit to a Diamond Mine.

As Dainty Laure and Kate Darcy stood on the edge of the Kimberley Mine, it was with a feeling of awe that Kate looked down into its depths filled with Kafirs and their white overseers, and saw those endless cable wires extending from the brink to the bottom of the mine. The huge buckets resembled spiders at work, ascending until they reached the edge of the bowl, when they would drop their spoils into cars which stood waiting for them, and which in turn would crawl off and away to the "floor," where they deposited their load, leaving the spiders to return to their task in the bottom of the mine.

On the arrival of Donald, Schwatka, and the ladies at the Company's office, they were conducted to the brink of the shaft sunk by a countryman of Kate's, which was the first successful attempt made in that direction.

Entering an elevator about six feet square, which was waiting to receive them, they slowly descended to the depth of two hundred feet. The earth had been probed to three times that depth, but the shaft had not as yet been sunk deeper. From the bottom of the shaft was a tunnel reaching to the mine, a distance of two hundred feet. It seemed like looking through an inverted telescope.

In this tunnel was laid a tramway, on which cars were constantly going to and from the mine.

They walked through the tunnel until an opening was reached, then stepped out on a ledge, and found themselves in the mine, on the precious blue soil; with hundreds of Kafirs working below, under the inspection of overseers, who would occasionally draw a gem from under the spade of one of the delvers. From there they looked upward to the sun, glaring hot and bright over them, and then to the brink of the mine, where men seemed like small boys moving about.

It was a strange sensation to stand and gaze around on this comparatively recent discovery, and contemplate what had been accomplished, and reflect on the strange chance that had unearthed so much magnificent wealth.

"Mr Laure, how has this bed of diamonds been formed?" asked Miss Darcy.

"The mine is thought to be the 'pipe' of an extinct volcano, and it is supposed that the diamondiferous soil containing garnets, ironstone, crystals, and diamonds, has been thrown up by the action of the great heat of this volcano," replied Donald, "and there seems to be no end of the glorious riches of this bed of diamonds."

"Well," continued Kate, "it is difficult to realise that this monster pit has been hewn out in so short a time by man. Nothing daunts him in his frantic search for wealth."

"Those white men you see are overseers. Each overseer has from ten to fifteen Kafirs under his eye, to see that they do not conceal diamonds, as they turn over the 'blue stuff' as we call it," said Schwatka. "Notwithstanding the utmost watchfulness, they contrive to steal and secrete the gems about their persons in inconceivable ways. As an incentive to his vigilance each overseer is given a portion of the profits on all diamonds found under his watchful eyes. An overseer picked up the Porter Rhodes diamond, and his share of the profits made him a wealthy man."

"Do these overseers detect many Kafirs in the act of stealing?"

"No, Miss Darcy. A Kafir's countenance is so immovable, that it is unreadable. Looking right at the overseer he will

work a diamond in between his toes, and thus convey it out of the mine. He eludes the keenest vigilance by concealing the gems in his woolly hair, and under his tongue, and even by swallowing them. A stray dog will receive into his shaggy back, a valuable stone, and carry it around with him, until relieved of it by the Kafir."

"The working of the mine must be attended with great expense, and these natives must seem like vampires to the claim-holders," said Kate.



"That is true. Two years ago there were one million carats of diamonds taken out of the Kimberley Mine, while those of Dutoits Pan and Bultfontein yielded no less than seven hundred thousand carats. About one quarter of this enormous product was stolen by the Kafirs employed in the mines, and sold by them to the I.D.B.'s, who are often respected and licensed diamond buyers. The large number of jewels stolen by the blacks while working in the mines has led the Government to make stringent laws to regulate their purchase and sale."

"How do these Kafirs know to whom to sell their booty?" asked Kate.

"Most of the natives who work in the mines have friends in service in the town; and it is through their assistance that they dispose of the stolen diamonds. These house servants form the acquaintance of some illicit diamond buyer, or I.D.B., as he is pithily called, to whom they sell the precious stones. There is a fascination to some men engaged in this traffic which far excels that of any other species of gambling. If they win, they leave for Europe comparatively rich men in a few years, but they run such risks of detection that it makes life unbearable to a man troubled with a conscience."

"Are the diamonds from this soil as fine as those taken from the Brazilian mines?"

"That is a question that is raised by many, but there is no doubt that the South African or Cape diamond is as pure and brilliant as any from Brazil. Most of the crown jewels of Europe, renowned for their history no less than their intrinsic worth, came from India. The Koh-i-noor was owned by an East Indian chief, five thousand years ago. The Indian mines were eclipsed by the Brazilian, which in their turn have yielded to the fame of those of South Africa—the largest in the world."

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## Chapter Twelve.

## Strolling among Riches.

As Kate watched the Kafirs fill the buckets with the diamondiferous soil, she understood the fascination which kept men tarrying in that hot climate, hoping that some lucky turn of the pick or spade might unearth for them a fortune.

While they were standing on the ledge of blue stuff extending from the tunnel, Donald moved a short distance from them when a stone fell at his feet. It was thrown in such a manner, that he knew it was not accidental. His countenance never changed, and he stood perfectly still for several minutes, then strolled leisurely back to the mouth of the tunnel. As he did so, a Kafir's voice in a low tone said: "Ba-a-as!"

Donald wheeled, and there in a dark angle of the excavation where it led into an inner chamber, stood a native who had been pushing the cars through the tunnel as the party entered it.

He held up between his thumb and finger something white, like a large lump of alum. Donald stood a few seconds with his hands in his pockets, eyeing him intently, then took a few steps, looked down the tunnel and listened attentively for any sound in the opposite direction; the next moment he had made three strides toward the boy and taken the diamond from his hand, when two shadows fell across his pathway. He glanced up and beheld Dainty and Schwatka. He closed his hand over the gem and put it in his pocket. The two men looked at each other without speaking, and then as Herr Schwatka's eyes filled with a fine scorn they fell on Dainty, and there was an instantaneous change of expression in them, which he concealed by turning his face. Speaking in a bantering tone, he said:

"Donald prefers darkness to light! I think, Mrs Laure, that if he does not regain his sunny disposition, you will have to take him away from the camp for a vacation."

Dainty had observed the look which passed between her husband and Schwatka, but did not understand its meaning.

She had not perceived the diamond in Donald's hand, for she had been picking her way to the entrance of the tunnel, and had approached it with her eyes cast down, until her companion came to a standstill.

She understood the meaning of that look later. How often a cloud passes over us surcharged with power, to which we are indifferent, until it is revealed to us by some lightning flash of memory.

The Kafir had immediately taken hold of his car, and wheeled it into an inner chamber, but not before Dainty had noted that he was a Fingo boy, who often came to the house on errands for Donald. The beads, earrings, and ornaments with which the natives adorn themselves, and also the style of wearing the hair, distinguish one tribe of Kafirs from another; and these peculiarities were well known to Dainty.

As Miss Darcy joined them, they returned to the shaft, entered the elevator, and soon arrived at the Company's office.

The day's "wash-up" of the diamonds was next seen, and the assorting of them on the "sorting" table (which is very agreeable work to those who are looking for a prize—and find it, but a little tedious if the labours result in failure) was gone through, and some fine brilliants found.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon on their return home that they strolled through the diamond market, a street of one-story houses built of corrugated iron, with the interiors very simply finished. They visited the offices of several diamond buyers, representing Parisian, English, Viennese, and Holland houses in this branch of trade. They were of all nations, those of Jewish origin predominating, and the visitors were received with the utmost courtesy.

The contents of their safes, stored with precious stones awaiting the departure of the English mail, packets of gems containing from ten to one hundred carats weight, were freely exhibited; and Kate almost wished that she too might enter the fascinating trade of buying and selling diamonds.

Proceeding on their way to the hotel, they passed through the market square which was strewn with the merchandise of the country. It was difficult to say whether the mine they had recently left was even as interesting as the exhibit of wealth lying before them, brought from a great distance in the interior; that delightful unknown country, with its lions, leopards, ivory, and impregnable strongholds of savage chiefs and adventurous traders.

The life of this latter class is as interesting to contemplate as are the fruits of their labour and skill. They go into the strange country where the 'Tse fly stings their horses to death, and where they must fight the still more deadly fevers. If they survive and manage to crawl out yellow and wan, the fervid life still holds out its charms for them, and they return to it again with the same eagerness; the voice of adventure drowns the admonitory tones of ease and safety.





On the corner of the market square, sat a Coolie woman, about thirty years of age, of diminutive form. In her native costume of many bright-hued silk handkerchiefs draped around her limbs, neck, and head, with the gold ring hanging from the nose, the earrings surrounding the entire outer edge of the ear, bracelets, anklets, and armbands, she presented a perfect type of this semi-barbaric country.

Sitting there beside her basket of oranges and melons, she fitted like a mosaic into the strange scene before them.

A little farther on was a trader's wagon, about fourteen feet long, and four and a half feet wide, piled high with skins of the leopard, silver jackal, tiger, hyena, and rare black fox. These skins, or karosses, as they are called, were as soft to the touch as a velvet robe, and had none of that hard thickness which characterise the cured skins of our wild animals. The natives are experts in the curing of these skins, and deliver them to the traders sewed together as neatly as a Parisian kid-glove, with thread made from the sinews of wild animals.

As they strolled along, the next objects which attracted their attention were the large-sized oxen with their enormously long and graceful horns.

These animals are the especial pride of the Boer farmer, who cares more for his span of sixteen handsomely-matched oxen than for any other object, animate or inanimate, on his farm. The particular cattle which attracted their notice were beautifully spotted black and white, with hides shining like satin. As Kate approached one of them, and reached out her hand, she could not touch the line of his back-bone, even when standing on tip-toe.

They stood there, huge creatures, with their horns towering in the air.

They would have made a fortune for the brush of a Bonheur.

It can hardly excite wonder that such animals gain so much affection. The trader's wagon to which they were yoked was loaded with ivory tusks, valuable furs, ostrich feathers, and other rich and singular merchandise. One feather, a yard long and half a yard wide from tip to tip, passed into Kate's possession. It was a plume no less beautiful than rare.

"These feathers," said Kate, regarding the gift with admiration, "do not look like the flossy, saucy, flirty things which appear on ladies' hats, strewing coquettish shadows over the face. They resemble those ugly awkward trailing bits of vanity which weep from their hats after a heavy rain, when they have neglected to carry that everyday English article

of dress, an umbrella! They are as ugly as the bird from which they are plucked, until some unconscionable merchant brings the tempting merchandise to town, and places it in the hands of the milliner. Then the great play of 'My Milliner's Bill' is enacted, husbands and fathers are ruined by its representation, while the women, pretty pieces of vanity, get free tickets to the show."

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## Chapter Thirteen.

### A Morning Ride.

One bright summer's morning in the latter part of November, as Dr Fox was on his way to visit a patient living in Dutoits Pan, he turned his horses' heads into the street where lived Miss Kate Darcy.

As he neared the house of his countrywoman, in whom he had recently come to take a deep interest, she appeared descending the steps of the verandah which surrounded the house. He spoke to his horses, and they increased their speed, reaching the curbstone as Miss Darcy opened the gate.

"Good-morning, Miss Darcy," said he, "out for a walk? Would that I were also walking!"

Kate looked up brightly and smiled. "Good-morning," said she, "would that I were also riding!"

Dr Fox's eyes held a gleam of pleasure, and springing lightly from the carriage, said, "I shall admit of no retreat after that. I am going to Dutoits Pan, and you must go with me."



Kate readily entered the carriage, the doctor seated himself by her side, and the horses sped away.

"Is there not a sort of indefinable recognition of approach and presence, by which we may sometimes become aware of the proximity of people before seeing them?" began the doctor. "I was thinking of you as I rode along, and here you are!"

Kate did not say that she had also thought of the doctor that morning. She only replied:

"Yes, I think there is often something of that sort. And recognition goes farther, too. We may often see a man's invisible soul, paradoxically speaking, against his will, and without desire. There is something, too, about a person that radiates, as it were, and unconsciously to himself and others affects those with whom he comes in contact. I suppose it affects sometimes from afar, as I did you this morning."

Dr Fox looked at Kate curiously.

"You are a novelty in this part of the world," he said. "I suppose no other woman this side an ocean voyage could talk like that."

"That may be true," said Kate, unaffectedly. "Women about here are not thinkers along certain lines. But I have a belief that moral and spiritual atmosphere has an extent and influence of which we little dream."

There was silence for a moment. Then, with a quick transition, Kate again spoke:

"Isn't this glorious? I am never happier than when I am behind fine horses, riding over a good road."

"I think, then, I see the way to giving you happiness," said the doctor, "and at the same time getting a good deal for myself. You seem like a bit of my native land again."

"Of the earth, earthy?" queried Kate.

"How can you!" cried the doctor, "but you are the first American woman I have seen in two years, and you are tremendously Yankee."

"Pray, what is tremendously Yankee?" asked Kate.

"Oh, delightfully individual! that is a trait of our countrymen—yours and mine. One sees it in you when you cross the floor, or do any other everyday thing. You could not conceal your nationality."

"We do not try to conceal what we take pride in. I am proud of being an American. Dear old America, I have not seen it in five years."

"So long? What have you been doing?"

"I have had a career," said Kate, quietly.

"Tell me about your career," said the doctor. "I have lived here two years, as you know. When you have tarried so long, you will want to know, as deeply as you can, the first congenial spirit that comes to Africa and finds you."

"What, two long years in Africa! Nothing could induce me to stay in such a land so long."

"The improbable, even the seemingly impossible things, often come to pass, Miss Darcy. Now, please, are you going to tell me about your career?"

"It won't be long."

"What—your career?"

"No—the story of it. There was a good deal of career. While I was living it, it seemed as if there would never be any end to it, and I often wished for any other life but that. It came to an end only a few months ago. It seems like a dream of centuries."

"You must have been very young when you began, for you—"

"Don't look all those centuries, eh?" said Kate, laughingly. "Why, I am twenty-eight." She then gave him an outline of her life, with the heartache left out. Although Kate was of an ardent imaginative temperament, she never sentimentally dwelt on her griefs.

By this time they had reached their destination. The call was short, the doctor taking little time to listen to the recounting of aches and pains. He braced his hypochondriacal patient up, by telling him that he was far better than he had expected to find him, and before the invalid could relapse, the doctor had gone. But the man was better, of course, for had not the doctor told him so?

"You have returned quickly," said Kate. "Is your patient better?"

"The patient? Oh yes, he's all right. I will bring my galvanic battery with me next time, and just give him a little homoeopathic earthquake. Don't let us talk about these sick people. You don't look as if sick subjects would be appropriate to your thoughts or conversation."

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## Chapter Fourteen.

### An Unexpected Declaration.

"I have never had time to think of being sick myself, or to think of myself in any way. I used to worry over every thing, and strove to gather sufficient force in one day to last a week, but the effort was useless. I now realise that I am not doing this living. I am being lived. There is much rest to me in that thought."

"You speak in riddles," said the doctor, "how can an unimaginative fellow like me solve the mystery of 'I am being lived?'"

"It is not a riddle, and it is not for the imaginative," said Kate. "It is reality of which I speak. We talk of the burden of life. But life is not a burden. If you look about at the over-burdened world you will find that its people are weighed down with loads of their own accumulation. Apprehension, fretfulness, discontent—a thousand things—dissipate the strength and happiness of mortals. I have come to believe that individual life, as it was given from the hand of God, is a fulness—not a strife. The familiar old figure of speech, 'Life is a river,' expresses it to me, and the river just flows along and takes all the goodly, streams that flow into it all the length of its course. So it grows and is filled, not filling itself."

"But don't you see, Miss Darcy, that the river must also take all the bad that flows into it."

"But don't *you* see," asked Kate, "that pursuing its course to the great ocean it purifies and brings to sparkling clearness *all* that comes to it. That is always the result of patient and cheerful acceptance."

It is in unexpected places and at unexpected times that we most often find ourselves speaking of heart-experiences, and spiritual beliefs and attainments. To Dr Fox this was a rare occasion. In the life he had known since he had left his native shores, the questions of the hour arising for the earnest thinker had not been presented to him. Like other men away from the influence of home and intelligent high-toned womanhood, he had drifted into careless modes of thought.

The ease that comes from a happy-go-lucky philosophy is not the peace that comes of trust. Dr Fox felt this with a startling clearness. Through the woman by his side came the white, searching light of a pure soul within, shining upon his own and revealing the barrenness of life without earnestness. How had she reached her spiritual altitude amid the ambitions and crushing disappointments of her past?

"Miss Darcy," said the doctor, "you are one of the rare beings who see only the good in every thing. You seem to know no other force. This may do for women, but how can men, with grosser natures, come into such a wide place?"

Kate looked at her companion with brave, open eyes, and she longed to impart her own earnestness to him. Every good woman is a natural moral reformer.

"Why," said Kate, "do men leave women lonely on spiritual heights? The men, too, are gods if they did but know it. Shall women have all the riches and delights of inward content? To live in harmony with our source means perfect health, and the attainment of our heart's desire, for then there can be no friction, no uncontrollable conditions. Why should not men without scepticism or half-heartedness accept and know the truth?"

"But you see, Miss Darcy, men would become dreamers, not workers. I fear we must leave the angel-side of existence to you, only stipulating that you do not fly away from us entirely."

"That is the trouble with a man," said Kate, "he calls the strongest force in the world a dream. As for the women flying away—don't think it. They love to stay where they can keep the men in sight."

She laughed. Laughter and tears were always close by with Kate.

"I believe," she continued, "most men think that thoughts of this sort are to be saved for the occupying of eternal years. Whereas Eternity always was, and now is. We are living in the Eternal Now."

"You think that men and women could be companions in this thought?" queried the doctor.

"I do. To be companions in the married or unmarried state, is just the rarest happiness in the world, but we are demanding it. It is the desire of the heart, and we will have it. Man stands for Love. Woman for Intelligence, Intuition. The Woman, no matter how intellectual, is ever craving for Love, ever seeking it. When Love on the one hand, and Intelligence and Intuition on the other, meet in this belief in the one Force, and recognise in each other the desire of their hearts and cry out, 'I have found you,' the two become one—Spirit."

"Why do you say 'Man is Love?' I have always thought he represented Intelligence."

"Is not Cupid a boy?" replied Kate saucily.

The doctor touched the horses with the whip, and they sped along the road. There was silence for a few moments, when Kate broke it by saying:

"I shall remember this ride with pleasure, Doctor, as it will probably be the last one I shall take with you before my departure for other scenes."

The reins fell idly on the doctor's lap, and the horses dropped into a walk. Horses have a trick of accommodating themselves to the moods of their drivers.

The doctor's face lost its look of enthusiasm.

"When do you go, and where do you go?" he asked.

"I want to leave the Fields during the hot Christmas holidays, and have arranged to go to that pretty little spot not far away—Bloemfontein."

"I am sorry you are going away," said the doctor, "but I should be sorrier if it were further from Kimberley. It seems a

short time since you came here.”

“Short stays make long friends,” said Kate.

“Then I shall come and make short stays,” exclaimed the doctor, with a return to something like gaiety.

“Do—” said Kate. “I mean do come. I don’t mean make short stays!”

“Of course you will return to Kimberley?”

“I hardly think I shall,” replied Kate.

“Is there nothing that I can say that could induce you to return?” The doctor said this with an accent on the personal pronoun “I.”

Kate did not think for a moment that it meant anything more than gallantry, but something: in the tone of his voice made her look into his face. The doctor was looking at her in that manly way of his, and she answered his look, with one as sweetly womanly, but hesitated to frame any words, for the right ones would not come. Where now was Kate’s fluency of speech? He laid his hand over hers, resting passively in her lap, and said:

“Pardon me for revealing my feelings toward you. Don’t speak now. I cannot expect you to come to my quick conclusions in a matter like this. Kate, you are my ideal woman. Only that man who has daily before him his ideal for inspiration can hope to attain his highest manhood. When I make a farewell call upon you before my trip to England, tell me if I have gone farther than you can go with me.”



Kate sat in a twilight happiness and her lips were dumb. She could neither encourage nor deny. Her past was before her. She remembered the time when she had laid her young heart on the altar of an early love. Could it be possible she could find happiness in the love of another? Should she take into the joyousness of her existence, won by submission and an exalted spiritual life, a new relationship?

The doctor’s manner showed neither embarrassment nor anxiety. He had the assurance of a nature that knows what it wants—as the satisfaction of love, and that can say, “I want you for my wife. Come!” intending to take no denial. Then the woman, contented in his love, is willing to say, “I will love, honour, and obey,” for her yoke is the yoke of

love, and her burden light, because she is evenly yoked. He was sure that he could make Kate Darcy happy. It should be her own fault if he did not. A vision of such a home as could be counted by thousands in his own happy land was before him. If this woman had drank of the elixir of life, she should by her companionship share her cup with him. By her own story she had grown younger with years. She should share her perfected youth with him.

This was a strange couple. Not a wand more of the mysteries of life and love escaped them. They talked as though they were henceforth sane on all subjects. The horses once more became swift. It is well that horses, if they can hear and comprehend, cannot talk.

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## Chapter Fifteen.

### An Abrupt Awakening.

"Fingo boy here, Ba-a-as," said a Coolie servant, as he entered the room where Laure was sitting, on the third day after the visit to the mine.

"Where is he?"

"In kitchen."

A cloud darkened Laure's face; after a moment's hesitation he told the Coolie to send the boy to him. The Fingo boy, who had handed the diamond to Laure in the tunnel, entered the room, and standing near the door waited for him to speak.

"Well, Fingo," said Laure, in a pleasant tone of voice, "you are around early this morning—shut the door. What can I do for you?"

"Come to see bout dat big, white diamond."

"Ah, yes; now how much shall I give you for it? It has a flaw in it, you know."

"Let Fingo boy see. Kafir want see hole in diamond."

"I haven't it about me. It isn't safe to have such a stone around. I may never have a chance to sell it," said Laure, firmly, looking at the Kafir.

"Dat good stone, Ba-a-as. Bring big money. Mus' have money fo' dat."

"What have you done with all the money I have given you, Fingo?"

"Me save him. Me buy cows, pony."

"It won't do for you to have so much gold about you. Detectives will get you and put you in the chain-gang."

"Me hide it—way off. Nobody find it!"

"Well how much shall I give you for it?"

"Hunder pound."

"Too much. It isn't worth it. I'll give you eighty, or you may come to-morrow and I'll give it back to you," said Laure, who was pretty certain that the Kafir would hardly dare hunt for a buyer, as many a buyer, though an illicit one, would bring him before the authorities and compel him to disgorge, simply to throw the detectives off the scent in regard to himself. The Fingo hesitated for a moment or two, and then accepted the offer.

"Going back to work to-day?" asked Laure.

"No! Me go way soon as me sell 'nother big white diamond me hab. Me buy wife, get big Kraal. Hab plenty ox, cow, pony."

"You have a wife now, haven't you?"

"Me hab two, three, four wife bime bye," replied the Kafir as he held up four fingers. "Me know pretty Kafir girl: hoe corn; pound mealies—cook. Me work no more. Hunt blesse-bok; ride pony; smoke dagga; hab good time!"

"Yes, that is right, Fingo, you must leave the Fields. I will have the money for you, and will meet you at—or, stay. I will put it under the rock where you got the last. But mind, don't stay round here much longer, or the police will get you—do you hear?"

"Kafir no fool, Ba-a-as Laure. He jes' go home to his Kraal. No work more," and the Kafir left the room.

That evening Laure and Schwatka were sitting talking in the library, when Dainty unexpectedly approached the room. A fragment of their conversation reached her, and as the full meaning of the words she heard burst upon her, she stood speechless, half hidden in the folds of the curtained doorway.

"Laure, how dare you carry on this illicit trade of buying diamonds of the Kafirs? Don't you fear that they will give you away to the detectives?" Schwatka was saying.

"I suppose I am in danger of being trapped, but I am pretty sure of the Fingo who sells me the blazers."

"You know you are safe, as far as I am concerned," replied Schwatka. "I am thinking what your wife would do, if you should be caught, through the treachery of this Fingo. You can never tell what they will not do for money."

"That's true, but I rather think my luck won't go back on me. I don't mind telling you, that I happen to know that this Fingo has a big diamond that I want, but he asks too much money for it—I tell you it's a beauty. These Kafirs are getting too knowing for us fellows; they are too well aware of the exact value of the diamonds, and we have to go slow with them."

"There are too many risks in that trade to attract me. I say, Laure, how do you expect to sell that diamond if you get it?"

"I shall probably keep it, until I go to Europe. The idea that an illicit or stolen diamond sells there for half its value, is nonsense. In Amsterdam, the great European market, a diamond sells according to its weight and purity. Its intrinsic worth is all that the buyer or seller thinks of. Look at this gem."

As Donald said this, he turned and caught sight of Dainty standing in the doorway. She looked from one to the other. Donald cast his eyes guiltily down, unable to meet the glances of the woman he loved; while Schwatka sat looking up into her face with his own all aglow, and in an attitude that suggested the ardent lover eager to shield her from trouble.

As her eyes at last rested on Herr Schwatka, in a dazed sort of way, her heart gave one bound and went out to him.



Though daily she had met the Austrian who had so often sought for opportunities to be near her, though daily her interest had become greater, and her pleasure in his presence increased, though sometimes she had felt dissatisfaction as she compared her husband with him whom she called her friend—yet, not until this sudden revelation terrified her, as a sense of its danger came over her, did she realise her actual feelings.

Silently turning, in a half-blinded way, she left the room. For a moment she was dazed. Then the peril of the situation flashed through her mind. Her alert, savage blood was roused at last, and from that moment she lost her indolent, indifferent manner. Never for one moment was she forgetful of the situation.

At any moment the officers of the law might be on their track. Both she and Donald were henceforth bound to Herr Schwatka. One by love—the other by fear. Even the generosity of Schwatka, should he conceal Donald's felony, made her sick at heart—for discovered, each was a partner in the other's guilt.

Her sleep, once so peaceful, was fitful and disturbed. She asked of neither an explanation.

What to do, to whom to turn, between her love, her duty, and her fears, was like an ever-present nightmare.

She had awakened to a new life; her eyes, that until now were soft, blazed with a fire that had never before been kindled in them. Emotions new to her had taken possession of her mind. Herr Schwatka came frequently, as before, and, with more eagerness than she had ever looked for Donald, she looked for him.

Strange were the mental experiences of Herr Schwatka. He saw what he desired to see, that her heart was his. But not with the triumph he would have known had he not fallen into his own trap.

Schwatka, who had coolly won more hearts than he ever took pains to count, was enthralled by the power of Dainty.

He felt he could not harm her, though he felt he could not lose her. By the power of his love he read every passing thought as it flitted over her face; and he would willingly have risked all his hope and happiness in other things, could he but possess the life of this woman—like a lamb in her helplessness, like a young lioness in her love of freedom, and in her rebellion against the chafing of distasteful bonds.

As the days passed, her restlessness of spirit increased. At last the fire began to consume the material body. She grew thin, a hectic flush tinged her cheek. Her eyes, like great burning lamps, looked out upon the world with an unsatisfied expression pitiful to behold. For a time these new emotions escaped the notice of Donald, but when she began to droop, and he perceived what he feared might be some malady, he resorted to Dr Fox with real anxiety.

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## **Chapter Sixteen.**

### **The Family Physician.**

On entering the doctor's office, Laure found him examining Bela's eye, or rather the part of the face that once contained that valuable organ.

"How do, Doctor," said Laure; "how are you, Bela? Now that you are well, why do you not return to your mistress?"

"Missy don't want see Bela now he got only one eye."

"We'll see about that," said Dr Fox. "Glad you came in, Laure. I was about experimenting on the boy's eye. We'll see if we can't send you back to your mistress with a new optic!"

As he said this he lifted Bela's eyelid, and in another second the boy stood before the men with two eyes in his head, though one was but a glass eye.

"Hello!" said Laure, "what hinders you now from going home to your mistress? You are nearly as good-looking as you ever were! By the way, Doctor I wish you would drop in and see Mrs Laure. She does not look well."

"Sorry to hear that," said the doctor. "I will call there this morning and take Bela with me." The two men exchanged a few more words and then parted. Some hours later Bela, accompanied by the doctor, entered his old home dressed in a most fantastic costume, and expressed, in his peculiar way, the greatest joy at seeing his mistress, who was well pleased to receive him again. She greeted the doctor cordially, and was curious about this new eye of Bela's.

"How did you ever do it?" she asked.

Pleased to see her interested, the doctor slipped the shell that so skilfully simulated the destroyed organ of sight, and showed her how it was inserted.

"It is easy enough. You could do it yourself," said he.

Dainty felt a childish desire to try. She had none of that horror of mutilation that most delicate women have, for her life had made her familiar with the sight of physical afflictions. The doctor, though he secretly wondered at her curiosity, was willing to indulge it, and Dainty soon found that she could actually adjust a glass eye herself.

Bela was dismissed, and her look of interest gave place to one of weariness. "Well, Mrs Laure, what is the reason I have not seen you riding of late?"

The blood flew to her cheeks, for she felt that the doctor was reading her heart. With the desire that every woman has to guard her dearest secret, she said:

"Donald imagines I am threatened with fever. It is nothing but a feeling of homesickness. To be sure my heart beats so at times that it nearly chokes me, but I think it will soon pass away. I have been coaxing Mr Laure to take me away from the Fields. I think if I were near the old ocean once more my health would return."

The doctor listened to her voice, but he only heard her mental words. The words she framed with her lips did not conceal the cause of her distress. We think to deceive the world when we talk to cover our feelings, but how rarely do we succeed with the good and true. The soul sits in the silence. Its influences are silent influences, and its voice soft and gentle. So, as it is attuned to stillness, it hears other soul voices when in harmony with it, and it discerns the



truth with unerring judgment.

Dr Fox had diagnosed mental struggles until it had become second nature to him to read the thoughts of his patients. He had also been keenly alive to the infatuation of Herr Schwatka for Mrs Laure, and when she alluded to a weakness of the heart, he asked:

"Have you anything on your mind that worries you?" She caught her breath for a second, and the doctor read in her hesitancy the true answer, though she replied:

"Oh, no."

"I will leave you a few powders, though a change of scene would do you more good than any medicine I might prescribe. You need to get out and away from accustomed places. You are stagnating. Your mind is travelling in a circle, and your thoughts dwell too much on yourself, which always produces an unsatisfactory mental, as well as physical condition. I sometimes advise my lady patients, when they are the subject of their own thoughts, to think of me. A crusty old bachelor is so radical a change, and so hard a subject that it has succeeded admirably in curing some of them, who only needed variety." This last remark brought a smile to Dainty's face.



"Yet I advise them not to overdo the remedy lest they think too much of me. I am extremely cautious, Mrs Laure."

Dainty smiled again. Sentiment and the doctor seemed so absurd a combination to her. He was kind-hearted, but to think of him as an awakener of love—Ah! love brought to her mind another. She blushed, stopped, and *thought of the doctor*. It was a good remedy. He was looking at her. She felt a mixture of discomfort and a desire to tell him how great was her heartache. Had he asked her her secret, she would have told him. He divined her confidential mood, but asked nothing. It is sometimes wise to be ignorant. If the family physician should divulge the secrets of the inner life of the social sphere in which he moves, what a shattered world would we live in! The life of a hermit would at once hold irresistible charms for many.

What an innocent and ignorant violator of social and marital laws was Dainty! But ignorance and innocence are not as beautiful qualities as knowledge and purity. With the former, life is but drifting; with the latter, it is anchored to a rock.

The doctor realised that Dainty was drifting. He had seen many another woman drift, only to be broken against the

rocks on bleak unknown shores; later he had seen the wreck washed up lying on the sands of life, exposed to the gaze of the gaping curiosity-seeker, and to his careless comments. Would this beautiful creature, wounded almost to death, be another wreck noted by pitying angels, and filling a sorrowful page in the book of Time? Not if he could help guide her. Ah! if our impulses are in the direction of the good, we know not how soon we may be given the opportunity to guide a frail bark clear of some threatening rock, into smiling waters, and under summer skies! The doctor's opportunity came sooner than he anticipated.

"I will call in again, Mrs Laure," said he, rising. "I have to see a patient a few hours' ride from here, and on my return, will tell Mr Laure that he must take you to England. I am expecting to go home for a short trip this summer, I need a change, too. One gets rusty living in Africa without a sight of other lands."

He took her little hand in his, gave it a quick, firm, friendly grasp, that seemed to say: "I know all about your trouble. Everything will come out all right." Aloud he said: "You must stop thinking about yourself," and left the house.

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## **Chapter Seventeen.**

### **"You have made me your Prisoner."**

Dainty, left alone, smiled in mockery. "Stop thinking!" As if she could!

She was innocent of any intentional wrong toward her husband, but oh! that world, that real world of hers—her thoughts.

Even in the midst of her self-upbraiding, her rebel thoughts would break loose, and reach out toward the man she loved. It was the ecstasy of a Heaven, blended with the agony of a Hell.

The shuttle of love that winds and weaves an unseen thread, had bound her heart in bond so firm, that to break it seemed like breaking the thread of life. Would that she could see how near the fate stood that would cut that thread! She felt that the new love which had sprung to a giant's strength within her heart, was doing cruel injustice to the loyal heart of her husband. She wished to be true to herself, and that meant true to Donald. Was he not truth itself to her? But she had no strength to fight against the power which Schwatka exerted over her, and thoughts of him held her prisoner as she lay on her divan moaning like a helpless wounded doe.



At this moment Herr Schwatka entered the room. As he approached, their eyes met in one long look, and as if mesmerised, their lips met in a kiss that annihilated time and space, and that for Dainty rent asunder all other bonds. Centuries of time were lived in that one kiss. She had been long married, but not until now was she mated.

At last time began again to beat out to the lovers those seconds and moments of which they had been too oblivious.

“Dainty,” said he, “I can no longer endure to see you bear toward another the relation of—wife. I came to-day to tell you that I leave Kimberley within twenty-four hours. I know that I have been a coward to remain here and see you suffer for my sake, but the strength of love has been my weakness, and has chained me to your side. My beloved, life without you is worth to me not a puff of smoke; if I remain here longer I shall become a dangerous enemy to your husband. He stands between you and me; therefore I go away. Absence sometimes brings forgetfulness. The memory of your dearly beautiful face, of your soulful eyes—ah! What shall I do!—I cannot, I cannot tear myself from you!”

He sank on his knees by her side, and laid his head on her shoulder, a man given over to the longings of a great love, without hope therein.

She was now the stronger of the two. How often do we see the dumb animal side, in the strongest nature, assert itself when it lays its head on the heart of a frail woman for comfort.

What is that power which enchains men and women for a season when death itself would be preferable to the bitter sweetness which fills the soul. The heart never entirely recovers, though by and by the pain is a dull heavy sorrow as for a loved one buried long ago? We pity ourselves then, to think that it is possible for us to so change.

Dainty could not move hand or foot, her eyes looked as if tears lay behind in the veiled depths, in sacred sympathy with the soul, in the throes of an agony which few are capable of understanding.

Great beads of perspiration stood on her brow; she tried to speak, but ended in an incoherent whisper. Her lover recognised the suffering of her soul, akin to his own, and wiped the cold dews away with a holy touch. There was no flaming consuming passion in his touch. How strange was this in a nature like Herr Schwatka's! It was one of the marvels of love that it could purify the impulses and purposes of such a man, not used to live above the moral plane of the careless man of the world. He might easily have wrought ruin in the life of this unsophisticated woman, who could not, in one remove from savage ancestry, grow away from the tendency of love to follow its own, regardless of consequences. So had her mother done. Raising herself, and looking him steadfastly in the eyes, she slowly said, in

an earnest whisper: "If you go, I go with you."

"No, no, Dainty, I love you too truly to let you live to repent anything for my sake. Donald will not return to you until evening. I must go while I have any manliness left, or we will both live to repent it."

There was silence for a few moments, and then he hesitatingly said:

"I want to make a confession, sweetheart, that will help to ease my pain." He stopped and his bosom heaved with emotion. "It is that—I was fascinated by you, and your untamed ways, so different from what I had ever known, and I thought you would be a pastime to me. See what misery my wrong has wrought to both. You are the one woman in the world stronger than I, who thought myself invincible. You have made me your prisoner."

Anger against her fate began to rise within her heart, and strange thoughts surged and swelled through her throbbing brain. She spoke with wild determination:

"Listen. Donald is keeping some great secret from me, and although he has no suspicion of the love existing between you and me, his life is as separated from mine as if we were living in different continents. My life is my own, and if you leave me, I follow."

"No, no, my beloved," cried Schwatka.

Dainty continued in the same voice:

"You cannot change me now. Bela," calling to her servant, "have the horses harnessed to the cart at once, I am going for a drive. Now," turning to Schwatka, "leave me. I have not the strength to bear your presence longer. I shall be at the meeting of the roads," naming a spot about five hours distant, "and will meet you there."

"No, no," said he, mournfully but firmly. "Here I bid you farewell." He laid his hand on her shoulder. "When you cease to think of me as a lover, hold my memory kindly as your saviour."

His hand fell from her shoulder slowly down her beautiful arm, till it reached the little firmly-knit hand, which he held a prisoner for a few seconds, then tenderly raised to his lips. In another moment he had gone.

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## **Chapter Eighteen.**

### **A Friend in Deed.**

Not for a moment was Dainty's determination shaken by the action of Schwatka. So full of magnetic fire she had never been disciplined to control; had love been sooner enkindled, she would but sooner have leaped into its flame, whether it meant warmth or destruction. Many women of her nature, live and die ignorant of love. Are they more blest for the ignorance?

Turning to her dressing-case, in which were her diamonds and costly jewels, she looked at them, and in another moment she replaced the casket. She rapidly dressed for the journey, and ordered Bela to pack a small trunk with necessary and sufficient apparel, and take it to the Cape cart waiting at the door. These things were quickly done by the silent, swiftly-moving Bushman.



Trembling with excitement she followed the Bushman, and got into the cart. As they drove away, she gave one backward glance at the home where she had lived so peacefully with Donald. Nerving herself, she bade Bela hasten. When they had reached the edge of the town, she seized the reins, and with a strength born of excitement, urged the horses on with a frenzy that caused Bela to give his mistress a look of wonder.

Her thoughts had been too long busy with her work to think of anything further, until now, with the motion of the revolving wheels, and the speeding horses, a sense of liberty took possession of her.

She was free! Away over the veldt she flew, the horses seeming to become imbued with the spirit of their mistress, which gave impulse to their fast-flying feet. This sense of freedom was a reaction from the sense of captivity, of late so strongly upon her.

Two hours or more flew by, before she gave a thought to the scenes through which she was passing. A weary waste of sandy, desert road; a treeless veldt covered sparsely with a coarse grass; a dreary farmhouse in the distance surrounded by a few trees, was a joyless picture to look upon.

Bela sat silent, watching the horses and the flying cart, but immovable as a statue. When the native becomes attached to his mistress, he accepts everything from the "Inkosa" whom he regards as a queen. Dainty's strength was ebbing fast, but with superhuman effort she rallied all her energies, and, when she saw a horseman in the distance, called to her aid in her most languorous and indifferent manner, reined in her rapid steeds and handed the reins to Bela. As the man drew near, to her dismay she recognised Dr Fox, who was returning from his patient. As he rode up to the cart, an expression of amazement spread over his face. When he stopped his horse to speak to her, she ordered Bela to stop, also.

"Good afternoon, Mrs Laure. You have greatly improved since I saw you this morning. I scarcely thought you well enough to venture so long a drive. Is it health or pleasure you seek?"

Dainty was as white as the dead are. She trembled before this man's honest way of asking questions. Her strength, until now fed by excitement, left her, and her tongue refused to move, though her lips parted in the effort.

The agony that convulsed her frame was depicted on her face, and she shook like one with ague. What should she say? The doctor perceived that here was some awful crisis. He rose to the occasion.

"Do not speak. Try to calm yourself," said he. Dismounting, he took Bela's place in the cart, and putting his horse in the Bushman's keeping, told him to follow them to town. He then gathered up the reins and wheeled the horses homeward. They were no sooner turned, than Dainty, unable to support herself, dropped her head on the doctor's shoulder.

"Mrs Laure, I see that you are in distress. I ask you nothing, every woman in trouble is my sister. That's right, let those wells in your eyes run dry. It would have done you good if they had run over many days earlier." To himself the doctor continued:

"We men have a great deal to answer for. Will we never learn to spare the beautiful butterflies whose lives we so wantonly break? If women only knew men, as men know each other, there would be more missionary work done before marriage. In fact home missionaries do not appreciate their opportunities, for most of us are heathens!"

The doctor slackened the reins, and the horses their pace, as they were ascending a hill, at the summit of which he saw a cart driven by Schwatka rapidly approaching. The doctor's grey eyes shot fire, his mouth set firmly under his brown moustache, and giving the horse a sharp cut with the whip, he passed Schwatka with a jovial, "How are you?" that had a ring in it that sounded like "Check!"

Dainty half rose, gave one little heartbroken moan, and sunk back into the corner of the seat. The doctor drove home as quickly as possible, and they were soon at the house, which Dainty had but lately left, expecting never to return. He gently lifted her out of the cart and carried her into the house. His presence was soothing to her spirit, and before he left the house she was wrapped in a sound sleep. She needed rest, for her day was not ended.

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## Chapter Nineteen.

### Detectives.

At dinner that evening, Donald's mind was fortunately too preoccupied to note the haggard face of the little woman sitting opposite. They were scarcely seated, when from the window she saw two men come into the yard and enter the kitchen. Turning she whispered one word:

"Detectives!"

Dainty had no suspicion of his having diamonds on his person, until he dropped his knife, and sat pale and nerveless. Leaping from her seat, she flew to his side, thrust her hand into one pocket and another, until she drew forth a large diamond. In another second she was standing in the middle of the room. What should she do with it? Where should she hide it, from those sharp-eyed hunters? There was no spot in the room that would not be searched.

There was a rent in the wall paper through which she felt tempted to slip it! The seconds were flying. In another moment those men would open that door and all would be lost! She could almost have annihilated time and space, so greatly was her mentality strained and quickened. In turning to look once more, with a sickening despair striking her vitals, her glance fell on Bela, standing perfectly rigid with terror.

Quick as thought she flew to the Bushman, and placing her finger on his eye, lifted the lid, took out that glass eye, slipped the diamond in, and returned the eye to its place. Then turning to her husband, panting, she whispered:

"Where did you get that diamond?" He collected his scattered senses and feebly answered:

"The Fingo boy." She sank on her chair a seemingly indifferent, indolent houri, as the door flew open and the detectives entered.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," said Dainty in a steady voice, but with a questioning look, as if she wondered at the strange hour and abrupt entrance of visitors.

"Sorry to disturb your dinner, madam," said one of the men, "but we have traced a marked diamond here; and must search for it."

"Why do you search here?" said Donald, haughtily.

"Hush, Donald! I suppose nothing we could say would hinder them," said Dainty, calmly.

Her coolness and her smile won the evident admiration of the men for a moment; but yet brusquely spoke one of them:

"Nothing, madam," and immediately the search began. Again Donald spoke:

"Gentlemen, I have no diamonds about me."

"Perhaps not, sir! But it is our business to make sure of it," said one detective as he deftly began a personal search.

Nothing coming to light, they seemed puzzled, for they had bribed the Fingo boy that day to sell the diamond to Donald, and knowing he had bought it within the hour, thought to find it on him. Then they ransacked the house. Carpets were torn up and furniture ripped open.

They even thrust their hands through the rent in the wall paper and felt on the ground below; but their search was fruitless.

They next closely inspected Dainty, her hair was combed, and her clothing handled unceremoniously by one man, while the other took Donald into custody. So sure were they that he had the diamond, that when the gem could not be found on the man or the premises, they had no hesitation in arresting him, and stationing the police to watch the house. But it was not so well watched, as to prevent that keen bright woman from eluding their vigilance.

Bela stood like a stone image with his one eye fastened on his mistress, and the other eye holding the honour or disgrace of her husband. Nothing could have made him disclose the secret.

As the officers left the house with Donald, her every sense was alert, and ready to spring to action.

What to do next? The diamond was safe. She must find that Fingo boy who had sold Donald the diamond, and put him out of the way. With the keener sense which she possessed as a birth right, with that black blood in her veins, her woman's wit came to her assistance, and she resolved to foil the bloodhounds of the law.



She remembered a suit she had prepared as a gift to a favourite Malay boy. It hung in her closet, not yet bestowed upon its future owner. With feverish haste she secured it, and dressed herself in it. The soft gay handkerchief she tied around her head, and over this placed the hat. She had smiled at the odd costume when she had first made it ready, but she did not smile now, nor at her appearance in it. She only felt joy in the disguise.

Now—how to pass the guards!

It was desperate business. She called Bela—trusty fellow! He must help. The Bushman started at sight of her, and only the voice assured him it was really she.

“Bela,” said she, “I must get away for a while and you must help me. Do you go out to the gate, and when the guards stop you, keep them as long as you can. I will run another way and try to get out of sight. They will send you back, of course.”

The Bushman started on his mission. Dainty watched him concealed in the shadow of the house. The guards stopped him as she had thought. It was growing rapidly dark. She heard the authoritative voices of the guards, and the stupid answers of Bela. Dashing at right angles from the scene, she scaled the fence unobserved, and rapidly left the unsuspecting guards trying to convince Bela that it would not do. When he finally submitted, the outwitted officers congratulated themselves on their vigilance. So was the first step accomplished!

Now to find her stalwart driver and order her cart and horses. She had gone scarce one hundred yards when, to her unspeakable joy and surprise, she found the servant going toward home. It was with difficulty she made him know his mistress; ordering him to meet her at a particular spot, she hurried on.

Rapidly passing to the Kafir location, where she felt she should find the Fingo, she walked fearlessly into the first hut. Hut after hut was visited, and inquiries, made of one and another inmate in her awakened savage mood, and in the native language, as to where the boy lay.

As she shook each sleeping body, the very manner of her action, and the tone of frenzy in which she addressed them, so impressed them, that they answered whether they would or not. She walked on and on, until the last hut, the farthest from probable detection was reached, and there, lying between two other Kafirs, she found him.

With superhuman strength she dragged him out. By this time her fury had reached such a pitch that, to be rid of her clutch was like shaking off the claws of a wild cat.

Hurrying him forward in breathless haste, she reached the place where the cart stood waiting. Hustling him into it, she held him with her woman's hands while the driver tied him securely down. Then, seizing the reins, she ordered her servant to wait her return, and drove swiftly away.

She pierced the dark with savage instinct for there was no road to guide her. The dangerous holes with which the veldt is studded did not lie in her path.

Her anger rose as the horses sped along. To her excited nerves their rapid pace was too slow, and she whipped them into a wild gallop all the way, for she must be home before sun up.

Her fury was intense, and she would turn to the Fingo cowering in the corner of the seat, in a sort of mad way, that made him shrink with terror. Every time she looked at him she would urge her horses to additional speed by lashings of the whip, until they were nearly as mad as their mistress.

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## Chapter Twenty.

### One of Eve's Daughters.

At last, in the dead of night, she reached the house of an Afrikander whom she had once befriended, and on whom she could rely. Him she awakened by blowing a bugle which had lain at her feet.—He came out to her, and listened to the strange tale which she hastily repeated, with the usual unmoved countenance of the Afrikander. He was ready enough to help her to dispose of her terror-stricken prisoner. These Cape people have a way of their own of disposing of anything disagreeable, which strikes the stranger as peculiar, but effective.

Obedying her orders, he took him to a lonely hut, and chained him fast. It was the Fingo's fate to remain there until danger to Donald was past. When she saw that the captive was where he could do her husband no harm, she handed a purse to the Afrikander and turned her horses' heads homeward, with a sense of relief.

Her fury had abated, but not her courage. Alone, and fearless, she returned over the veldt, until, exhausted, she arrived on the outskirts of the town, just as the day was dawning, and descended from her cart, leaving it in the hands of her tireless waiting servant. She then turned homeward, now on foot. The fatigue of the watch had relaxed the vigilance of the guard, and they expected nothing from beyond the premises. So by care she was able to regain the shadow of the house and to make safe entrance.

Closing the door, the graceful Malay became transformed into a tearful, trembling, exhausted woman. She doffed her male attire, donned a soft, silken, clinging robe, and sunk on a couch with a feeling of utter weakness. Fate, she thought, had overtaken her, and she felt herself hopelessly entangled in the intricacies of Donald's possible disaster. But she had shown her devotion as a wife, in her wild and dangerous midnight ride. Why had she ever met Donald? Why had she not been left to live her uneventful life? "Oh," she sighed, "to hide in the depths of some great forest and there lie down in peace to die." Then her thoughts reverted to Schwatka, who was seldom out of her mind. Donald with his hidden secret had estranged her. When we are no longer worthy of confidence, we lose confidence in others.

A remnant of the old self that had been Donald's—her pride in his good name was still left. In secreting the diamond, she sought to shield her husband's name from disgrace. Beyond this pride, the rest was indifference, and nothing henceforth could kindle any warmer flame, while the new fires of another love burned at such a white heat, that they threatened to consume the temple in which their altars stood.

The mental strain of the last twenty-four hours had completely prostrated her. Soon all became a blank, and she lay for hours unconscious; when she awoke her brain slowly resumed its action. She passed her hand wearily over her head. Where was she? What was it? Ah, yes. She remembered, and rang for Bela. He did not answer the call. Calling a second time, and receiving no response, she sat up, lost in thought.

What was the immediate work before her? To find Bela must be her first act, for he had the diamond! She ran out of the room into the next and searched everywhere, thinking he must be in hiding. Calling again, and receiving no answer, she realised that there was not a servant on the place.

Action was now a luxury. Real danger was in the air. If nothing could be proved against her husband, when would he return?

With all these thoughts surging through her brain, it seemed as if her head would burst. As she tottered back toward



the bedroom, the door opened, and she swooned in Donald's arms.

Donald saw that she had been passing through some terrible agony. He groaned and covered her face with kisses, as he laid her gently on the couch and applied restoratives. When she regained consciousness, her eyes fell on Donald. She turned her head away from him with a weary motion. Here were two people chained to each other by the bond of marriage, but whose ways lay far apart. Love held Donald captive, while fate bound Dainty to Donald.



Suddenly she rose from her couch, and began to tell him of her night ride. As she continued, he looked at her in amazement. Her self sufficiency, her fearlessness, under the utterly listless manner in which she told it all, made her seem like a new being to him.

Woman needs but to taste the fruit of the tree of knowledge, to become an epicure. Dainty had been wandering in the fields of Paradise with an Adam who was not Donald, and Donald would no more be her companion, though he might stay by her side.

"If Bela does not return to-day, we must leave the country, unless you are willing to work in convict dress."

He sank lower in his chair, before replying in a scarce audible voice:

"Where shall we go?"

She looked at him in amazement as she said:

"To England, of course. Where else should you go?" He kept his hand over his eyes as he replied:

"I had thought we might wish to go to Australia."

"Australia! Why there, instead of England? Do you not care to see your native land?"

"Oh, yes," said Donald, hurriedly, "only I did not know as you—you cared to go to England in winter."

This seemed to satisfy Dainty, who wearily closed her eyes and said:

"It matters little to me whether it is summer or winter, so long as I get away from here." She said no more, but lay unmoved with eyes closed. Donald moodily watched her. Presently he saw that she slept the sleep of exhaustion.

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## Chapter Twenty One.

### On the Heights.

Bloemfontein, the beautiful. Have you seen Bloemfontein? No? Well you must do so before you leave Africa. In this lovely place, its streets shaded by trees, whose luxurious foliage is kept in perennial verdure by purling streams, had Kate Darcy chosen a resting-place. What a change from the dirty, dusty, noisy Fields, with streets filled with hungry worshippers of Mammon, to this crystallised mirage, for one would scarcely realise that so beautiful a garden could rise out of a desert, except in imagination.

Here in the midst of a garden of roses, encircled by a hedge of cactus, stood the house in which Kate Darcy had chosen to make her home for the nonce. Its owner, a wealthy Hollander, who had come out as a missionary, and availed himself of the opportunities of trade with great success, was now visiting Europe with his family. The house was luxuriously furnished, and a Scotchwoman, as housekeeper, watched over all the barbaric creatures—servants on the place.

One morning, a few weeks after her arrival, Kate was listlessly swinging in a hammock shaded by a fig-tree, when Margaret appeared, saying:

"A gentleman to see you, Miss Darcy."

"Who is it, Margaret?"

"Here is his card."

As Kate read the name of C.A. Fox—Kimberley, she said:

"Show him the way to the garden, Margaret. I will receive him here."

When the doctor reached the veranda that overlooked this charming spot, he stood lost in admiration. Before him was the woman he had dreamed of, thought of, loved—since the hour he first met her. Never before had he seen so beautiful, so idyllic a picture. She looked sweet and restful under the trees, with the sunlight striking the trembling leaves which threw playful shadows over her face.

At his approach, she rose from her hammock to greet him. Taking both her hands in his, and looking into her eyes, as if he would read her inmost thoughts, he said: "I hope that you are glad to see me?"

"Indeed I am," said Kate, heartily. "I was beginning to feel a little secret restlessness, and a desire for the society of a congenial soul. What good angel has brought you to Bloemfontein? Ah, I know," she continued, for the doctor seemed for once in his life at a loss for words; "the angel of mercy. Some poor stricken sufferer has heard of your skill and sent for you. Is it a case for the surgeon, or physician?"

"I have not fully diagnosed the case."

"It is not a hopeless one, I trust?" said Kate.

"I fear it is."

"Let us hope that with your skill, aided by kind Providence, all will be well."

"I will say Amen, to that, but, as it is a case for the metaphysician, I fear I shall lose the patient."

"Ah, Doctor! and you whose happy cures are so frequently the result of mental action. By the way, is the patient one of your own sex?"

"Yes; and therein lies the danger."

With one accord they began to walk slowly over the grounds. As they walked, they talked, and in the midst of their talk, they would cease to walk; standing still to enjoy some thought of the moment, and then begin to pace over the green sward.

"I thought, Miss Darcy, that I would leave the Fields during the hot Christmas season, and visit you."

"You have done quite right. We will try to entertain you as best we know how. Instead of the usual Christmas turkey with its accompanying cranberry sauce, we will serve up to you some of those delightful dishes our Coolie cook knows so well how to prepare, with a feast of rare fruit, such as I think you have never tasted."

"I see you think of the inner man?"

"Why, certainly! You, like the rest of your brothers, love to be well fed. You see that I wish you to be amiable while you are here. Experience has taught me that a good dinner makes a man much better company than he would be without it."

"Miss Darcy, I think your presence would always make a man feel at his best."

"Tut! Tut! what nonsense. I am more of a philosopher than you. There is nothing equal to a good dinner to make a man feel at peace with all the world."

"How are you off for servants?"

"I have not the slightest idea how many Margaret has on her staff. When meal time comes around, there will be a quorum or more Kafirs around the kitchen door. Always enough to come to a decision on the merits of the cook, cuisine, and condiments. They are an amusing study. They come in all sorts of garbs: in blankets, old military jackets once owned by some brave Englishman, and a variety of garments too absurd to mention. One Kafir came with a stovepipe hat turned upside down, so that he could have carried all his worldly possessions in it if he had wished to do so. The hat was held on his head by fastening a string to each side of the rim, and tying them under his chin. In addition to that he had on a paper collar, and a pair of old pantaloons half way up to his knees. He had a knob-kerrie in his hand, and walked much as a Broadway dandy would walk."

"Miss Darcy," said the doctor, laughingly, "you should fill a sketch-book with all these strange characters you see. Your powers of observation are so developed that you perceive things which others would pass blindly over."

"I have not the slightest talent for sketching. These scenes will have to remain imprinted on the photographic tablet of my memory."

"I trust your housekeeper suits you?"

"Margaret is all one could ask for, and such an honest body. I know she doesn't 'pretty much'!"

"One could not truthfully say that she is handsome! You are perfectly safe while she is your body-guard. Has she raised that moustache since you met her?"

Kate laughed merrily, for Margaret always reminded her of an old mouser. It seemed as if she never could have been young, and her clothes had a home-made-in-a-hurry sort of look about them. But Margaret filled her niche in the world.

"Let us take a drive before dinner," said Kate, "and let me show you through this beautiful little town of ours, which we think compares favourably with those havens of rest around Cape Town. You must have seen at the hotel the Englishmen, who are enjoying poor health, and losing their old dreaded belief in consumption."

"I did, and found them agreeable company. You have pleasant neighbours?"

"I don't know. I should be sorry to find that I have not, so I do not try to gratify any curiosity I may have on the subject."

They had reached the house, and Kate, having given orders for the horses to be harnessed to the Victoria, excused herself for a few moments. When she returned she wore a plain cream-coloured cashmere dress. A wide-brimmed Leghorn hat, with drooping feathers, sat gracefully on her head.

After driving through the miniature city, with its imposing banks, churches, House of Parliament, and handsome residences, they struck the road leading along the edge of a line of hills that overshadowed the town, passing several neatly-kept vineyards. For an hour they kept up a running fire of conversation on every topic except the one nearest their hearts; then the doctor turned the horses, and the spirited creatures put their noses down and enjoyed the run home over the hard, smooth road, as much as did the occupants of the carriage behind them. Dinner was ready when they reached the house, and they sat a long time chatting over the viands before them, unmindful of everything outside those four walls. After dinner the garden was again visited, and Kate swung idly in her hammock, while the doctor sat near by and told her the news of the Kimberley world. A cool breeze sprang up at sunset, and the moon rose in all her silvery glory.



They were both content. The day had brought its full amount of happiness, and was one to be kept in memory.

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## **Chapter Twenty Two.**

### **Pinning Leaves Together.**

"I have been thinking that you have found that home of loveliness and utter delight, which you so charmingly described during our last ride together in Kimberley."

"And have you not forgotten what I said?" asked Kate, looking up at the sky.

"I remember every word I ever heard you utter."

"I shall be very careful what I say after this."

"Not on my account, I beg? I like to hear you think aloud as you do, for your words have so stirred my own thoughts, Miss Darcy, that I have been anxious to hear you talk again."

Kate swung more and more slowly with eyes half closed, like one indulging in a dream.

"Tell me," continued the doctor, looking down into her face, "are you perfectly happy within yourself. Have you no longing for the society of others, and is this idle life of yours all that you wish for?"

Kate could not answer this man lightly, she felt that if she were false to him in the slightest degree, she would become less womanly in her own, as well as his eyes. Avoiding his glance, she answered:

"The idle life I am leading is a life full of thought. My mind is constantly absorbing everything I see. All these strange creatures around me are a study. I have not been as idle as you think during my stay in Bloemfontein. I have been pinning some leaves together."

"Pinning leaves together! Am I among those leaves?"

"Yes, but I have turned your particular leaf, with a few others, down for future reference."

"What will you do with the remaining leaves?"



"They will be left pinned. I do not wish to re-read the past. I need all my strength and thought for the ever-present now."

"Do you mean to say, that you do not intend giving any backward glances?"

"All that is not pleasant I have shut away in those leaves."

"Then I may infer that the leaf you have turned down for reference, has something agreeable written there?"

Kate made no reply.

"To be but a leaf in your book, brings a sense of delight to me. Pray let me know if I am fast in the binding, or whether I am liable to become lost, strayed, or stolen. Sometimes I feel as if I were all three," said the doctor, with an earnestness in his voice, that made the blood fly to Kate's cheeks. Yet evading his real meaning, she said, with mock pity:

"Poor fellow! That is homesickness. Homesickness is a very unpleasant feeling."

"Especially if you have no home, but are merely existing?"

"Don't you call Kimberley home?"

"Did you ever meet anyone there who did?" asked the doctor.

"Now that I think of it I never did. Why is it?"

"Because to live simply to make money, is only existence. I do not think I shall remain there much longer. I expect to sail for England shortly."

"To remain there?"

"That depends!" and the doctor watched her face with its varying expression. Kate covered her face with her hand,

for a few moments. When she looked up again the doctor asked:

“Of what were you thinking?”

“Of something in the past. Of course it was a pleasant thought.”

“I wish that I were woven in that past life of yours.”

“I don’t think we would have been as good friends as we are now.”

“Why do you think that?”

“Well,” said Kate, slowly, “I glided over the surface of life then, and did not appreciate half there was to be found in it. I realise now, that it is a great, a grand thing to live.”

“And you make others think the same thought when they come near you.”

“Ah! if I could have that power, what a rich woman I would be. What knowledge I would have, and what good I could do.”

“Don’t say ‘if,’” Kate felt the doctor’s eyes looking down upon her, as he spoke, and knew that he was deeply moved as he continued:

“I think I am a nobler man since I first met you. Your thoughts have been a refreshing draught to my thirsty soul. The divine womanhood in you has at last awakened my true self.”

“Then my coming has done some good; I am content.”

The doctor stood with his hand behind him. Attitude and form expressing the nobility of manhood, as he looked at this queen of his heart. Drawing a long breath he said: “I am not in a mood to talk platitudes, for my life has now become an earnest endeavour. I would rather you would wound me, than to endure another day of suspense such as I have passed through since you left me. Words are but clumsy vehicles to bear the expression of my feelings for you. You seem to be a part of myself—my spirit-mate. Kate, my beloved, come to me; let me call you—wife!”

As he said this he made a step forward, and grasped the hammock, trembling from head to foot. Kate remained silent, while the doctor stood with his hand still on the hammock patiently waiting her reply.

Kate was pale to her lips, as she replied: “My friend, I will be as truthful to you, as one soul can be to another; and I think you will understand me. I am happier now than I have ever been, in my life. I am at peace with myself. To say that I am perfectly happy, would be to say what no one yet has said truly; but it is a question, a very serious one with me, whether marriage would bring me greater happiness than I now know.”

“Would not this love I bear for you make you happier? God did not place you in my pathway without a purpose.”

“That is true. But let us be sure that this love is not a fancy!”

“A fancy! Have you no feeling for me deeper than you give to a mere friend?”

“Yes.”

“Thank God!” and the doctor raised his eyes, then let them fall upon her face with an adoring look.

“But I cannot make you understand, that I would spare you suffering later on. Let me tell you. Love, to me, means perfect trust. I could never stoop to find out if you ever deceived me. If I did, love would die out of me that instant, and then how dreary my life would be. I don’t want to be wretched through any mistaken fancy. When I surrender, it must bring me what I long for—Contentment.”

“Come to me, Kate, and trust me! I am not here without being certain that our lives can be made of use and joy to each other, for I love you. I love you. I have been smothering my feelings so long, that it is now a relief to tell you of it,” and the doctor took one of her hands in his, and held it firmly.

“Tell me, Kate, is marriage distasteful to you?”

“Not my ideal of the true married state. When I look at my married friends, and see among them so many lovely women wretched, and unable to solve the problem of happiness, I pray that my life may escape like miserable failure.”

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## **Chapter Twenty Three.**

### **What shall They do with It?**

“Explain to me your ideal of married life?”

“It is one of joy and happiness and of usefulness to our neighbours as well as ourselves. I have come to the conclusion that the restlessness in married people, which leads to divorces, springs entirely from selfishness. As for me, I want henceforth to make my life one of use to every one that comes near me. Every one is given at least one talent for use; not to hide and hoard away. Except for its new duties and relations, married life has no higher ideals

than single life. The same earnest unselfish principles should actuate us in whatever sphere we are called. We must shut our eyes to everything but the good in those who seek us, and so call out the best there is in them. That is the great secret of happiness. Encourage a soul to grow, and it will soar far beyond its highest fancies."

"Kate! you voice the feelings of my best nature. The life of a conscientious physician is only one of use to his neighbour. How might we, equally devoted to humanity and usefulness, work together. If you could but trust yourself to me, we could surely do much good in our lives, one in heart and purpose. Do not fear to trust yourself in my keeping. I know the responsibility of holding a woman's happiness in keeping, and I would hardly let my first betrayal of any trust be a treachery to the wife of my choice."

Kate looked long and earnestly at the brilliant stars, that hung from the blue curtain of night. She seemed to drink of an inspiring force, and her eyes matched the brilliancy of the heavenly orbs, as she looked into his, that were so strong and true. In a clear voice she said:

"I am yours in trust."

The next instant she was gathered in his arms, and held there, while his lips pressed her brow. It would have seemed like mockery to have spoken at such a moment. Words are needless when Love sits enthroned. Then it is that heart speaks to heart.



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"Miss Darcy?"

"Yes, Margaret."

"May I speak with you a moment?"

"Well, what is it?" and Kate approached Margaret, who stood a little distance from the lovers.

"A strange creature is here who wishes to see you."

"See me? Is it a man or woman?"

"He looks like a Bushman."

"What can a Bushman want of me?" said Kate, walking toward the house. In the still night air, the doctor had heard every word, and now followed her. He found Bela talking rapidly to her in clicks and vowel sounds, with his hand held over his eyes.

When Kate saw the doctor she laughingly said:

"He sounds like a cricket! Can you understand the jargon?"

At sight of the doctor, Bela acted like one insane with delight. He clapped his hands and kept time with his feet, while his body swayed in strange undulating motions.

"Let us go into the house, Miss Darcy," and making a motion to the Bushman to follow, they entered the salon. The doctor sat down, and Bela stood and told his story. As he proceeded the doctor's face was a study to Kate, who knew from its expression that something very strange had occurred.

In a few moments putting his fingers to Bela's eyes, he lifted the lid and slipped the glass eye from under it. As he did so, the concealed diamond fell into his hand.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the doctor.

Bela chuckled, and began to clap his hands and express delight in his usual way. Kate gave one look, and sank into a chair. They sat for a moment looking at each other, in stupefaction. Then Kate asked:

"What does it all mean?"

"It means that Donald Laure has been arrested on suspicion of being an I.D.B. and this creature has been a faithful servant to Mrs Laure. You may go outside and wait for me, Bela." When the Bushman had gone, the doctor continued: "Knowing you were a friend to his mistress, he has run from the Fields to you, without stopping, carrying the diamond in his eye! These natives are wonderfully astute, and Bela knowing that as you were living in the Orange Free State out of the pale of the law of Griqua Land West, the land of diamonds, if he could deliver this diamond into your keeping, he would be safe, and every one else connected with it."

"What would I have done with the diamond? Mercy! how glad I am that you are here."

"Already, Kate, I am of use to you? I am very glad indeed, for your sake, that I am here."

"What will you do with it?"

"Well, I shall consider the matter. It is late, and I must now go to my hotel. I will think it over and tell you my decision in the morning. This has been a memorable day in my existence, but it must end, more's the pity.

"Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night, 'till it be morrow,"

quoted the doctor, as he left her alone.

---

The next morning they were eager to see each other, for this was the dawn of their new life, and their faces reflected the radiance of the glory of the light on their horizon. Yet their talk was not of themselves but of Bela and the diamond.

"I have been busy this morning attending to this matter. Bela has disappeared! I find he was last seen at sunrise, on the road leading up into the interior of the country. He must have been nearly frightened to death over the scene with the detectives and his mistress, and afterwards by a little encounter with the guards at the gate. He probably fears even me at present, thinking that I may hand him over to the authorities, and so injure Laure. These natives have some of the wisdom supposed to be bestowed only upon their masters."

"What will you do with the gem?"

"I have telegraphed to Kimberley to find if Donald Laure is there. The disappearance of Bela with the diamond may cause Donald to change his plans."

As they sat talking a telegram was brought in by Margaret. Its contents follow:

"Donald Laure and wife have left Kimberley for England."

The doctor sat thinking with a puzzled expression on his countenance.

"Surprises multiply, Kate. What shall we now do with the diamond? I do not know to whom it belongs, and do not wish to do anybody an injury by sending it to the authorities. They would at once telegraph to England and have Donald Laure seized on his arrival in that country."

"What do men do with their diamonds, when they want to get them out of their way?"

"Oh, they bury them, or send them to England by mail."

"Why don't you do that?"

"Do what?"



"Send it by mail to your banker in England, addressed to Donald Laure, care of yourself, so it will be in safe hands, then you can give him an order for it when you find out his address."

"Well, Kate! That is good Yankee invention. You will be as good as a lawyer in adjusting all weighty matters that may arise in our lives. It is just the thing to do. Who says a woman's quick invention isn't worth more than the step-ladder man uses when he tries to climb to the heights of success through his reason?"

"Then you will do that?"

"It is the only thing to do. I will send it off before I leave to-day. We have only a few hours to ourselves before I start on my journey down the country to the sea, where I will take the steamer which will carry me to England in twenty days. I am a happier man, Kate, than I expected to be on that journey. When I came to Bloemfontein it did not seem as if I were worthy to approach and ask you to give yourself into my keeping."

"Love makes one feel unworthy of the object upon which it sets its affections. But our recompense for this personal sense of unfitness is the glory we gain in the eyes of our beloved. Perhaps an average struck between the humility of love on one side and the exaggeration of love on the other, will give a fair estimate of the reality."

The doctor smiled at Kate's grave conclusion, and taking both her hands in his, laid them over his heart which beat so truly, and on which she knew she could rest and gather to herself strength. In another hour he was on his way to the coast.

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## Chapter Twenty Four.

### "How will it End?"

What a civiliser is the railroad, preceded by the missionary, and followed by the speculator!

How changed is the country, since the time when the journey from Kimberley to the coast was made by ox-wagon, by stagecoach, or Cape cart, with its Malay driver and Hottentot guard, with a possible passenger hurrying to the sea to catch the English steamer.

Here the Kafir, with his coating of blue clay, once wound his way over the path worn by his ancestors, through the Karoo, across the sluit, the swamp, over the Kopje, telegraphing his approach by that soft, melodious, far-reaching cry peculiar to himself, on his pilgrimage to the great ocean, his goal. Not until certain sacred rites were carried into effect and he was cleansed in the great waters, was he considered a man by his tribe, and his approach to a kraal was but the signal for the younger women to hide themselves.

Strange creatures, and stranger customs, that are as strictly adhered to, as were the Mosaic laws of old, which in some respects they resemble. The scientist in the country finds the native life a weird, never-ending mystery, and the iron horse seems a trespasser.

In these days the traveller lounges in a luxurious Pullman coach, which in thirty hours hurries to the coast at Port Elizabeth, across sandy plains, and treeless mountains, passing slowly and gracefully over the "Good Hope" bridge, over a thousand feet in length, built upon nine arches that span the Orange River, a treacherous stream fifty-five feet below the rail, rushing onward to that omnivorous mouth, the Sea. During a few months of the year the upland rivers come rolling down like cataracts, over huge boulders, and dragging great gnarled trees with them, as if they were no more than a feather's weight; thus leaving the riverbeds dry during the remaining months of the year, or with a mere brooklet trickling along between wide yawning walls of clay.

On reaching Port Elizabeth, that enterprising city of Cape Colony, Dr Fox proceeded immediately to the long jetty, built well out into the sea, and there boarded a tug that lay alongside, and was soon steaming out to the "Arab," riding at anchor in Algoa Bay.

Many passengers were aboard, a number having come from Natal, and their faces expressed satisfaction at the prospect of a visit home to England.

Soon the heart of the great "Arab" began to beat, and the pulsations could be heard and felt by the passengers sitting on its deck watching the sunlight reflected on the wooded shores of the African coast, that seemed to glide by, while the "Arab" stood still.

A few days at sea seems a very long time, and social reserve drops off with the taking of the log. The seats arranged at table, the constant personal association in the confines of the ship, together with the hundred of incidents that arise during a long voyage, soon reveal the characters of fellow passengers. If there is congeniality the voyage comes to an end almost too soon.

There is no life that can tell of its romances and its heart-burnings like the life at sea.

A man's soul must be living indeed in a cold atmosphere, that can be so gently rocked in such a richly carved and gilded cradle as one of those Southern steamers, and not find sentiment growing in his soul. Especially if he is fortunate to meet there what may appear to be an affinity.

On reaching Cape Town the following day, and entering the stone dock, the doctor disembarked to pay a flying visit to the Eden-like suburbs, where the houses, covered with passion-flowers, growing in wild profusion and surrounded by orchids, peep out, overlooking the beautiful waters of Table Bay. With the mauve-tinted, golden-rimmed mountains lying in the distance, it is a veritable paradise in which to hide one's self away from the world.

Taking a hansom and returning to the steamer, the doctor stood on deck watching the sailors depositing the luggage in the hold, and thinking what that voyage might mean in the lives of many of the passengers.

As this thought sprang up, he looked toward the dock, and saw three persons in tourist garb, hastily approaching the gangplank, then in course of being hauled on deck.

Their faces were familiar. They were Donald and Dainty Laure, with Herr Schwatka, and they came hastily on board, and disappeared in the deck cabins allotted to them.

This was the beginning of a new act, not anticipated by the doctor, in the drama of which, so far, he had been a spectator.

"What will be the end of it?" was his mental query.

Here in the Southern hemisphere, with the clearly defined outline of majestic scenery, the great "Arab" again began slowly to swing away from her moorings out into the boundless ocean, soon to glide over its bosom, as swiftly as a swan in its native lake.

Hardly a ripple disturbed the waters, and the air kissed the cheek like the touch of an angel's wing.

Here, where "The heavens are telling the glory of God," and the Southern Cross and the eye of night throw out a light unequalled in our Northern hemisphere, to simply live is a delight.

That great deck seemed unnecessary for those quiet waters, but there are times when the sea changes its moods with a suddenness like that of Southern storms in the upland regions of Africa, where the whirlwinds of dust come with unexpected fury. Those tropical winds, on both land and sea, are treacherous and capricious.

To attempt to describe a sea-voyage from Africa to England, through the summer voyage of the world, is like attempting to describe a dream that had been one long, sweet draught of perfect happiness, where the spirit seemed to go wherever it willed, and was in company with people with whom it felt in harmony.



There are usually musicians, or accomplished people aboard, who have no thought of hiding their light under a bushel, but who cheerfully contribute to the entertainment of their fellow passengers.

To Dainty Laure what would not this experience have been, had her heart been at rest. But she looked at the new world with strange experiences distracting her soul, and the unwonted surroundings made her condition but more pitiful.

Unable to control the harassing conditions of her life, she was like a sick, suffering creature denied the quiet and rest needed for recovery. In her full strength, and with her former capacity for enjoyment, she would have taken a child's delight in change.

But now, removed from her accustomed places, kept by circumstances from putting her trust for the future where her heart prompted, and unable to feel toward Donald the reliance of love, she was never at rest.

Often she would sit long by the side of the doctor, not saying a word. He was the one man she knew well whose presence satisfied her. The doctor never questioned her, for the agony of her spirit was written on her face, which grew sadder day by day. She knew not how to wear a mask.

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## Chapter Twenty Five.

### The End of the Voyage.

But Dainty was not the only uneasy passenger among our acquaintances; Donald was no less discomfited. The knowledge of his past embittered even his love for Dainty—a love to which he was true. And yet, when in any way we wrong the loved, are we true? No—rather false. For real love will deny itself for the sake of the beloved.

He had no suspicion of the tender feelings that existed between his friend and the woman he called wife. The hidden entanglements of his own life blinded him to all other convictions. What solitary lives were these two living! Watched and harassed, they were not as happy as the hard-worked, gasping stoker, who came up from below, like a Vulcan from his fiery forge, to get a breath of the stifling equatorial air.

One hot, lazy afternoon, just after tiffin, Donald and Herr Schwatka were walking on deck, when the latter asked:

“What has become of Kildare?”

“Oh, he has set his scheme afloat, and is sailing along. The great gold mining company is now in popular favour. By the by, he compliments the doctor on being the best Poker player, but one, on the Fields.”

“And what may be the name of his superior?”

“Why, Major Kildare, of course. He thinks Doctor Fox the best fellow in the country. I suppose you know that the Major accepted his invitation to call and take his revenge, and won back all his money, and immediately went out on the market and bought the finest tiger skin he could find, and hung it in his office. So that is why there is one man in Africa better than the doctor in playing the little game of Poker.”

“That is a matter of opinion,” said Schwatka, sarcastically; as he strolled away, Donald joined the doctor, who was sitting on deck by Dainty's side, and offered him a cigar. The day was lovely. Not a ripple disturbed the surface of the ocean.

“Laure,” said the doctor, “do you know what became of that diamond which the detectives couldn't find, and which was hidden in the Bushman's eye?”

Donald's cigar fell from his mouth, and he seemed to shrivel up in his chair. “If you don't,” continued the doctor, as coolly as if he had asked the time of day, “I do.”

“You!” gasped Donald.

“Yes. I believe it is in a mail bag on board this very steamer.”

“Impossible!” ejaculated Donald.

“Not at all. In fact, quite probable,” said the doctor, showing him the postal order, and then related his interview with Bela.

Donald was stunned, and when the doctor handed him the order for recovery of the package on his arrival in London, the circumstance did not tend to restore calm.

Donald hesitated at first, but his fingers finally closed over the bit of paper that made him again owner of the diamond. After looking it over, he turned to Dainty and said:



"I think the diamond belongs to you. If it were not now on its way to England through your influence, I would not be sitting here. I will endorse this order, so that you will own the diamond."

He did so, and eventually the gem came into the possession of Dainty.

Late in the afternoon of the nineteenth day out, the steamer anchored in the bay of Plymouth. A tender, with relatives and friends of the passengers aboard, came out to meet and take them ashore.

In the gathering gloom the faces of those on board the "Arab" were not discernible, but the outline of the forms of three people could be seen, standing silently apart from the crowd at the gangway. Names were called out, and greeted with hearty, joyous words of recognition. Many stood waiting to disembark as soon as the signal was given. Suddenly a voice called out:

"If Mr Donald Laure is on board, he will please land here, as his wife, from Scotland, is waiting to receive him!"

Not a sound was heard from those on deck. All stood as silent as ghosts in the gathering mist.

On hearing those words, Herr Schwatka looked at Dainty, who stood rooted to the spot, and putting his arm around her supported her firmly and tenderly, as he uttered three words:

"Mine at last!"

Donald turned to Dainty with a face like death, but only to see her led away from him upheld by the arm of Herr Schwatka. With a slow step, like that of a man walking to his doom, he disappeared down the gangplank to meet the "wife from Scotland!"

We know not for what race we are preparing. Fate holds the leading horses in her hands. But sooner or later we must drive.

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In a certain copy of the "Bloemfontein Gazette" is the following notice.

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## Married.

Fox-Darcy.—At the residence of the bride's brother, Kimberley, South Africa, May 22, 18—Miss Kate Darcy and C.A. Fox, M.D. New York City papers please copy.

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[Chapter 1](#) | [Chapter 2](#) | [Chapter 3](#) | [Chapter 4](#) | [Chapter 5](#) | [Chapter 6](#) | [Chapter 7](#) | [Chapter 8](#) | [Chapter 9](#) | [Chapter 10](#) | [Chapter 11](#) | [Chapter 12](#) | [Chapter 13](#) | [Chapter 14](#) | [Chapter 15](#) | [Chapter 16](#) | [Chapter 17](#) | [Chapter 18](#) | [Chapter 19](#) | [Chapter 20](#) | [Chapter 21](#) | [Chapter 22](#) | [Chapter 23](#) | [Chapter 24](#) | [Chapter 25](#) |

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