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CHURCHES.

BAPTIST—Services Sunday 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.; Sunday school 9:50 a. m.; the young people's society 6:15 p. m. Prayer meeting Thursday 7:30 p. m. Covenant meeting first Sat each month 2:00 p. m.
E. B. PAGE, Pastor.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL—Services every Sabbath 11:00 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday school 9:30 a. m. Prayer meeting 7:00 p. m. Thursday. LEE THOMPSON, Pastor.

CUMB. PRESBYTERIAN—Services every Sabbath 11:00 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday school 9:30 a. m. Y. P. C. E., Sunday 6:30 p. m. Prayer meeting Thursday, 7:30 p. m.
E. E. THOMPSON, Pastor.

CHRISTIAN—Preaching at 11 a. m. and at 7:30 p. m. on the first and third Sundays; on the second and fourth Sundays at 7:30 until further notice. At Carlton on second and fourth Sundays at 11 a. m., and Saturday evening before at 7:30. At No. 8 at 3 p. m. on second and fourth Sundays.
JAMES CAMPBELL, V. D. M., Pastor.

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SECRET ORDERS.

KNOWLES CHAPTER No. 12, O. E. S.—Meets a Masonic hall the first and third Monday evening in each month. Visiting members cordially invited. C. H. McKINNEY, Sec.
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. 10

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.
J. B. STILWELL, Commander.
B. F. CLUBINE, Adjt.

W. C. T. U.—Meets on every Friday at 3 p. m. in reading room, Union block. CLARA G. ESSON, Pres.
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, 33.64 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 34.42 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 17.03 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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Atty's for Executrix.

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THE PEOPLE OF THE MIST.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

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To begin with, there are always some who would be glad to step in the shoes of a high priest; also Nam had blundered so extensively in the matter of the false gods that the greater part of the fraternity, whom he had involved in his mistakes, would not sorrow to see the last of him.

These facts, which were perfectly well known to Olfan and guessed at by his companions, sharpened their sense of danger in which they had been placed by Soa's readiness and cunning. Indeed their escape was a matter of life and death to them and many hundreds of their adherents. If once they could reach the temple and proclaim the rearisen gods to the people, all would go well, for the army would suffice to keep the priests from using violence, but if they failed in this their death warrant was already signed, for none of them would ever be heard of again.

No wonder, then, that they hurled themselves despairingly upon the stubborn doors. For an hour and more they labored, but all in vain. The massive timbers of hard wood, six inches or more in thickness, could scarcely be touched by their knives and spears, nor might their united strength serve even to stir the stone bolts and bars that held them fast, and they had nothing that could be used as a battering ram.

"It is useless," said Leonard at last, throwing down his knife in despair. "This wood is like iron. It would take us a week to cut through it."

"Why not try fire, baas?" suggested Otter.

Accordingly they attempted to burn down the doors, with the result that they nearly stifled themselves in the smoke and made but little impression upon the woodwork.

At length they gave up the experiment—it was a failure—and sat looking blankly at each other as they listened to certain sounds which reached them from the passages without, telling them that their enemies were gathered there.

"Has any one a suggestion to make?" said Leonard at last. "If not, I think that this game is about played."

"Baas," answered Otter, "I have a word to say. We can all go down through that hole by which I came up to you. The water dweller is dead. I slew him with my own hand, so there is nothing to fear from him. Beneath the hole is a tunnel, and that tunnel leads to the slope of the mountain above. At the top of the slope is an ice bridge by which men may reach a fair country if they have a mind to."

"Then for heaven's sake, let us cross it," put in Juanna.

"I have seen that bridge," said Olfan, while the captains stared wonderingly at the man whose might had prevailed against the ancient snake, "but never yet have I heard of the man who dared to set his foot upon it."

"It is dangerous, but it can be crossed," replied Otter. "At the least, it is better to try it than to stay here to be murdered by the medicine men."

"I think that we will go, Leonard," said Juanna. "If I am to die, I wish to do so in the open. Only what is to become of Nam? And perhaps Olfan and the captains would prefer to stop here?"

"Nam will go with us wherever we go," answered Leonard grimly. "We have a long score to settle with that gentleman. As for Olfan and the captains, they must please themselves."

"What will you do, Olfan?" asked Juanna, speaking to him for the first time since the scene in the other prison.

"It seems, queen," he answered, with downcast eyes, "that I have sworn to defend you to the last, and this I will do the more readily because now my life is of little value. As for my brethren here, I think that, like you, they will choose to die in the open air rather than wait to be murdered by the priests."

The three captains nodded an assent to his words, and then they set to work.

First they took food and drink, of which there was an ample supply in the other cell, and hurriedly devouring some of it disposed the rest about their persons as best they could, for they foresaw that even if they succeeded in escaping it was likely that they would go hungry for many days. Then Leonard wrapped Juanna in a goatskin cloak which he took from one of the dead priests, placing the second cloak over his own shoulders, for he knew that it would be bitterly cold on the mountains. Lastly, they tied Nam's arms behind him and deprived him of his knife, so that the old man might work none of them a sudden injury in his rage.

All being prepared, Otter made his rope fast to the staff and descended rapidly to the cave below. As his feet touched the ground the priests began to batter upon the doors of the cell with beams of wood, or some such heavy instruments.

"Quick, Juanna!" said Leonard. "Sit in this noose and hold the line. We will let you down. Hurry. Those doors cannot stand for long."

Another minute, and she was beside Otter, who stood beneath, a candle in his hand. Then Leonard came down.

"By the way, Otter," he said, "have you seen anything of the jewels that are supposed to be here?"

"There is a bag yonder by the water dweller's bed, baas," answered the dwarf carelessly, "but I did not trouble to look into it. What is the use of the red stones to us now?"

"None, but they may be of use afterward, if we get away."

"Yes, baas, if we get away," answered Otter, bethinking himself of the ice bridge. "Well, we can pick it up as we go along."

Just then Nam arrived, having been let down by Olfan and the captains, and stood glaring round him, not without awe, for neither he nor any of his brethren had ever dared to visit the home of the snake god. Then the captains descended, and last of all came Olfan.

"We have little time to spare, deliverer," said the king. "The door is falling," and as he spoke they heard a great crash above. Otter jerked furiously at the rope, till by good luck one end of the stake slid over the edge of the hole, and it fell among them.

"No need to leave this line for them to follow by," he said. "Besides it may be useful." At that moment something appeared looking through the hole. It was the head of one of the pursuing priests. Nam saw it and took his opportunity.

"The false gods escape by the tunnel to the mountains," he screamed, "and with them the false king! Follow and fear not. The water dweller is dead. Think not of me, Nam, but slay them."

With an oath Otter struck him heavily across the mouth, knocking him backward, but the mischief was done, for a voice cried in answer:

"We hear you, father, and will find ropes and follow."

Then they started. One moment they paused to look at the huge bulk of the dead crocodile.

"This dwarf is a god in truth," cried one of the captains, "for no man could have wrought such a deed."

"Forward," said Leonard. "We have no time to lose."

Now they were by the crocodile's bed and among the broken bones of his victims.

"The bag, Otter; where is the bag?" asked Leonard.

"Here, baas," answered the dwarf, dragging it from the moldering skeleton of the unlucky priest who, having offended the new found god, had been let down through the hole to lay it in its hiding place and to perish in the jaws of the water dweller.

Leonard took the bag, and opening its mouth, which was drawn tight with a running strip of hide, peeped into it while Otter held down the candle that he might see. From its depths came a glimmer of red and blue light that glowed like the heart of some dull fire.

"It is the treasure," he said in a low tone of exultation. "At last the luck has turned."

"How much does it weigh?" said Juanna as they sped onward.

"Some seven or eight pounds, I should say," he answered, still exultantly. "Seven or eight solid pounds of gems, the finest in the world."

"Then give it me," she said. "I have nothing else to carry. You may have to use both your hands presently."

"True," he answered and passed the string of the bag over her head.

Then they went on up the smooth sloping bed of the stream, suffering little inconvenience, except from the cold of the water that flowed about their ankles.

"The stream has risen somewhat, baas, since I passed it this morning. Doubtless this day's sun has melted some snow at its source. Tomorrow we might not have been able to travel this road."

"Very likely," answered Leonard. "I told you that our luck had turned at last."

Twenty minutes more and they reached the mouth of the tunnel, and passing between the blocks of ice found themselves upon the mountain side; but, as it chanced, the face of the moon was hidden by clouds, which is often the case in this country at the beginning of the spring season, for, whereas in winter the days are almost invariably misty and the nights clear, in spring and summer these atmospheric conditions are frequently reversed. So gloomy was it indeed that it proved impossible to attempt the ascent of the mountain until the day broke, since to do so would be to run the risk of losing themselves and very possibly of breaking their necks among its numerous clefts and precipices.

After a minute's hasty discussion they set to work to fill up the mouth of the tunnel, or rather the cracks between the blocks of ice that already encumbered it, with such material as lay at hand—namely, lumps of frozen snow, gravel and a few large stones which they were fortunate enough to find in the immediate vicinity, for the darkness rendered it impossible to search for these at a distance. While they were thus engaged they heard the voices of priests speaking on the farther side of their somewhat inefficient barrier and worked harder than ever, thinking that the moment of attack had come.

To their astonishment, however, the sound of voices died away.

"Now where have they gone," said Leonard—"to climb the cliff by another path and cut us off?"

"I think not, deliverer," answered Olfan, "for I know of no such path. I think that they have gone to bring heavy beams by means of which they will batter down the ice wall."

"Still there is such a path, king," said one of the captains, "for I myself have often climbed it when I was young searching for snow flowers to bring to her whom I courted in those days."

"Can you find it now, friend?" asked Olfan eagerly.

"I do not forget a road that I have trod," said the captain, "but it is one not easy to follow."

"See now, Shepherdess," said Olfan after thinking awhile, "shall we take this man for a guide and return down the cliff to the city, for there, unless fate is against us, we may find friends among the soldiers and fight out this battle with the priests."

"No, no," answered Juanna almost passionately. "I would rather die than go back to that dreadful city to be murdered at last. Do you go if you will, Olfan, and leave us to take our chance."

"That I cannot do, queen, for I am sworn to a certain service," he said proudly. "But hearken, my friend, follow this path of which you speak, if you can do so in the darkness, and find help. Then return swiftly to this spot, where I and your two comrades will hold the priests at bay. Perchance you will not find us living, but this I charge you—if we are dead give it out that the gods have left the land because they were so evilly dealt with and rouse up the people to fall upon the priests and make an end of them once and forever, for thus only shall they win peace and safety."

Making no reply, the man shook Olfan and the other two captains by the hand, saluted Juanna and vanished into the darkness. Then they all sat down in front of the mouth of the tunnel to wait and watch, and very glad were they of the goatskin cloaks which had belonged to the dead priests, for as the night drew toward dawn the cold became so bitter that they could scarcely bear it, but were obliged to rise and stamp to and fro to keep their wet feet from freezing.

"Leonard," said Juanna, "you do not know what passed after Nam trapped you." And she told him all that tale.

When she had finished, he rose, and taking Olfan by the hand said: "King, I thank you. May fortune deal as well with you as you have dealt with me and mine."

"Say no more, deliverer," answered Olfan hastily. "I have but done my duty and fulfilled my oath, though at times the path of duty is hard for a man to follow." And he looked toward Juanna and sighed.

Leonard sat down and was silent, but many a time both then and in after days did he wonder at the nobleness of mind shown by this savage king, who, under circumstances so cruel, conquered his own passion and was willing to lay down life and throne together that he might carry out his vow to protect a stranger who had brought him so much pain and now left him forever with his successful rival.

At length, looking at the mountain peak above them, they saw its snows begin to blush red with the coming of the dawn, and just then also they heard many voices talking within the tunnel and caught glimpses of lights flashing through the openings in their rude fortifications. The priests, who no doubt had been delayed by the procuring of the timbers which were to serve as battering rams and the labor necessary to drag them up the steep incline of the tunnel, had returned and in force. A few more minutes and a succession of dull thuds on the farther side of the ice wall told the little band of defenders that their enemies were at work.

"The light grows quickly, deliverer," said Olfan quietly. "I think that now you may begin to ascend the mountain and take no harm."

"What shall we do with this man?" asked Leonard, pointing to Nam.

"Kill him," said Otter.

"No, not yet awhile," answered Olfan. "Take this," and he handed Leonard the spear of the third captain, who had left it when he started down the mountain, fearing that it might encumber him, "and drive him along with you at its point. Should we be overpowered, you may buy your lives as the price of his, but should we hold them back and you escape then do with him what you will."

"I know well what I would do," muttered Otter, glowering at the priest.

"And now farewell," went on Olfan in the same calm voice. "Bring more ice, comrades, or stone if you can see any. The wall cracks."

Leonard and Otter wrung the king's hand in silence, but Juanna could not leave him thus, for her heart was melted at the thought of all his goodness.

"Forgive me," she murmured, "that I have brought you grief, and as I fear death to follow grief."

"The grief you could not help, queen, and be sure I shall welcome death if he should choose me. Go now, and happiness go with you. May you escape in safety with the bright pebbles which you desire, and may you and your husband, the deliverer, be blessed for many years in each other's love, and when you grow old together from time to time talk kindly of that wild man who worshiped you when you were young and laid down his life to save you."

Juanna listened, and the tears sprang to her eyes. Then of a sudden she seized the great man's hand and kissed it.

"I am repaid, queen," he said, "and perchance your husband will not be jealous. Now go, and swiftly."

As he spoke a small portion of the wall fell outward, and the fierce face of a priest appeared at the opening. With a shout Olfan lifted his broad spear and thrust. The priest fell backward, and just then his companions arrived with stones and stopped the hole.

Then the three turned and fled up the mountain side, Otter driving Nam before him with blows and curses, till at length the old man fell and lay groaning on his face. Nor could the dwarf's blows, which were not of the softest, force him to rise.

"Get up, you treacherous dog," said Leonard savagely, pricking him with the spear.

"Then you must loose my arms, deliverer," answered the priest. "I am very weak, and I cannot travel up the mountain with my hands bound behind me. Surely you have nothing to fear from one aged and unarmed man."

"Not much at present, I suppose," muttered Leonard, "though we have had enough to fear from you in the past," and taking his knife he cut loose the lashings.

While he did so Juanna turned and looked behind her. Far below them she could see the form of Olfan and his companions standing shoulder to shoulder, and even catch the gleams of light reflecting upon their spears, for now the sun was rising. Beneath them again she saw the grass grown roofs of that earthly hell, the city of the People of the Mist, and the endless plain beyond through which the river wandered like a silver serpent. There also was the farther portion of the huge wall of the temple built by unknown hands in long forgotten years, and rising above the edge of that gap in the cliff through which she was looking appeared a black mass that she knew to be the head and shoulders of the hideous colossus, on whose dizzy brow she had sat in that strange hour when the shouting thousands thundered a welcome to her as their goddess, and whence her most beloved friend, Francisco, had been hurled to his cruel death.

"Oh, what I have suffered in that place!" she thought to herself. "How have I lived through it, I wonder? And yet I have won something," and she glanced at Leonard, who was driving Nam toward her, "and if only we survive and I am the means of enabling him to fulfill his vow and buy back his home with these jewels I shall not regret all that I have endured to win them. Yes, even when he is no longer so very much in love, he must always be grateful to me, for few women will have done as much for their husbands."

Then Nam staggered past her, hissing curses, while the untiring Otter rained blows upon his back, and losing sight of Olfan and his companions they went on in safety till they reached the neck and saw the ice bridge glittering before them and the wide fields of snow beyond.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Which way are we to go now?" said Juanna. "Must we climb down this great gulf?"

"No, Shepherdess," answered Otter. "See before you is a bridge." And he pointed to the band of ice and rock which traversed the wide ravine.

"A bridge?" gasped Juanna. "Why, it is slippery as a slide and steep as the side of the house. A fly could not keep its footing on it."

"Look here, Otter," put in Leonard, "either you are joking, or you are mad. How can we cross that place? We should be dashed to pieces before we had gone ten yards."

"Thus, baas, we must sit each of us on one of the flat stones that lie round here; then the stone will take us across of itself. I know, for I have tried it."

"Do you mean to tell me that you have been over there on a rock?"

"No, baas, but I have sent three stones over. Two crossed safely. I watched them go the whole way, and one vanished in the middle. I think that there is a hole there, but we must risk that. If the stone is heavy enough, it will jump it; if not, then we shall go down the hole and be no more troubled."

"Great heavens!" said Leonard, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, "This is practical tobogganing with a vengeance. Is there no other way?"

"I can see none, baas, except for the birds, and I think we had better stop talking and make ready, for the priests are still behind us. If you will watch on the neck here so that we are not surprised, I will seek stones to carry us."

"How about this man?" said Leonard, pointing to Nam, who lay face downward on the snow, apparently in a dead faint.

"Oh, we must keep him awhile, baas. He may be useful if those priests come. If not, I will talk with him before we start. He is asleep and cannot run away."

Then Leonard went to the top of the neck, which was distant some 20 yards, and Otter began to search for stones suitable for his purpose.

As for Juanna, she turned her back to the ice bridge, at which she scarcely dared to look, and sat herself upon a rock. In doing so the jewels in the bag struck against her knee and jingled, and the thought came into her mind that she would examine them while she waited, partly because she desired to distract her thoughts from the vision of the terrible ordeal which lay before her, and partly to gratify a not unnatural curiosity. Opening the mouth of the bag, she thrust her fingers into it, and one by one drew out the biggest gems which were jumbled together there, placing them on the rock beside her. In less than a minute she was feasting her eyes upon such a collection of priceless jewels as had never before gladdened the sight of any white woman, even in her wildest dreams. Indeed till now Juanna had not thought it possible that stones so splendid could exist on the hither side of the walls of heaven.

First there were great sapphires roughly squared and two enormous round star rubies. These had formed the eyes of the colossus, which were removed on the morrow of their arrival, the star rubies representing the blood red pupils. Then there was a heart shaped ruby of perfect color and without flaw, almost as large as a jackdaw's egg, which, on the days of sacrifice, had adorned the breasts of the chief priests of the People of the Mist for many generations. Next came the greatest wonders of this treasure—two marvelous stones, one a sapphire and one a ruby—fashioned respectively into models of the statue of the dwarf and of the hideous shape of the water dweller. Then there were others, dozens of them, some rudely cut and some as they came from the mines, but every one of them singled out for its remarkable size, flawlessness or its perfect fire and beauty.

Juanna arranged them in rows and stared at them with ecstasy—and where is the woman who would not have done so?—till in contemplating them she forgot the present terrors of her position, forgot everything except the gorgeous loveliness and infinite value of the wealth of gems which she had been the means of winning for Leonard.

Among other things that passed from her mind at this moment was the presence of Nam, who, overcome by rage and exhaustion, lay in a seeming faint upon the snow within 12 paces of her. She never saw him lift his head and look at her with an expression as cold and cruel as that which Otter had seen in the eyes of the water dweller when he lifted his head from its bed of rock. She never saw him roll slowly over and over across the snow toward her, pausing a little while between each turn of his body, for now she was occupied in replacing the jewels one by one into their bag of leather.

At last all were in, and with a sigh, for it was painful to lose sight of objects so beautiful, Juanna drew the mouth of the bag tight and prepared to place it around her neck.

At this moment it was that a hand, withered and lean with age, passed beneath her eyes and swiftly as the snatch of an eagle's talon seized the bag and rent it from her grasp. She sprang up, with a cry of dismay, and well might she be dismayed, for there, running from her with incredible speed, was Nam, the jewels in his hand. Otter and Leonard heard her cry, and thinking that the priest was escaping sped to cut him off. But he had no idea of escape—at least not of such escape as they expected. Some 40 yards from where Juanna had been sitting a little promontory of rock jutted out over the unclimbable gulf below them, and toward this spot Nam directed his steps. Running along the ridge, he halted at its end. Indeed he must do so unless he would fall 1,000 feet or more to the bottom of the ravine beneath. Then he turned and faced his pursuers, who by now had reached the edge of the cliff.

"Come one step nearer," he cried, "and I let this bag fall whence you never shall recover it, for no foot can tread these walls of rock, and there is water at the bottom of the gulf."

Leonard and Otter stopped, trembling for the fate of the jewels.

"Listen, deliverer," cried Nam. "You came to this land to seek these trinkets, is it not so? And now you have found them and would be gone with them? But before you go you would kill me for vengeance's sake because I have shown you to be cheats and have sought to offer you up to those gods whom you have blasphemed, but the red stones you desire are in my hands, and if I unclasp my fingers they will be lost to you and all the world forever. Say, now, if I bring them back to you in safety, will you swear to give me my life and suffer me to go my ways in peace?"

"Yes, we will swear it," answered Leonard, who could not conceal the anguish of his anxiety. "Come back, Nam, and you shall depart unharmed, but if you let the stones fall then you shall follow them."

"You swear it?" said the priest contemptuously. "You are come to this, that you will sacrifice your revenge to satisfy your greed. O white man, with a noble heart! Now I will o'ermatch you, for I, who am not noble, will sacrifice my life to disappoint you of your desires. What! Shall the ancient holy treasure of the People of the Mist be stolen by two white thieves and their black hound? Never! I would have killed you all had time been granted to me, but in that I failed, and I am glad that I have failed, for now I will deal you a bitterer blow than any death. May the curse of Jal and Aca cleave to you, you dogs without a kennel! May you live outcasts and die in the dirt, and may your fathers and your mothers and your children spit upon your bones as I do! Farewell!" and shaking his disengaged hand at them he spat toward them, then, with a sudden motion, hurled himself backward off the point of rock and vanished into space, bearing the treasure with him.

For awhile the three stood aghast and stared at each other and the point of rock which had been occupied by the venerable form of the late high priest. Then Juanna sank upon the snow, sobbing.

"It is my fault," she wailed, "all my fault. Just now I was boasting to myself that I had won wealth for you, and I have lost everything. And we have suffered for nothing, and, Leonard, you are a beggar. Oh, it is too much, too much!"

"Go out there, Otter," said Leonard in hoarse voice, pointing to the place whence Nam had hurled himself, "and see whether there is any chance of our being able to climb down into the gulf."

The dwarf obeyed and presently returned, shaking his head. "It is impossible, baas," he said. "The walls of rock are sheer as though they had been cut with a knife. Moreover, there is water at the bottom of them, as the old wizard said, for I can hear the sound of it. Oh, baas, baas, why did you not kill him at first or let me kill him afterward? Surely I told you that he would bring evil on us. Well, they are gone, and we can never find them again, so let us save our lives if we may, for, after all, these are more to us than the bright stones. Come now and help me, baas, for I have found two flat rocks that will serve our turn, a big one for you and the Shepherdess, since doubtless she will fear to make this journey alone, and a smaller one for myself."

Leonard followed him without a word.

He was too heartbroken to speak, while Juanna rose and returned to the spot where Nam had robbed her. Looking up presently, her eyes still blurred with tears, she saw Leonard and the dwarf laboriously pushing two heavy stones across the snow toward her.

"Now, deliverer," he said, "when I am safe across, all that you must do is to lie flat upon the stone, both of you, and to push a little with the spear. Then before you know it you will be by my side."

"All right," said Leonard doubtfully. "Well, I suppose that you had better start. Waiting won't make the matter any easier."

"Yes, baas, I will go now. Ah, little did I think that I should ever be called on to take such a ride as this. Well, it will be something to make songs about afterward."

And Otter laid himself face downward on the stone with a little laugh, though Leonard noticed that, however brave his spirit might be, he could not prevent his flesh from revealing its natural weakness, for it quivered pitifully.

"Now, baas," he said, gripping the edges of the stone with his large hands, "when I give the word to you, push gently, and then you will see how a black bird can fly. Put your head lower, baas."

Leonard obeyed, and the dwarf whispered in his ear:

"I only want to say, baas, in case we should not meet again, for accidents will happen even on the safest roads, that I am sorry that I made such a pig of myself yonder. It was so dull down there in that hole of a palace, and the fog made me see all things wrong. Moreover, drink and a wife have corrupted many a better man. Don't answer, baas, but push, for I am growing afraid."

Placing his hand at the back of the stone, Leonard gave it a gentle shove. It began to move, very slowly at first, then more fast and faster yet, till it was rushing over the smooth ice pathway with a whirring sound like that produced by the flight of a bird. Presently it had reached the bottom of the first long slope and was climbing the gentle rise opposite so slowly that for awhile Leonard thought that it was going to stop. It crossed its brow, however, and vanished for a few seconds into a dip, where the watchers could not see it; then it appeared again at the head of the second and longest slope, of which the angle was very steep. Down this it rushed like an arrow from a bow till it reached the narrow waist of the bridge, of which the general conformation bore some resemblance to that of a dead wasp lying on its back. Indeed, from where Leonard and Juanna stood, the span of ice at this point seemed to be no thicker than a silver thread, while Otter and stone might have been a fly upon the thread. Now of a sudden Leonard distinctly saw the rock sledge and its living burden, which just then was traveling its swiftest, move upward as though it had leaped into the air, and then continue its course up the rising plane, which represented the throat of the wasp, till at length it stopped.

Leonard looked at his watch. The time occupied by the transit was just 52 seconds, and the distance could not have been much less than half a mile.

"See," he cried to Juanna, who all this while had sat with her hand before her eyes to shut out the vision of the dwarf's dreadful progress, "he has crossed safely!" and he pointed to a figure that appeared to be dancing with glee upon the breast of the snow slope.

As he spoke a faint sound reached their ears, for in those immense silences sound can travel far. It was Otter shouting, and his words seemed to be, "Come on, baas; it is easy!"

"I am glad he is safe," said Juanna faintly, "but now we must follow him. Take my handkerchief, Leonard, and tie it over my eyes, please, for I cannot bear to look. Oh, the idol's head was nothing to this!"

Leonard obeyed her, bidding her not to be afraid.

As they came to the stone Leonard heard a sound behind him of footsteps muffled by the snow, and glancing round saw Soa rushing toward them, almost naked, a spear wound in her side and the light of madness shining in her eyes.

"Get back," he said sternly, "or"—

And he lifted the great spear.

"O Shepherdess," she wailed, "take me with you, Shepherdess, for I cannot live without you."

"Tell her to go away," said Juanna, recognizing the voice. "I never want to see her any more."

"Then you can die, Soa," answered Leonard. "Stay. How is it gone yonder? Speak truly, or there is an end."

"I know not, deliverer. When I left, Olfan and his brother still held the mouth of the tunnel and were still unhurt, but the captain was dead. I slipped past them and got this as I went." And she pointed to the gash in her side.

"If he can hold out a little longer, help may reach him," muttered Leonard. Then, without more words, he laid himself and Juanna face downward on the broad stone.

"Now, Juanna," he said, "we are going to start. Grip fast with your right hand and see that you do not let go of the edge of the stone, or we shall both slip off it."

"Oh, take me with you, Shepherdess, take me with you, and I will be wicked no more, but serve you as of old!" shrilled the voice of Soa in so despairing a cry that the rocks rang.

"Hold fast," said Leonard through his set teeth as disengaging his right hand from about Juanna's waist he seized the handle of the spear and pressed its broad blade against a knob of rock behind them. Now the stone, that was balanced on the very verge of the declivity, trembled beneath them, and now slowly and majestically, as a ship starting from her slips when the launching cord is severed, it began to move down the icy way.

For the first second it scarcely seemed to stir, then the motion grew palpable, and Leonard heard a sound behind him and felt his left foot clasped by a human hand. There was a jerk that nearly dragged them off their sledge, but he held fast to the front edge of the stone, and though he could still feel the hand upon his ankle the strain became almost imperceptible.

CHAPTER XXX.

Lifting his head cautiously, Leonard looked over his shoulder, and the mystery was explained. In her madness and the fury of her love for the mistress whom she had outraged and betrayed, Soa had striven to throw herself upon the stone with them so soon as she saw it commence to move, but too late, for feeling herself slipping forward she had grasped despairingly at the first thing that came to her hand, which chanced to be Leonard's ankle. Now she must accompany them upon their awesome journey, only, while they rode upon the stone, she was dragged after them upon her breast.

A flash of pity passed through Leonard's brain as he realized her fearful plight. Then for awhile he forgot all about her, since his attention was amply occupied with his own and Juanna's peril. Now they were rushing down the long slope with an ever increasing velocity, and now they breasted the first rise, during the last ten yards of which, as in the case of Otter, the pace of the stone slowed down so much in proportion to the progressive exhaustion of its momentum that Leonard thought they were coming to a standstill. Then it was that he kicked out viciously, striving to free himself from the weight of Soa, which threatened to bring them to a common ruin, but she clung to him like an ivy to a tree, and he desisted from his efforts lest he should cause their sledge to alter its course.

On the very top of the rise the motion of the stone decreased almost to nothingness, then little by little increased once more as they traversed a short, sharp dip, the same in which they had lost sight of Otter, to be succeeded by a gentle rise. So far, though exciting and novel, their journey had been comparatively safe, for the path was broad and the ice perfectly smooth. Its terrors were to come. Looking forward, Leonard saw that they were at the commencement of a decline so steep that, even had it offered a good foothold, human beings could scarcely have stood upon it, and measuring 400 or 500 yards in length. As yet the tongue of ice was 50 paces or more in width, but it narrowed rapidly as it fell till at length near the opposite shore of the ravine it fined away to a point like that of a great white needle and then seemed to break off altogether.

Now they were well under way, and now they sped down the steep green ice at a pace that can hardy be imagined, though perhaps it is sometimes equaled by an eagle falling on its prey from some vast height of air. Indeed it is possible that the sensations of an eagle making his headlong descent and those of Leonard may have been very similar, with the important exception that the bird feels no fear, whereas absolute terror are the only words wherewith to describe the mental state of the man. So smooth was the ice and so precipitous its pitch that he felt as though he were falling through space, unsupported by anything, for traveling at that speed the friction of the stone was imperceptible. Only the air shrieked as they clove it, and Juanna's long tresses, torn by it from their fastenings, streamed out behind her like a veil.

Down they went, still down, half—two-thirds of the distance was covered; then he looked again and saw the horror that lay before them. Already the bridge was narrow, barely the width of a small room. A hundred yards farther on it tapered to so fine a point that the stone would almost cover its breadth, and beneath it, on either side, was that unmeasured gulf wherein Nam was lost with the jewels. Nor was this all, for at its narrowest it was broken away for a space of 10 or 12 feet, to continue on the farther side of the gap, for a few yards at a somewhat lower level, and then run upward at a steep incline to the breast of snow where Otter sat in safety.

On they whizzed, ice beneath them and before them, and ice in Leonard's heart, for he was frozen with fear. His breath had left him because of the rush of their progress, but his senses remained painfully acute. Involuntarily he glanced over the edge of the stone, saw the sheer depths below him and found himself wondering what was the law that kept their sledge upon this ribbon of ice when it seemed so easy for it to whirl off into space.

Now the gap was immediately in front of them. "God help us!" he murmured, or rather thought, for there was no time for words, and they had left the road of ice and were flying through the air as though the stone which carried them were a living thing that, seeing the peril, had gathered up its energies and sprung forward for its life.

What happened? Leonard never knew for certain, and Otter swore that his heart came and stood before his eyes so that he could not see. Before they touched the farther point of ice—while they were in the air indeed—they, or rather Leonard, heard a hideous scream and felt a jerk so violent that his hold of the stone was loosened, and it passed from beneath them. Then came a shock, less violent than might have been expected, and, lo! they were spinning onward down the polished surface of the ice, while the stone that had borne them sped on in front like a horse that has thrown its rider.

Leonard felt the rubbing of the ice burn him like hot iron. He felt that his ankle was freed from the hand that had held it; then for some minutes he felt no more, for his senses left him. When they returned, it was to hear the voice of Otter crying: "Lie still, baas; do not stir for your life. I come."

Instantly he was wide awake, and moving his head ever so little saw their situation. Then he wished that he had remained asleep, for it was this:

The impetus of their rush had carried them almost to the line where the ice stopped and the rock and snow began, within some 15 feet of it indeed. But those 15 feet were of the smoothest ice and very sheer, so smooth and sheer that no man could hope to climb them. Below them the slope continued for some 13 or 14 yards till it met the corresponding incline that led to the gap in the bridge. On this surface of ice they were lying spread eagled. For a moment Leonard wondered how it was that they did not slide back to the bottom of the slope, there to remain till they perished, for without ropes and proper implements no human being could scale it. Then he saw that a chance had befallen them which in after days he was wont to attribute to the direct intervention of Providence.

It will be remembered that when they started Leonard