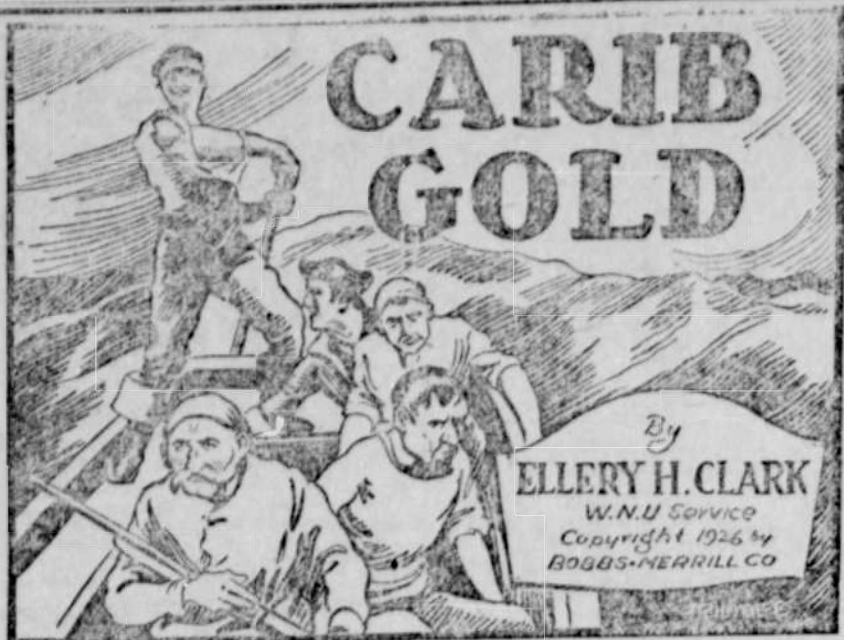




CHAPTER VI.—Barclay sets Lindsay ashore on Jamaica island, after telling him to seek out Shively, manager of McAllister's plantation, introduce himself as Robert, and ask if he can about his "cousin's" house, and its defenses, and report to Lindsay in two weeks. On his way to the town, Lindsay may be a witness to the kidnapping and tying up of a colored man, whom he frees. Lindsay then goes to a match race the next day. Quasny sends Lindsay to his employer, Colonel Singleton, to explain the matter. He does so, and next day Singleton's horse, with Quasny up, wins the race.

CHAPTER VII.—Lindsay has made the acquaintance of a young man, George Lewis, whom he admires. While watching a card game in which Lewis is engaged, Lindsay detects a player cheating. He denounces the cheater, and a duel follows. Lindsay wounds his opponent, but grants him his life on his admitting the truth of Lindsay's accusation.

CHAPTER VIII.—Lindsay finds Shively, introduces himself, and is coldly received. Shively is a cowardly tyrant, brutal to his slaves under his control. He is torturing a young female slave when the woman's husband tries to kill him with a knife. Shively shoots the man, but the death throes the slave declares he will come back to haunt his slayer.

CHAPTER IX.—Lindsay is accepted without question as McAllister's nephew. He finds the man the embodiment of evil, and is convinced of the truth of Barclay's story of his villainy. Lying with McAllister is his adopted daughter, Helen, with whom Lindsay is impressed. He finds the place extremely defended. His acquaintance with Helen progresses. During a hurricane McAllister's ship, the *Admiral*, with a cargo of slaves, is wrecked on the island, not a soul surviving.

CHAPTER X.—Investigating a disturbance among the cattle, Lindsay with two negroes, finds one of the animals frightfully mutilated, evidently not the work of any man, however powerful. That night the two negroes, watching, are killed in much the same manner as had been the helter the day before. Dick sees a black man in a canoe, evidently escaping from the island, and, believing him the murderer, anoints and kills him. The tension is relieved, but that night Lindsay finds McAllister investigating a buried treasure. While he watches, unseen, McAllister is threatened by what seems to be a black man. Lindsay shoots him, and the figure makes for the house. While seeking entrance, Dick shoots and kills him. The brute proves to be an orang-utan.

agony, almost caused almost as abruptly as it began. In the darkness, the sound was positively terrifying, suggesting all kinds of unseen tortures, and Caesar by daylight as brave a man as you could find, refused to go to the rescue of his pet. In the morning we searched for him, but in vain; the dog had vanished as completely as though the earth had swallowed him.

The maid was triumphant; her story was now substantiated, and indeed by this time it did seem as if somebody or something—man or spirit—was haunting the island. Yet realizing the difficulties of exploring the mangrove swamp, we took no action save to be in before nightfall, to lock up the goats and the poultry, and on the ground floor to make sure that door and windows were thoroughly barred.

One thing, however, we did not do. We took no heed of our herd of half-wild cattle, which roamed the island at will. That they also might be attacked never crossed our minds; yet it was on the succeeding evening that another tragedy was added to the list. We had just finished supper; dusk was falling; and Helen and I were debating whether or not we would take our customary stroll, which we had abandoned since the night of the hurricane. She had asked me whether I really believed there was danger, when her question was suddenly answered for her by a great bellowing of cattle. Running to the door, I could see six or eight of them, barely visible in the dim light, dashing at full tilt toward the house, as if they felt that here at least they might find protection. I seized my gun and went out, wishing greatly that Cudjo, the leader of the maroons, were with me, but there had been much talk of a rebellion among the slaves and he had gone up the river, the day before, on a scouting trip, to see what he could learn in the way of news. Caesar and Bill, however, were already on hand, like myself, with their rifles in their hands. The three of us stood close together, casting doubtful glances at the black shadow of the woods. Caesar, usually brave as a lion, for once hesitated. "What think?" he asked me.

To tell the truth, I should have been very glad to retire into the house, but since he had appealed to me in this way, I did not wish to be quoted afterward as having counseled prudence. And, as a matter of fact, to retreat, like frightened children, because of a stampede of cattle in the darkness, appeared the very height of cowardice. And so, with a resolution I was far from feeling, and with what was, I fear, that species of false bravery which comes from the dread of being thought afraid, I replied: "I think we ought to go ahead. Come on, boys, and we'll clear up this mystery for good and all."

Thus appealed to, two old fighters like Bill and Caesar could not well demur, and at once, as the light was each instant growing dimmer, we walked rapidly toward the border of

the trees. At the edge of the thicket we halted, cocked our rifles, made sure that our knives and pistols were in readiness; then, spreading out a little, slowly advanced among the trees. There were no sounds anywhere, save the faint tread of our own footsteps; and I was beginning to feel renewed courage and rather to pride myself upon my decision when we suddenly emerged into a little clearing, and as we did so I gave an uncontrollable start. I could not have said that I had seen anything, yet, fanciful as it may sound, I had a feeling that some one had been in that clearing but a moment ago; and in spite of myself I felt my hair actually bristling on my scalp. At the same moment Caesar, whose eyes were as keen as those of a lynx, gave vent to a low exclamation. "At once I hastened to his side, and found him and Bill peering intently toward the farther side of the clearing.

"Look like one of cattle," said Caesar. "Maybe somebody hide. We dare go?"

By this time, though I am far from making the statement boastfully, I had become wrought up to such a pitch of excitement that now, instead of being half frightened to death, I was in a state of absolute recklessness. With a terse "Come on!" I advanced, taking advantage of the faint light that still illumined the clearing, though all beyond its boundaries was dark and silent as the grave.

I did not wait to see whether or not I was followed, for as I say I was fairly beside myself with the tension of the whole affair; but, as a matter of fact, Caesar and Bill were close at my heels, and in a moment we were standing by the silent heap upon the ground.

It was one of the cattle; no doubt of that. It lay in a strangely contorted position, with forelegs extended as if in a last desperate effort at flight, and with head thrown back, as it seemed to me, unnaturally far. I stooped to see if the animal were really dead, and then, in my mingled surprise and horror, uttered a cry, for its strange and unnatural attitude was now explained; the helter's neck had been broken, its throat was torn and bleeding terribly, so that the ground about was soaked with blood. With courage suddenly evaporated, I threw a terrified glance at the forbidding blackness of the woods. Surely this was not the work of human hands, and at the moment I could have sworn that I saw something moving in the trees and heard the snapping of a twig. It was enough. Thoroughly panic-stricken, all three of us dashed headlong across the clearing and through the woods beyond; nor did we stop there, but kept on running until we were once more within a stone's throw of the house. Then, indeed, we pulled up, and gazed at one another, not, I think, ashamed of ourselves, but thoroughly demoralized and at a loss to account for this new tragedy.

We found McAllister eagerly awaiting us, but there was little we could do to relieve his anxiety. For a long time we talked. McAllister held stubbornly to the theory that this was the work of men who came from the mainland in a boat; yet this seemed hardly possible, for besides the strong probability of our seeing them there was the added puzzle of the helter with its broken neck and bleeding throat. But to this McAllister answered that the animal's neck was broken by its fall. Caesar and Bill laid the whole blame on evil spirits, in some way conjured hither by the murdered old man, possibly all the way from Africa. I, for my part, was frankly puzzled, and could suggest no theory at all.

With morning, and the cheerful sunshine, the events of the night seemed incredible, and it was without fear that we started to revisit the grove. To my relief, Cudjo had returned from his scouting trip, reporting all quiet among the slaves, and he, disposed to ridicule on story, went with us to the woods. His face, as he bent over the body of the helter, was a study, for he was a man of unusual intelligence, and the superstitious imaginings of his race meant nothing at all to him. Yet while he discarded the idea of anything supernatural, he was at a loss to tell who had done the deed. The helter's neck interested him immensely, and over it he shook his head.

"This afternoon," he announced, "we hunt island. All men, all armed, all keep together. If nothing, then come evening, I watch here. I and one other man, if get him."

I admired his courage and his decision, and felt that with him as a companion I was ready to take the risk. But when I volunteered he shook his head. "Master no let you," he said decisively. "Think too much danger. Master no let me, if tell him. So no tell him. No get other man, come alone."

But this doubt of getting another man stung Caesar, in spite of his belief in ghosts. "I go," he announced quietly, and Cudjo nodded, well pleased.

That afternoon, with the consent of Andrew McAllister, we made careful preparations and explored, as thor-



I Do Not Know What Woke Me.

oughly as we could, the mangrove swamp, with the exception of one particularly tangled spot to the westward of the house, which McAllister promised to make his special care. When we wended our way homeward, with our results, we felt tolerably certain that it was not in the swamp that our foe was lurking. But where then on the island could he conceal himself? The treetops, indeed, would serve, but their smooth trunks rose, without a branch, for many feet, and we had only to stand and look upward to know that the most skillful of us could not scale them. No, the mystery remained unsolved, and its shadow cast a gloom over the entire household.

Nor did I, to tell the truth, feel on the easy in my mind over Cudjo and Caesar; yet they were both mature men, expert and resourceful, and I did not dare to offend them by informing McAllister of their plan. Fortunately for its success, McAllister retired early, and watching, not without anxiety, from the doorway, I saw the two figures emerge from their quarters and melt silently into the darkness. For some time, indeed, I waited outside, half wishing to go, unbeknown to their assistance, and to take up a position near them in case they needed reinforcements. But after an hour had passed, and no sound broke the stillness of the night, I went in, and was soon sleeping soundly.

I do not know what woke me. It may have been a pure coincidence, or it may have been through some mysterious agency which we do not wholly understand, but in an instant I was broad awake. It was perhaps an hour before daybreak, I calculated, and feeling that Cudjo would no longer disapprove my coming, I decided to dress steal out and join them in the woods, to hear the story of their vigil. As I left the house, a shadow from the maroon quarters joined me, and I was not sorry to recognize Big Bill, with the rifle in his hand. His face looked troubled and anxious, and when I asked him why he was abroad so early I discovered that he had been awakened in the same strange manner as myself. Evidently, too, he felt that it foreboded evil, for he muttered apprehensively, "Something bad happen soon."

We had traversed perhaps half the distance to the woods when of a sudden, and the more dreadful because without warning, there arose on the morning air a most frightful shriek, high-pitched, heartrending, the scream of a man in agony. Then came the sharp report of a rifle, and a second later an appalling cry rang out, twice repeated, "Help! Help! Oh, God—" and then absolute silence. It was too much for overwrought nerves; coming as the climax of a series of lesser misadventures, it was indescribably terrifying, and I felt no surprise as I saw Bill turn and fairly take to his heels. And though I did not follow his example, I take no credit to myself; I would gladly have done so had not pride prevented; and stubbornly, with teeth set and heart hammering against my ribs, I pressed on toward the woods, thankful that at last a faint light was beginning to show around me. If I was to die, I wished to meet death face to face, not to be struck down in the dark.

I reached the edge of the clearing without mishap, and, peering forth, knew instantly that the worst had happened. In the center of the glade, face downward, lay the body of Cudjo; a little nearer, just on the edge of the clearing, a head and shoulders, projecting from the undergrowth, betrayed the body of Caesar. A hasty examination destroyed the last vestige of hope—both men were beyond all aid. Caesar, I judged, had been struck down from behind with awful force; while it was only too evident that Cudjo had met his death by the same hands that had slain the hapless helter. I felt my brain going; never before had I believed in vampires or warlocks, yet now I did, and for an instant I was actually convinced that here was the work of some ghostly visitor from beyond the grave.

Then, in a flash of reason, I somehow regained my power of control. We had searched the island; nothing was there. This deed had happened within a few moments; if done by visitors from the mainland, they could not yet

have escaped. As fast as my legs would carry me, I dashed through the strip of woods that led to the seaward point; and there—I could have shouted at the sight of it—there was a canoe of cottonwood, its single occupant making his paddle fly. It was light enough for me to see that he wore a scarlet handkerchief about his head and even in the dim light I had the impression that he was not a negro, but a white man. I threw my rifle to my shoulder, aimed at the base of the man's neck, and pressed the trigger. My aim was true, for at the report he half leaped to his feet, dropping his paddle and clutching at the air, then plunged over the side, upsetting the canoe in his fall, and floated, struggling feebly, but without, as it seemed to me, any real notion of what he was doing. With a feeling of relief that this mysterious murderer was at last laid low, I started to run to the spot where the boats lay moored, but throwing a hasty glance over my shoulder, I stopped in my tracks, for even as I looked I saw his body rise half out of the water as if impelled by some force from beneath the waves, then swiftly and silently disappear from sight, to rise no more. I needed no explanation; some one of the huge sharks that haunted the lagoon had secured a meal, and the identity of the mysterious murderer would never become known.

The effect of the affair on McAllister was remarkable. The solving of the mystery lifted an enormous weight from his spirits. My killing of the marauder in the canoe especially pleased him; I was in the highest favor; and again and again he praised my skill with the rifle. "What a gift!" he would say admiringly. "What a bonny gift!" And again, "Where might I be now, if I hadna written you to come and join me?"

He was so pleased, indeed, that I had not the heart to impart to him the doubts that still remained in my mind, for the more I thought about it the less I could arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. That this mysterious visitor was the murderer seemed plain; and yet, if it was against our household that he had designs, why had he slain the dog? Why had he slaughtered the helter? What possible object was there in thus alarming our garrison and putting us on our guard? The theory which I at last adopted as the most probable was that this was a madman, seized with some blood lust, and prowling about in the darkness, like a beast of prey, to gratify his murderous frenzy.

For twenty-four hours quiet reigned. Then, at breakfast, Helen told us that her maid had, during the night, been almost frightened to death. She had awakened in the darkness, had heard a faint scraping noise outside her room, and while she had lain there,

quaking at these cautious, hardly audible sounds, something—she was sure of it—had peered in at the window. It was, she thought, a large man with very broad shoulders; she had screamed, and immediately the visitor had vanished. Of course none of us took this seriously, for almost all the blacks are imaginative to the highest degree. So instead of allowing our selves to become disturbed, we heard the story with a smile.

Thus the next night came—sultry, unbearably hot, with a high moon peering occasionally through drifting clouds. For some time I tried to sleep, but finally overcome by wakefulness, I determined to resort to my expedient of the rope; and slipping on my lightest clothing I armed myself, dropped noiselessly to the ground, and was just starting to walk away when I heard a noise as if of a door closing, as though some one were entering or leaving the house. Flattening myself against the wall, I waited, and presently a figure came into view, not, needless to say, that of a ghost or demon, but the bent and commonplace form of McAllister, carrying a spade in his hand.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

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