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KNOWLES CHAPTER No. 12, O. E. S.—Meets a Masonic hall the first and third Monday evening in each month. Visiting members cordially invited.
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MRS. C. W. TALMAGE, W. M.

A. O. U. W.—Charity Lodge No. 7 meets first and third Fridays of each month, 7:30 p. m. Lodge room in Union block.
H. C. BURNS, M. W.
J. D. BAKER, Recorder. 19

Yamhill Lodge No. 10 D. of H. meets in Union hall second and fourth Friday evenings of each month.

CUSTER POST No. 9—Meets the second and fourth Saturday of each month in Union hall at 7:30 p. m. on second Saturday and at 10:30 a. m. on 4th Saturday. All members of the order are cordially invited to attend our meetings.
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JENNIE GALLENTINE, Sec'y

NOTICE OF EXECUTRIX' SALE OF REAL PROPERTY.

NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to an order of the county court of Yamhill county, Oregon, duly made and entered of record on the 3d day of April, 1895, the undersigned, the duly appointed, qualified and acting executrix of the estate of J. S. Hibbs, deceased, will, from and after the 4th day of May, 1895, proceed to sell at private sale for cash in hand, the real property belonging to said estate and described as follows, to-wit:

The west half of lot No. 2 and the east 28 feet of lot No. 3 in block 8, of the City of McMinnville, Oregon.

Blocks Nos. 2 and 3 in Johns' addition to the City of McMinnville, Oregon.

A lot or parcel of land 30 feet wide running east and west and adjoining the northern tier of lots on the south of block 21, of Johns' addition to the City of McMinnville, Oregon.

Commencing at a point on the east boundary line of section 9, in township 4 south, of range 4 west of the Willamette meridian, Yamhill county Oregon, 38.64 chains south of the northeast corner of said section, said point being the southeast corner of land deeded by J. S. Hibbs to J. Fred Hibbs, recorded in Vol. 28, page 243, records of deeds of said county, and running thence south 52.76 chains; thence west 54.42 chains to the east line of J. G. Baker's donation land claim; thence north 14.88 chains to the northeast corner of said D. L. C.; thence west 17.08 chains; thence north 11.25 chains to the center of Baker creek; thence down said creek to a point due west of the place of beginning, and thence east 61.96 chains to the place of beginning; also commencing in the center of the county road running from McMinnville to Carlton at southwest corner of a tract conveyed to G. H. Hibbs in Vol. 24, page 465, records of deeds for said Yamhill county, and running thence north 69½ deg. east to center of Baker creek; thence southwesterly along said creek to center of said road, and thence northerly along said county road to the place of beginning. All the above described real property lying and being in Yamhill county, Oregon.
ELIZABETH HIBBS,
Executrix.
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THE PEOPLE OF THE MIST.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

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sake, I implore you, do not give way to grief or rage. I swear to you that no harm shall come to yonder man if you will but do my bidding. Shepherdess, you are found out. I know and the people know that you are no goddess. It had been safer to sacrifice you today, but partly because of the pleading of my daughter, who loves you, and partly for other reasons I have caused you to be saved alive. Now, Shepherdess, from this country there is no escape. As you have chosen to come here, here you must remain for life, and in this cell you cannot live and die. Therefore for my daughter's sake I have cast about for a means to deliver you from bonds and set you high in the land—aye, almost at its head," and he paused.

"Perhaps you will come to the point," said Juanna, who was trembling with fear and anger.

"It is this, Shepherdess," Nam answered, bowing. "Although you are dethroned as a goddess, you may still shine as a queen and rule over us as the wife of our king."

"Indeed," said Juanna, turning suddenly cold, "and how shall I, who am held to be dead, appear again as a woman wedded to your king? Surely the people would find that strange, Nam."

"No, Shepherdess, for I have made a tale ready which shall explain the wonder, and already the rumor runs from mouth to mouth. It will be said that you were a goddess and therefore immortal, but that for the sake of love you have put off your godhead and put on the flesh that you might dwell for some years with him whom you desire."

"Indeed?" said Juanna again. "And what if I refuse to consent to this scheme, which, as I think, can have come only from a woman's brain?" and she pointed to Soa.

"You are right, Shepherdess," said Soa. "The plan is mine. I made it to save you, and also," she added coolly, "to be revenged upon that white thief who loves you, for he shall live to see you the wife of another man, a wild man."

"And have you never thought, Soa, that I may have wishes of my own in this matter?"

"Doubtless, yet the fairest woman cannot always have what she may chance to wish. Know, Shepherdess, that this must be both for your own sake and for the sake of Nam, my father. Olfan loves you, and in these troubled times it is necessary that Nam and the priests should have his support, and it has been bought but now by the promise that you will be given to him in marriage on this very day. For you, Shepherdess, although you might have wished to wed one of your own race, at the least you will rule as a queen, and that is better than to perish miserably."

"I think otherwise, Soa," Juanna answered calmly, for she saw that neither passion nor pleading would help her, "and of the two I choose to die," and she put her hand to her hair, then started, for she found the poison gone.

"You will choose to die, Shepherdess," said Soa, with a cold smile, "but death is not always so easy. I have taken your medicine from you while you slept, and here there are no other means to compass it."

"I can starve, Soa," replied Juanna, with dignity.

"That takes some time, Shepherdess, and today you will become the wife of Olfan. Still it is needful that you should yourself consent to marry him, for this king is so foolish that he declares that he will not wed you till you have accepted him with your own mouth and in the presence of witnesses."

"Then I fear that this wedding will not be celebrated," said Juanna, with a bitter laugh, for she could not refrain from giving some outward expression to all the loathing which she felt for this wicked woman, who in her fierce love would save the life of her mistress by selling her to shame.

"I think that it will, Shepherdess," answered Soa, "for it seems that we have a way by which we can win you to speak those words that Olfan desires to hear."

"There is no way, Soa."

"What, none? Think now. He whom you name deliverer is a prisoner beyond that door. What if his life hangs upon your words? What if he were shown to you about to die a fearful death from which you alone could save him by speaking that word?"

Now for the first time Juanna fully understood the hideous nature of the plot whereby Soa purposed either to force her to become the wife of a savage or to thrust upon her the guilt of being the cause of the death of the man whom she loved and sank back on the couch, saying:

"You would have done better to leave me yonder in the slave camp, Soa."

Then, abandoning the tone of forced calm in which she had spoken hitherto, Soa broke out into bitter words:

"When you were in the slave camp, Shepherdess, you loved me, who have loved you from a child, for then no white dog had come to sow mischief between us and make you hate and distrust me. Then I would have died for you—aye, and this I would do now. But also I would be revenged upon the white dog, for I, who am husbandless and childless, had but this one thing, and he has taken it from me. You were to me as mother and lover and babe are to other women—my all—and now I am left desolate and will be revenged upon him before I die. But I still love you, Shepherdess, and could any other plan have been found to help you I would not have forced this marriage on you. No such plan can be found. Thus alone can you live and be made great and happy, and thus alone can I continue to feast my eyes upon you, though it be from far."

She ceased, trembling with the strength of the passions that shook her, to which indeed her words had given but feeble expression.

"Go," said Juanna. "I would have time to think."

Then Nam spoke again.

"We go, Shepherdess, in obedience to your wish, but before evening we shall return to hear your answer. Do not attempt mischief on yourself, for know that you will be watched, though you cannot see the eyes that watch you, and if you do but so much as lift a hand against your life or even strive to cut off the light that flows through yonder hole, then at once you will be seized and bound, and my daughter will be set to guard you. Shepherdess, farewell."

And they went, leaving Juanna alone and a prey to such thoughts as can scarcely be written.

The day passed slowly, and at length the gloom gathering in the little cell told her that night was near. Before it came, however, Soa and Nam entered, bearing candles, which they fixed upon brackets in the walls.

"We come, Shepherdess, to hear your answer," said Nam. "Will you consent to take Olfan for a husband, or will you not?"

"I will not consent," answered Juanna.

"Think again, Shepherdess."

"I have thought. You have my answer."

At the words Nam seized her arm, saying, "Come hither, Shepherdess, and you shall see something," and he led her to that door by means of which Leonard had been entrapped. At the same time Soa extinguished one of the candles, and taking the other in her hand left the cell, bolting the door behind her, so that Nam and Juanna stood in darkness.

"Shepherdess," said Nam sternly, "you are about to see him whom you name the deliverer. Now, remember this—if you cry out or speak above a whisper he dies."

Juanna made no answer, although she felt her heart grow faint within her. Five minutes or more passed, and of a sudden a panel slid back in the upper part of the door which connected the two cells, so that Juanna could see through it, although those who stood on the farther side could not see her, for they were in light, and she was in darkness.

And this was what she saw: Ranged against the wall of the second prison and opposite to her were three priests holding candles in their hands, whose light shone upon their sullen, cruel faces and the snake's head tattooed on their naked breasts. In front of these men stood two other priests, and between them Leonard, bound and gagged. On the other side of the cell and not more than two feet from the door, through the open panel of which Juanna was looking, was Soa, on whom the eyes of the executioners were fixed, as though awaiting a command. Between Soa and these men yawned an open hole in the rock-floor.

When Juanna had gazed upon this scene some 20 seconds, the sliding panel was closed, apparently by Soa, and Nam spoke:

"You have seen, Shepherdess," he said, "that the deliverer is bound, and you have also seen that before him is a hole in the floor of the rock. He who falls down that hole, Shepherdess, finds himself in the den of the snake beneath, from the visiting of whom no man has ever returned alive, for it is through it that we feed the water dweller at certain seasons of the year and when there is no sacrifice. Now, Shepherdess, you must choose between two things—either to wed Olfan of your own free will this night or to see the deliverer thrown to the snake before your eyes and afterward to wed Olfan whether you will or not. What do you say, Shepherdess?"

Juanna took counsel with herself and came to the conclusion that she would resist a little longer, for she thought this scene had been planned to try her fortitude.

"I refuse to marry Olfan."

Then Nam opened the panel and whispered a word into the ear of Soa, who uttered a command. Instantly the two executioner priests flung Leonard on to his face upon the ground, an easy task, seeing that his legs were fastened with ropes, dragged him forward until his head hung over the oubliettelike hole. Then they paused, as though awaiting for some further order. Nam drew Juanna some few paces back from the door.

"What is your word now, Shepherdess?" she said. "Is the man to die or be saved? Speak swiftly."

Juanna glanced through the opening and saw that now Leonard's head and shoulders had vanished down the oubliette while one of the priests held him by the ankles, watching Soa for the sign to let him go.

"Loose him," said Juanna faintly. "I will marry Olfan."

Stepping forward, Nam whispered to Soa, who issued another order. Thereupon the priests drew Leonard back from his perilous position and rolled him to the side of the cell unwillingly enough, for they would have preferred to be rid of him. At that moment also the shutter was closed.

"I said loose him," repeated Juanna. "Now the man lies on the ground like a fallen tree unable to move."

"Nay, Shepherdess," replied Nam, "perchance you may yet change your mind, and then it would be troublesome to bind him afresh, for he is very strong and violent. Now listen, Shepherdess. When Olfan comes presently to ask your hand, you must say nothing of that man yonder, for he deems him to be dead, and the moment that you speak of him he will be dead. Do you understand?"

"I understand," answered Juanna, "but at least the gag might be taken from his mouth."

"Fear not, Shepherdess. It shall be done when you have spoken with Olfan. And now at what hour will it be your pleasure to see him?"

"When you will. The sooner it is finished the better."

"Good. My daughter," he added to Soa, who just then entered the cell, "be pleased to make fire and then summon the king Olfan, who waits without."

Soa departed upon her errand, and overcome with emotion which she would not show Juanna sank upon the couch, hiding her face in her hands. For awhile there was silence, and then the door opened again, and, heralded by Soa, Olfan, the king, stood before her.

"Be careful, Shepherdess," whispered Nam as they entered. "One word, and the deliverer dies."

CHAPTER XXVI.

For awhile there was silence. Then Juanna looked up, searching Olfan's face with her eyes. Nothing was to be read there, for it was impossible to pierce the mask of solemn calm beneath which, in common with all his race, the king was accustomed to hide his thoughts. He leaned on the shaft of his broad spear, his head slightly bowed, as though in humility, his dark eyes fixed upon her face with a mingled look of wonder and supplication, immovable, impassive, a picture of savage dignity.

"Speak, Olfan," said Juanna at length.

"But a few hours since I thought you dead, for with all the thousands in the temple I believed that it was your fair body which Nam hurled at dawn from the brow of the statue, and I tell you that when I saw it I, who am a warrior, wept and cursed myself, because, though I was a king, I had no power to save you. Afterward this man, the high priest, came to me, telling me the truth and a plan that he had made for his own ends, whereby you might be saved alive and lifted up among the people and he also might be saved and my rule as king be made sure in the land." And he ceased.

"What is this plan, Olfan?" asked Juanna after a pause.

"Queen, it is that you should wed me and appear before the people no longer as a goddess, but as a woman who has put on the flesh for her love's sake. I know well that I am all unworthy of such honor, and, moreover, that your heart must be sore with the loss of one who was dear to you and little set upon the finding of another husband; also I remember certain words that passed between us and a promise that I made. All these things I told to Nam, and he answered me, saying that the matter was urgent; that here you could not be hid away for long, and that if I did not take you to wife then you must die."

And once more he bowed his head, leaned upon his spear and was silent.

Juanna considered the position rapidly. It was hopeless and cruel. Nam and Soa were on either side of her, the latter standing near the door with the sliding panel beyond which Leonard lay bound, and she knew well that did she speak a single word of the truth to Olfan it would be the signal for her lover's death. It was possible that the king might be able to protect her own person from violence, but if Leonard died it mattered little what became of her. There was but one thing that she could do—declare herself willing to become the wife of Olfan, and yet it seemed shameless thus to treat this honorable man, the only friend that they had found among the People of the Mist. But of a truth such necessities as hers cannot wait while those in their toils weigh scruples or the law of honor.

"Olfan," she said, "I have heard you, and this is my answer: I will take you as my husband. You know my story. You know that he who was my lord is but this day dead"—here Soa smiled approvingly at the lie—"and that I loved him. Therefore of your gentleness you will accord me some few weeks before I pass from him to you, in which I may mourn my widowhood. I will say no more, but surely you can guess the sorrow of my heart and all that I have left unsaid."

"It shall be as you wish, queen," replied Olfan, taking her hand and kissing it, while his somewhat sad face grew radiant with happiness. "You shall pass into my keeping at that time which best pleases you, yet I fear that in one matter you must be troubled, now, this very hour."

"What may that be, Olfan?" asked Juanna anxiously.

"Only this, queen—that the rite of marriage as we practice it must be celebrated between us. It is necessary for many reasons that will be made clear to you tomorrow. Moreover, such was my bargain with Nam, sealed by an oath sworn upon the blood of Aca, an oath that I do not dare to break."

"Oh, no, no!" said Juanna in acute distress. "Think, Olfan, how can I, whose husband is not dead six hours, vow myself to another man upon the altar of his grave? Give me some few days, I pray you."

"Most willingly would I do this, queen, but I may not. It is against my oath. Also what can it matter? You shall remain alone for so long as it shall please you."

Then Nam spoke for the first time, saying:

"Shepherdess, waste no breath in words, for learn that, though this garment of modesty is becoming to one new widowed, yet you must put it from you. More hangs upon this ceremony than you know of. The lives of many hang upon it, our own perchance among them, and more immediately the life of one of whom it does not become me to speak," and as though by accident he let his eyes rest upon the door of the adjoining cell.

Of his auditors Olfan thought that he was alluding to his own life, but Juanna and his daughter knew well that he spoke of that of Leonard, which would be sacrificed did the former persist in her objections to the instant celebration of the marriage.

"You hear his words, queen," said Olfan, "and there is weight in them. The times are very dangerous, and if our plot is to be carried through before midnight I must make oath to the captains and the council of the people that you have come back from death to be my wife."

"Maybe," answered Juanna, catching at a straw in her despair, "but must I, who shall be set over this people as queen, be married thus in secret? At the least I will have witnesses. Let some of the captains whom you trust, Olfan, be brought here to see us wed; otherwise the time may come when I shall be held to be no true wife and there are none to establish my honor by their words."

"There is little fear of such a thing, queen," answered Olfan, with a faint smile, "yet your words are just. I will lead three of my captains here, men who will not betray us, and they shall be witness to this rite," and he turned as though he would go to seek them.

"Do not leave me," said Juanna, catching him by the wrist. "I trust you, but these two I do not trust. I fear to be left alone."

"There is no need for witnesses, king," exclaimed Nam in a threatening voice.

"The Shepherdess has asked for witnesses, and she shall have them," answered Olfan fiercely. "Old man, you have played with me long enough. Hitherto I have been your servant. Now I will be your master. Some few hours ago your life was forfeit to me, for the white dawn had turned to red, and I meant to take it, but you bribed me with this bait," and he pointed to Juanna. "Nay, do not lay your hand upon your knife. You forget I have my spear. Your priests are without, I know it, but so are my captains, and I have told them where I am. If I vanish as many vanish here, my life will be required at your hands, for, Nam, your spell is broken. Now obey me. Bid that woman summon him who guards without. No; you do not stir!" And he lifted the spear till its keen blue point quivered over the high priest's naked breast. "Bid her go to the door and summon the guard, I said. To the door, but not beyond it, or beware."

Nam was cowed. His tool had become his master.

"Obey," he said to Soa.

"Obey, but no more," echoed Olfan.

The woman slipped past them to the door, snarling like a wolf, and opening it a little way whistled through the crack.

"Hide yourself, queen," said Olfan.

Juanna retreated into the shadow behind the candle, and that moment a voice spoke through the open door, saying, "I am here, father."

"Now speak," said Olfan, advancing the spear an inch nearer Nam's heart.

"My son," said Nam, "go to the entrance by which the king entered, where you shall find three captains, generals of the king. Lead them hither."

"And see that you speak to no one on the way," whispered Olfan in Nam's ear.

"And see that you speak to no one on the way," repeated Nam.

"I hear you, father," replied the priest and went.

Some ten minutes passed, and the door opened again. "The captains are here," said a voice.

"Let them enter," said Nam

The order was obeyed, and three great men armed with spears stalked into the narrow chamber. One of them was brother to the king, and the two others were his chosen friends. Then the door closed.

"My brethren," said Olfan, "I have sent for you to acquaint you with a mystery and to ask you to witness a rite. Aca, who this day was hurled into the pool of the snake, has returned to earth as a woman and is about to become my wife." Here the captains started. "Nay, brethren, ask no questions. These things are so. It is enough. Now, priest, play your part."

At last it was done, and once more Olfan was bowing before her and kissing her hand.

"Greeting, Shepherdess! Hail, queen of the People of the Mist!" he said, and the captains repeated his words.

Juanna awoke from her stupor. What was to be done now? she wondered. What could be done? Everything seemed lost. Then in her despair an inspiration took her.

"It is true that I am a queen, is it not, Olfan?"

"It is true, lady."

"And as the queen of the People of the Mist I have power, have I not, Olfan?"

"Even to life and death," he answered gravely, "though if you kill you must answer to the council of the elders to me. All in this land are your servants, queen, and none dare disobey you except on matters of religion."

"Good!" said she, then, addressing the captains in a tone of command, added, "Seize that man who is named Nam and the woman with him."

Olfan looked astonished, and the captains hesitated. As for Nam, he did not hesitate, but made a bound toward the door.

"Stay awhile, Nam," said the king, making a barrier before him with his spear. "Doubtless the queen has reasons, and you would wish to hear them. Hold them, my captains, since the queen commands it."

Then the three men sprang upon them. Once Nam tried to draw a knife; but, failing in his attempt, he submitted without further struggle. With Soa it was different. She bit and tore like a wildcat, and Juanna saw that she was striving to reach the panel and speak through it.

"On your lives do not suffer her to come to that door," she said. "Presently you shall know why."

Then the brother of the king dragged Soa to the couch, and throwing her down upon it stood over her, his spear point at her throat.

"Now, queen," said Olfan, "your will is done, and perhaps it may please you to explain."

"Listen, king, and listen you, captains," she answered. "These liars here told you that the deliverer was dead. Is it not so? He is not dead. He lies bound in yonder cell, but had I spoken a word of it to you then he would have died. Olfan, do you know how my consent was won to be your wife? A shutter within that door was opened, and he, my husband, was shown to me, gagged and bound and being held over the mouth of a hideous pit in the floor of his prison that leads I know not where. 'Consent, or he dies,' they said, and for my love's sake I consented. This was the plot, Olfan, to marry me to you partly because the woman yonder, who was my nurse, did not desire my death and partly that Nam might use me to save himself from the anger of the people. But do not think that you would have kept me long, Olfan, for this was in the plot also—that when you had served their purpose you should die by secret means, as one who knew too much."

"It is a lie," said Nam.

"Silence," answered Juanna.

"Let that door be opened, and you shall see if I have lied."

"Wait awhile, queen," said Olfan, who appeared utterly overcome. "If I understand you right, your husband lives, and therefore you say that the words that we have spoken and the oaths that we have sworn mean nothing, for you are not my wife."

"That is so, Olfan."

"Then now I am minded to turn wicked and let him die," said the king slowly, "for know this, Shepherdess, I cannot give you up."

Juanna grew pale as death, realizing that this man's passions, now that once he had given them away, had passed beyond control.

"I cannot give you up," he repeated. "Have I not dealt well with you? Did I not say to you, 'Consent or refuse, as it shall please you, but having once consented you must not go back upon your words?' What have I to do with the reasons that prompted them? My heart heard them and believed them. Queen, you are wed to me. Those oaths that you have sworn may not be broken. It is too late, now you are mine, nor can I suffer you to pass from me back to another man, even though he was your husband before me."

"But the deliverer! Must I then become my husband's murderer?"

"Nay, I will protect him, and, if it may be, find means to send him from the land."

Juanna stood silent and despairing, and at this moment Soa, lying on the couch, broke into a shrill and mocking laugh that stung her like a whip and roused her from her lethargy.

"King," she said, "I am at your mercy, not through any wanton folly of my own, but because fate has made a sport of me. King, you have been hardly used, and, as you say, hitherto you have dealt well with me. Now I pray you let the end be as the beginning was, so that I may always think of you as the noblest among men, except one who died this day to save me. King, you say you love me. Tell me, then, if my life hung upon a word of yours, would that word remain unspoken? Such was my case. I spoke the word, and for one short hour I betrayed you. Will you, whose heart is great, bind me by such an oath as this, an oath wrung from me to save my darling from the power of those dogs? If this is so, then I have erred strangely in my reading of your mind, for till now I have held that you were a man who would perish ere he suffered his more evil part to force a helpless woman to be his wife, one whose crime was that she deceived him to save her husband."

She paused, and clasping her hands as though in prayer looked up into his troubled face with beseeching eyes, then, as he did not speak, went on:

"King, I have one more word to say. You are the strongest, and you can take me, but you cannot hold me, for that hour would be my last, and you would be but the richer by your broken honor and a dead bride."

Olfan was about to answer when Soa, fearing lest Juanna's pleading should prevail against his passion, broke in, saying: "Be not fooled, king, by a woman's pretty speeches or by her idle threats that she will kill herself. She will not kill herself. I know her well. She loves her life too much, and soon, when you are wed, she will love you also, for it is the nature of us women to worship those who master us. Moreover, that man, the deliverer, is not her husband, except in name. For months I have lived with them, and I know it. Take her, king, take her now, this hour, or live to mourn her loss and your folly all your life's day."

"I will not answer that slave's falsehoods," said Juanna, drawing herself up and speaking proudly, "and it were more worthy of you not to listen to them, king. I have spoken. Now do your will. Be great or little, be noble or be base, as your nature leads you."

And suddenly she sank to the ground, and shaking her long hair about her face and arms burst into bitter weeping.

Twice the king looked at her. Then he turned his head as though he dare look no more and spoke, keeping his eyes fixed upon the wall.

"Rise, queen," he said hoarsely. "Cease your tears, since you are safe from me. Now as always I live to do your will, but I pray you hide your face from me as much as may be, for, lady, my heart is broken with love for you, and I cannot bear to look on that which I have lost."

Still sobbing, but filled with admiration and wonder that a savage could be thus generous, Juanna rose and began to murmur thanks, while the captains stared and Soa mocked and cursed them both.

"Thank me not," he said gently. "It seems that you who can read all hearts have read mine aright, or perchance you fashioned it as you would have it be. And now, having done with love, let us to war. Woman, what is the secret of that door?"

"Find it for yourself," snarled Soa. "It is easy to open when once you know the spring—like a woman's heart, Olfan. Or if you cannot find it, then it can be forced—like a woman's love, Olfan. Surely you who are so skilled in the winning of a bride need not seek my counsel as to the opening of a door, for when I gave it but now upon the first of these matters you would not hearken, Olfan, but were melted by the sight of tears that you should have kissed away."

Juanna heard, and from that moment made up her mind that if she could she would give Soa to doom. Nor was it wonderful, for few women could have pardoned what she had suffered at her hands.

"Drive the spear into her till she speaks, comrade," said Olfan. Then Soa gave up mocking and told the secret of the door.

CHAPTER XXVII.

After he had rested awhile at the bottom of the glacier Otter set to work to explore the cliff on the top of which he found himself, with the view of descending it and hiding himself at its foot till nightfall, when he hoped to find the means of re-entering the city and putting himself in communication with Olfan. Very soon, however, he discovered that if he was to return at all he must follow the same route by which he had come.

Evidently the tunnel sloped upward very sharply, for he was standing on the brow of a precipice cut into three steps, which, taken together, may have measured some 800 feet in height, and, so far as he could see, it was utterly impossible to descend any of these cliffs without the aid of ropes. Nor could he continue his investigations over a wide area, for about 400 paces to the left of the opening to the subterranean passage—whereof, by the way, he was very careful to note the exact position—the mountain pushed out a snowy shoulder, with declivities so precipitous that he dared not trust himself on them.

Then he tried the right hand side, but with no better luck, for here he was stopped by a yawning rift in the rock. Now Otter sat down and considered the situation.

The day was still young, and he knew that it would be foolish to attempt escape from the pool before dark. In front of him the mountain rose steeply till, so far as he could judge, it reached a pass that lay some two miles off, at the base of the main peak, on whose snows the priests had watched the breaking of the dawn. Part of this declivity was covered with blocks of green ice, but here and there appeared patches of earth, on which grew stunted trees, shrubs and even grass and flowers. Being very hungry, it occurred to Otter that he might find edible roots among this scanty vegetation, and with this hope he began to climb the slope, to be rewarded in due course by the discovery of a vegetable that he recognized, for it was the same which had been offered to him on the occasion of his unlucky outbreak that had resulted in the casting away of the rubies.

With this poor food the dwarf filled himself, and having found a bough that made him an excellent staff he continued to climb, desiring to see what there might be on the other side of the neck.

Arriving there without any great difficulty, Otter stood astonished, although in a general way he was not much given to admiring scenery. Below him lay the City of the Mist, with its shining belt of rivers that, fed from the inexhaustible mountain snows, meandered across the vast plains, no longer hidden in mist, which they had trodden on their journey. Above his head the mighty peak towered thousands of feet into the air till it ended in a summit shaped like a human finger pointing eternally to the heavens. Before him the scene was even stranger, made up as it was of snowy fields broken by ridges of black rock and laid one beneath the other like white sails drying upon the slopes of a sand hill.

Gradually, as the eye traveled downward, these snowfields grew fewer and fewer till at last they vanished altogether, and their place was taken first by stretches of grass land and finally, at the foot of the mountain, by what seemed to be a rich and level country interspersed with clumps of bush and forest trees.

The first of these snowfields lay within three furlongs of where the dwarf stood, but several hundred feet below him. Between the neck of the pass and this field stretched a mighty rift or chasm, with sides so sheer that no goat could have kept a footing on them. Yet this gulf was not without its bridge, for rising from the bottom of the chasm was a rock wall that formed the bed of a glacier which spanned it from side to side, being in some places comparatively level and in others having descents almost as sharp as those of a waterfall. This remarkable bridge of ice, that varied from 100 paces to a few yards in width, was bordered on either side by the most fearful precipices, while just where its fall was sharpest and its width narrowest it seemed to spring across a space of nothingness like the arch of a bridge thrown from bank to bank of a river. Indeed at this point its line became so attenuated that in the glittering sunlight Otter could not be sure that it was not broken through for a distance of some yards.

Being of an inquiring mind, the dwarf decided to satisfy himself upon the matter. All around him lay slabs of rock, some of which were worn perfectly smooth and to the thinness of a tombstone by centuries of polishing in the iron jaws of glaciers. Selecting one of these of convenient size, Otter approached the edge of the bridge, pushing the stone before him over the frozen snow. Here the ice was perfect except for a slight hoar frost that covered it, for the action of the wind prevented the snow from gathering on it, and whenever the sun was strong enough to melt its surface it froze again at night, so that no slide upon a parish pond could have been more slippery or free from inequalities.

Otter gave his stone a push, and away it went, sometimes swiftly and sometimes at a trifling speed, according to the nature of the angle down which it passed, leaving a bright green ribbon upon the ice in its wake, whence it swept the hoar frost as it sped. Once or twice he thought that it was going to stop, but it never did stop. At length it approached the steepest and narrowest part of the descent, down which it rushed with fearful velocity.

"Now I shall see whether the bridge is broken," thought Otter, and just then the stone, traveling like an arrow, came to that portion of the glacier where, for a width difficult to estimate, it stretched unsupported over space and measured only some few feet across. On it rushed, then seemed to leap into the air and once more sped forward till it reached the farther slope of snow, up which it travelled for a distance and stopped, appearing, even to Otter's keen sight, no larger than a midge upon a tablecloth.

"Now, if a man had been seated on that stone, he would have passed the bridge in safety," said Otter to himself, "yet it is one that few would care to travel unless sure death were behind."

Then he determined to make a second experiment, and selecting another and somewhat lighter stone he sent it upon its journey. It followed precisely the same course as its predecessor, but when it came to the knife blade of the bridge it vanished.

"Now, I am sorry for that stone," thought Otter, "for doubtless it, that has been whole for many years, is at this moment only little pieces."

A third time he repeated his experiment, choosing the heaviest rock that he could move. This messenger also leaped into the air at the narrowest portion of the bridge and then passed on in safety to the slope of snow beyond.

"A strange place," thought Otter, "and I pray that it may never be my lot to ride one of those stone horses."

Then he turned down the mountain again, for the afternoon was advancing. When he reached the entrance to the river bed, sunset was at hand. For awhile he sat watching the fading light and eating some more roots which he had gathered. Then he crawled into the passage and commenced his darksome journey toward the home of the dead water dweller, though what he was to do when he got there he did not know. No accident befell him, and in due course he arrived safely, his journey being much facilitated by the staff he bore, which enabled him to feel his way like a blind man.

Creeping to the edge of the pool, he listened to its turmoil, for the shadows were gathering so fast that, with the exception of some ghostlike shapes of foam, he could not see the surface of the water.

"Now, if I go in there, how can I get out again?" he thought sadly. "After all, perhaps I should have done better to return while it was still light, for then by the help of my staff and the rope I might have made shift to climb the overhanging ledge of rock, and to try this now were madness. I will go back and sit in the cave with the ghosts of the god and his dead till the morning comes again, though I do not crave their company."

So he retreated a few paces and sat in silence near the tail of the dead crocodile. After awhile loneliness took hold of him. He tried to sleep and could not, for it seemed to him that he saw eyes staring at him from the depths of the cave and heard dead men whispering to each other tales of their dreadful ends. Moment by moment his fears grew upon him, and Otter was very superstitious. Now he fancied that he could distinguish the head of the reptile lined in fire and resting on the edge of the rock as he had seen it that morning.

"Doubtless," he thought, "this monster is a devil and has come to life again to be revenged upon me. Wow, I liked him better when he was in the flesh than now, that he has turned himself into fire." Then, to comfort himself, he began to talk aloud, saying:

"Otter, unlucky that you are, why did you not die at once instead of living on to be tormented by ghosts? Perhaps your master, the baas, whom alone you love, is dead now and waits for you to come and serve him. You are very tired. Say, now, Otter, would it not be well if you took that rope which is about your middle and hung yourself? Thus you, too, would become a ghost and be able to do battle with them in their own fashion," and he groaned aloud.

Then of a sudden he grew fearful indeed. The short wool stood up upon his head, his teeth chattered, and as he said afterward his very nose seemed to grow cold with terror, for as he sat he heard or seemed to hear a voice speaking to him from the air, and that voice was his master's. "Otter, Otter," said the voice. He made no answer. He was too frightened.

"Otter, is that you?" whispered the voice again.

Then he spoke. "Yes, baas, it is I. I know that you are dead and call me. Give me one minute till I can undo my rope, and I will kill myself and come to you."

"Thank you, Otter," said the voice, with a ghastly attempt at a laugh, "but if it is all the same I would much rather that you came alive."

"Yes, baas, and I, too, would rather stop alive, but being alive how can I join you who are dead?"

"You fool, I am not dead," said Leonard.

"Then, baas, how is it that you speak out of the air? Come near to me that I may touch you and be comforted."

"I cannot, Otter. I am bound and in a prison above you. There is a hole in the floor, and if you have a rope, as I heard you say, perhaps you could climb up to me."

Now the dwarf began to understand. Rising, he stretched the long staff he had with him high above his head and found to his delight that he could touch the roof of the cave. Presently the point of the staff ceased to press upon the rock.

"It is here, but you must throw the stick up like a spear through the hole, for I am tied and cannot put out my hand to take it."

"Stay awhile, baas. First I must make the line fast to it."

"Good, but be swift, for I am in danger."

Hurriedly Otter undid the hide rope from about