INTO THE PRIMITIVE

BY ROBERT AMES BENNET

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

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"I'm Unprepared to Climb Precipices, Even Though My Costume Is That of a Savage."

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the shipwreck of the steamer on which Miss Genevieve Leslie, an American heiress, Lord Winthrope, an Englishman, and Tom Blake, a brusque American, were passengers. The three were tossed upon an uninhabited island and were the only ones not drowned. Blake recovered from a drunken stupor. Blake, shunned on the boat, because of his roughness, became a hero as preserver of the helpless pair. The Englishman was suing for the hand of Miss Leslie. Blake started to swim back to the ship to recover what was left. Blake returned safely. Winthrope wasted his last match on a cigarette, for which he was scored by Blake. Their first meal was a dead fish. The trio started a ten mile hike for higher land. Thirst attacked them. Blake was compelled to carry Miss Leslie on account of weariness. He taunted Winthrope. They entered the jungle. That night was passed roosting high in a tree. The next morning they descended to the open again. All three constructed hats to shield themselves from the sun. They then feasted on cocoanuts, the only procurable food. Miss Leslie showed a liking for Blake, but detested his roughness. Led by Blake they established a home in some cliffs. Blake found a fresh water spring. Miss Leslie faced an unpleasant situation. They planned their campaign. Blake recovered his surveyor's magnifying glass, thus insuring fire. He started a jungle fire, killing a large leopard and smothering several cubs. In the leopard's cavern they built a small home. They gained the cliffs by burning the bottom of a tree until it fell against the heights. The trio secured eggs from the cliffs. Miss Leslie's white skirt was decided upon as a signal.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

One after another, the keys were welded together, end to end, in a narrow ribbon of steel. The thinnest one, however, was not fastened to the tip until it had been used to burn a groove in the edge of a rib, selected from among the bones which Miss Leslie had thrown out of the baobab. The last key was then fastened to the others; the blade ground sharp, tempered, and inserted in the groove. Finally, pieces of the keyring were fitted in bands around the bone, through notches cut in the ends of the steel blade. The result was a bone-handled, bone-backed knife, with a narrow cutting edge of fine steel.

Long before it was finished Miss Leslie had been forced away by the requirements of her own work. In fact, Blake did not complete his task until late in the afternoon. At the end, he spent more than an hour grinding the handle into shape. When he came to show the completed knife to Miss Leslie, he was fairly aglow with justifiable pride.

"How's that for an Eskimo job?" he demanded. "Bunch of keys and a bone, eh?"

"You are certainly very ingenious, Mr. Blake!"

"Nixy! There's little of the inventor in my top piece—only some hustle and a good memory. I was up in Alaska, you know. Saw a sight of Eskimo work."

"Still, it is very skilfully done."

"That may be— Look out for the edge! It'd do to shave. No more bamboo splinters for me—dull when you hit a piece of bone. I'm ready now to skin a rhinoceros."

"If you can catch one!"

"Guess we could find enough of them around here, all right. But we'll start in on some of Win's sheep and cattle."

"Oh, do! One grows tired of eggs, and all these sea-birds are so tough and fishy, no matter how I cook them."

"We'll sneak down to the pool, and make a try with the bows this evening. I'll give odds, though, that we draw a blank. Win's got the aim, but no drive; I've got the drive, but no aim. Even if I hit an antelope, I don't think a bamboo-pointed arrow would bother him much."

"Don't the savages kill game without iron weapons?"

"Sure; but a lot have flint points, and a lot of others use poison. I know that the Apaches and some of those other southern Indians used to fix their arrows with rattlesnake poison."

"How horrible!"

"Well, that depends on how you look at it. I guess they thought guns more horrible when they tackled the whites and got the daylight let through 'em. At any rate, they swapped arrows for rifles mighty quick, and anyone who knows Apaches will tell you it wasn't because they thought bullets would do less damage."

"Yet the thought of poison—"

"Yes; but the thought of self-preservation! Sooner than starve, I'd poison every animal in Africa—and so would you."

"I—I— You put it in such a horrible way. One must consider others, animals as well as people; and yet—"

"Survival of the fittest. I've read some things, and I'm no fool, if I do say it myself. For instance, I'm the boss here, because I'm the fittest of our crowd in this environment; but back in what's called civilized parts, where the law lets a few shrewd fellows monopolize the means of production, a man like your father—"

"Mr. Blake, it is not my fault if papa's position in the business world—"

"Nor his, either—it's the cussed system! No; that's all right, Miss Jenny. I was only illustrating. Now, I take it, both you and Win would like to get rid of a boss like me, if you could get rid of Africa at the same time. As it is, though, I guess you'd rather have me for boss, and live, than be left all by your lonesomes, to starve."

"I—I'm sure there is no question of your leadership, Mr. Blake. We have both tried our best to do what you have asked of us."

"You have, at least. But I know. If a ship should come to-morrow, it'd be Blake to the back seat. 'Papa, give this—er—person a check for his services, while I chase off with Winnie, to get my look-in on 'Is Ri-yal 'Ighness.'"

Miss Leslie flushed crimson— "I'm sure, Mr. Blake—"

"Oh, don't let that worry you, Miss Jenny. It don't me. I couldn't be sore with you if I tried. Just the same, I know what it'll be like. I've rubbed elbows enough with snobs and big bugs to know what kind of consideration they give one of the mahsses—unless one of the mahsses has the drop on them. Hello, Win! What's kept you so late?"

"None of your business!" snapped Winthrope.

Miss Leslie glanced at him, even more puzzled and startled by this outbreak than she had been by Blake's strange talk. But if Blake was angered, he did not show it.

"Say, Win," he remarked gravely, "I was going to take you down to the pool after supper, on a try with the bows. But I guess you'd better stay close by the fire."

"Yes; it is tim you gave a little consideration to those who deserve it," rejoined Winthrope, with a peevishness of tone and manner which surprised Miss Leslie. "I tell you, I'm tired of being treated like a dog."

"All right, all right, old man. Just draw up your chair, and get all the hot broth aboard you can stow," answered Blake, soothingly.

Winthrope sat down; but throughout the meal, he continued to complain over trifles with the peevishness of a spoiled child, until Miss Leslie blushed for him. Greatly to her astonishment, Blake endured the nagging without a sign of irritation, and in the end took his bow and arrows and went off down the cleft, with no more than a quiet reminder to Winthrope that he should keep near the fire.

When, shortly after dark, the engineer came groping his way back up the gorge, he was by no means so calm. Out of six shots, he had hit one antelope in the neck and another in the haunch; yet both animals had made off all the swifter for their wounds.

The noise of his approach awakened Winthrope, who turned over, and began to complain in a whining falsetto. Miss Leslie, who was peering out through the bars of her screen, looked to see Blake kick the prostrate man. His frown showed only too clearly that he was in a savage temper. To her astonishment, he spoke in a soothing tone until Winthrope again fell asleep. Then he quietly set about erecting a canopy of bamboos over the sleeper.

Just why he should build this was a puzzle to the girl. But when she caught a glimpse of Blake's altered expression, she drew a deep breath of relief, and picked her way around the edge of her bamboo stakes, to lie down without a trace of the fear which had been haunting her.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Mark of the Beast.

MORNING found Winthrope more irritable and peevish than ever. Though he had not been called on watch by Blake until long after midnight, he had soon fallen asleep at his post and permitted the fire to die out. Shortly before dawn, Blake was roused by a pack of jackals, snarling and quarreling over the half-dried seafowl. To charge upon the thieves and put them to flight with a few blows of his club took but a moment. Yet daylight showed more than half the drying frames empty.

Blake was staring glumly at them, with his broad back to Winthrope, when Miss Leslie appeared. The sudden cessation of Winthrope's complaints brought his companion around on the instant. The girl stood before him, clad from neck to foot in her leopard-skin dress.

"Well, I'll be—dashed!" he exclaimed, and he stood staring at her open-mouthed.

"I fear it will be warm. Do you think it becoming?" she asked, flushing, and turning as though to show the fit of the costume.

"Do I?" he echoed. "Miss Jenny, you're a peach!"

"Thank you," she said. "And here is the skirt. I have ripped it open. You see, it will make a fine flag."

"If it's put up. Seems a pity, though, to do that, when we're getting on so fine. What do you say to leaving it down, and starting a little colony of our own?"

Miss Leslie raised the skirt in her outstretched hands. Behind it her face became white as the cloth.

"Well?" demanded Blake soberly, though his eyes were twinkling.

"You forget the fever," she retorted mockingly, and Blake failed to catch the quaver beneath the light remark.

"Say, you've got me there!" he admitted. "Just pass over your flag, and scrape up some grub. I'll be breaking out a big bamboo. There are plenty of holes and loose stones on the cliff. We'll have the signal up before noon."

Miss Leslie murmured her thanks, and immediately set about the preparation of breakfast.

When Blake had the bamboo ready, with one edge of the broad piece of white duck lashed to it with catgut as high up as the tapering staff would bear, he called upon Winthrope to accompany him.

"You can go, too, Miss Jenny," he added. "You haven't been on the cliff yet, and you ought to celebrate the occasion."

"No, thank you," replied the girl. "I'm still unprepared to climb precipices, even though my costume is that of a savage."

"Savage? Great Scott! that leopard dress would win out against any set of Russian furs a-going, and I've heard they're considered all kinds of dog. Come on. I can swing you into the branches, and it's easy from there up."

"You will excuse me, please."

"Yes, you can go alone," interposed Winthrope. "I am indisposed this morning, and, what is more, I have had enough of your dictation."

"You have, have you?" growled Blake, his patience suddenly come to an end. "Well, let me tell you, Miss Leslie is a lady, and if she don't want to go, that settles it. But as for you, you'll go, if I have to kick you every step."

Winthrope cringed back, and broke into a childish whine. "Don't—don't do it, Blake— Oh, I say, Miss Genevieve, how can you stand by and see him abuse me like this?"

Blake was grinning as he turned to Miss Leslie. Her face was flushed and downcast with humiliation for her friend. It seemed incredible that a man of his breeding should betray such weakness. A quick change came over Blake's face.

"Look here," he muttered, "I guess I'm enough of a sport to know something about fair play. Win's coming down with the fever, and's no more to blame for doing the baby act than he'll be when he gets the delirium, and gabbles."

"I will thank you to attend to your own affairs," said Winthrope.

"You're entirely welcome. It's what I'm doing— Do you understand, Miss Jenny?"

"Indeed, yes; and I wish to thank you. I have noticed how patient you have been—"

"Pardon me, Miss Leslie," rasped Winthrope. "Can you not see that for a fellow of this class to talk of fair play and patience is the height of impertinence? In England, now, such insufferable impudence—"

"That'll do," broke in Blake. "It's time for us to trot along."

"But, Mr. Blake, if he is ill—"

"Just the reason why he should keep moving. No more of your gab, Win! Give your jaw a lay-off, and try wiggling your legs instead."

Winthrope turned away, crimson with indignation. Blake paused only for a parting word with Miss Leslie. "If you want something to do, Miss Jenny, try making yourself a pair of moccasins out of the scraps of skin. You can't stay in this gully all the time. You've got to tramp around some, and those slippers must be about done for."

"They are still serviceable. Yet if you think—"

"You'll need good tough moccasins soon enough. Singe off the hair, and make soles of the thicker pieces. If you do a fair job, maybe I'll employ you as my cobbler, soon as I get the hide off one of those skittish antelope."

Miss Leslie nodded and smiled in response to his jesting tone. But as he swung away after Winthrope, she stood for some time wondering at herself. A few days since she knew she would have taken Blake's remark as an insult. Now she was puzzled to find herself rather pleased that he should so note her ability to be of service.

When she roused herself, and began singeing the hair from the odds and ends of leopard skin, she discovered a new sensation to add to her list of unpleasant experiences. But she did not pause until the last patch of hair crisped close to the half-cured surface of the hide. Fetching the penknife and her thorn and catgut from the baobab, she gathered the pieces of skin together, and walked along the cleft to the ladder-tree. There had been time enough for Blake and Winthrope to set up the signal, and she was curious to see how it looked.

She paused at the foot of the tree, and gazed up to where the withered crown lay crushed against the edge of the cliff. The height of the rocky wall made her hesitate; yet the men, in passing up and down, had so cleared away the twigs and leaves and broken the branches on the upper side of the trunk, that it offered a means of ascent far from difficult even for a young lady.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Harder Job.

The tributes to the popularity of Mr. Hammond's son pleased the father, who was the oldest summer resident of Shrubville. They pleased him the more because they came from natives of the soil, whose good opinion could not be forced in any way.

"He's a real good boy, that boy o' yours," said Capt. Hollis Towne, and Capt. Lothrop James added his word of approval.

"I like the cut of his jib," he announced, with decision, 'and I like his ways; he ain't too forth-putting, nor yet he ain't too stand-offish.

"Thing of it is you and his ma haven't tried to have him 'brought up,' same as most of the summer folks do with their children; he's just been 'raised' like we were, and that's why he gets on with everybody in this town, sir!"—Youth's Companion.

NEW DIVORCE MILL

Reno, Nev., Has Corner on Quick Decree Business.

Law Recently Enacted in Nevada Makes the City Mecca for Those Who Would Cure Marital Woes.

Reno, Nev.—A popular song of the summer has been changed to fill a new want and now reads:

My wife has gone to Reno
Hooray; hooray!

It is stated officially that upward of six hundred persons have established a residence in this city and have either filed divorce proceedings or will do so as soon as they have been here six months. Every train brings new applicants, and every part of the United States is already represented by those who have found marriage a failure.

The new Nevada divorce law is, perhaps, the most elastic ever entered on the statutes of any state. It was enacted by the legislature to attract immigration and money to the state in the popular belief that every new arrival would make more or less of an investment in the vast mining and other industries of Nevada. The plaintiff must reside in the state for at least six months. He or she need not live there continuously, but may leave the state, at any time, returning and filing suit when six months have passed after legally establishing a domicile.

Here is what a Reno divorce specialist says in a treatise on the procedure required: "While the laws in other states generally contain some provision for the dissolution of the marriage tie, it is obvious that in cases where extreme cruelty, desertion and failure to provide form the basis of the grievance, the laws in such states offer no substantial relief to the aggrieved party because the requirements of proof, duration of offense,

Court House at Reno.

corroboration of the plaintiff and procedure under court rules are so exacting and irksome that the desired relief sought by the applicant is rendered impossible of attainment, and the client, when consulting local counsel, is almost invariably advised that he has no remedy. In Nevada the applicant, without deception or fraud, upon almost any charge from which lack of harmonious relations may be reasonably inferred, may apply to our courts and secure prompt results by decree of absolute divorce, valid and binding in law."

Upon the passage of the new law Nevada promptly succeeded to the easy divorce crown that formerly characterized South Dakota, the people of which state one year ago made its requirements harder and the time of required residence one year. It needed only the filing of suits there by such well-known persons as Nat Goodwin, Margaret Illington (Mrs. Daniel Frohman) and others of stage circles, with the consequent wide advertising, to cause a stampede in that direction of hundreds, many of whom married at leisure and repented in haste.

Reno is a city of 18,000 population, acting as a supply center to the vast mining areas of Nevada, and being the site of the State University, the Mackay School of Mines, a big Carnegie library and other institutions. It is known as the city of the finest churches and homes in the state. It has every modern equipment in the way of paved streets, traction service, waterworks, lighting, etc. Not only is it a center of intellectual attainment and wealth, but it is a railroad center and of climatic and scenic note. Intersecting it is Nevada's most beautiful mountain stream, the Truckee river, on which the government is spending millions, and surrounding it is the richest agricultural land of that region.

With all these and other advantages Reno immediately grabbed the larger part of the divorce industry.

Noted Old Tavern Still Standing.

The old Whitney tavern in Shelbyville, Tenn., erected in 1810, is still in a good state of preservation. It is built of cedar logs, which are chinked and pointed between, and with the exception of the renewing of the weather boarding and shingles it has undergone no change. The large stone chimneys, with their broad fireplaces, are still in as perfect condition as when Gen. Jackson and other noted personages were entertained there. Later it was occupied as a residence by Thomas Holland.

In the days of overland travel commodious stables were kept in connection for the purpose of taking care of the horses and vehicles of the guests, also the stage coaches which ran between Nashville and southern points in Alabama and Mississippi.—Christian Science Monitor.

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