

Marvelous Love Story Of A Black Queen

By J. A. ROGERS

(continued from page ten)

Displays Wisdom

At that moment a workman was passing. On his head was wood and on his neck, straw. His sandals hung from his hips and sweat poured down the length of his nude form. Solomon bade the man halt.

Pointing to him, Solomon said: "Do you see any difference between this humble worker and myself? Am I not a man like him? Am I not made of dust the same as he and tomorrow shall I not be a worm even as he?"

"Are we not both the sons of Man? What hindered God from giving me glory to this man and putting me in his place? But at this hour this workman has more strength than I to accomplish his particular task, for God comes to the help of the feeble as He sees fit."

Bidding the man continue his work the king went on: "What good are we if we do not obtain grace by practicing good in this earth? For though we wear magnificent clothing, eat delicious food, and clothe ourselves with perfumed garments we are already of the dead by our sin and corruption. Happy are those who repent and fear God."

And Makeda replied: "What joy do your words give me! How like to the dropping of dew are they! Teach me, O teach me more. We of the South worship the Sun as our fathers have taught us, because we believe that the Sun is the king of all gods."

"But now I wish to worship no longer the Sun, but the creator of the Sun: The God of Israel. Let the Ark of the Covenant be my guide and that of my descendant; and that of the multitude who bow before my sceptre forever."

And so they talked.

Solomon Is Tempted

But Solomon in all his wisdom was but human. The daily proximity of the beautiful Makeda stirred the man within him. But Makeda stood firm. She told the king that according to Ethiopian law a queen could rule only as long as she remained pure.

At last came the eve of the day of her departure. Solomon was resolute in his purposes while the Queen was equally firm. The king in despair resorted to a ruse. He caused a splendid feast to be spread in his apartments for himself and Makeda alone. Makeda consented to come on condition that the king would give his word to respect her purity.

Solomon replied: "I give my word, on condition that you steal none of my treasure."

Makeda thought this a good jest. Why should she, the wealthiest woman on earth want to steal any of Solomon's treasure. Laughingly she gave her word to abide by the bargain.

The king ordered the dinner served. Meats in abundance there were served with a profusion of salt and spice washed down with wines and liqueurs. But no water. Raging with thirst Makeda stole away and seeing a snouting jet of water drank greedily of it.

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Solomon, arising, had stealthily followed her, and coming up reminded her of her promise not to steal any of his treasure.

"Why," laughed the Queen, "this is only water."

"And is not water the greatest of my treasures?" retorted the king.

And pushed by her love and her admiration for the king's artifice the Queen showed that she, too, was only a woman.

Solomon at that time had 700 wives, all princesses, and 300 concubines. Among the wives were Nitocris, daughter of the king of Egypt; Sulamit, daughter of King Suman; Rachel, daughter of Hiram II, king of Tyre; Terada, daughter of the king of Sidon, and Emmah, daughter of Achbal, king of Ceylon. Makeda, he now elevated to the position of favorite, queen to the discontentment of the others.

Some of them began to reproach Makeda about the darkness of her skin, hence the famous passage: "I am black but comely, oh, ye daughters of Jerusalem."

A Son Appears

Six months later the Queen of Sheba returned to her people. A child was to be born and Solomon had exacted a promise from her that if it was a son she would send him to visit him. He gave her a ring to give this son in order that he might be recognized.

In time a son was born, later Menelik I.

But the Queen was loath to let the boy go. At last he approached manhood and he had always been asking about his father and was wishing to go to see him. Makeda finally sent him to Jerusalem.

When Solomon saw the young man his heart went out to him. What a striking resemblance did he bear to his grandfather, King David. Solomon re-christened him David, and planned to make him his successor.

But the young man declined the honor. He said that he had sworn to his mother, hand on her breasts, that he would return. Still Solomon strove hard to keep him.

A Threat To Rebel

Then an incident occurred that made Solomon consent to part with the young man. Rehoboam, another son, had been named as heir to the throne before the coming of Menelik and Rehoboam's supporters were threatening to rebel.

Before sending Menelik away, Solomon, in a brilliant ceremony, crowned him King of Ethiopia. To give added prestige to Menelik's court he

sent a thousand of the eldest sons from each tribe to remain in Ethiopia with him, 12,000 in all with 12 judges. Among the number was Azariah son of Zadoc, the High Priest.

Solomon's plan was to establish the religion of Judah in Ethiopia and he had had made a duplicate of the Ark of the Covenant to accompany Azariah and his 1,000 Levites. But Azariah, on leaving, is said to have changed it for the real one, with the result that the original Ark went to Ethiopia.

6,000 Virgins

Back in Abyssinia Menelik I established the religion of Israel. Six thousand black virgins were chosen the Daughters of Zion, according to the law.

In the Church at Axum, Abyssinia is still venerated a copy of one of the Tables of the Law said to be given by Solomon as well as the crown of gold and precious stones that Solomon is said to have placed on the Queen of Sheba's head. These as well as the imperial ornaments, all presents from Solomon to the Queen are exhibited at each marriage of a member of the royal family.

Makeda was born in 1020 B. C. and was the only daughter of King Quacuasya and Queen Ismanie. She came to the throne at the age of 15, one year before Solomon succeeded David, and died at the age of 65. She was succeeded by her son. When

she visited Solomon she was 35, and at the height of her beauty.

Arka in the Tigre and Axum were her principal residences. A few years ago her tomb, as well as the ruins of a great temple and 22 obelisks of her period, were excavated at Axum.

Makeda, Great Ruler

Makeda possessed all the qualities of a great king. Two holy books, the Bible and the Koran have mentioned her. Her fame extended even into distant parts of savage Europe. The Greeks spoke of her as "The Black

Minerva," and "The Ethiopian Diana."

In Arabian writings the Queen of Sheba is called Balkis. This has led some writers to say that there were two Queens of Sheba, both consorts of Solomon, one of which came from Arabia. But when it is recalled that at that time Makeda was herself ruling in Arabia, it being a part of the Seban Empire, it will be easily seen that Makeda and Balkis are one. Balkis may have been one of her names.

In our next article we will tell of Menelik II, direct descendant of the Queen of Sheba over a period of 2821 years.

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