

INTO THE PRIMITIVE

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the shipwreck of the steamer on which Miss Genevieve Leslie, an American heiress, Lord Winthrop, 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, shunned on the boat, because of his roughness, became a hero as a preserver of the helpless pair. The Englishman was suing for the hand of Miss Leslie. Winthrop wasted his last match on a cigarette, for which he was scolded by Blake. All three constructed huts to shield themselves from the sun. They then feasted on coconuts, 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. 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. Miss Leslie made a dress from the leopard skin. Overhearing a conversation between Blake and Winthrop, Miss Leslie became frightened. Winthrop became ill with fever. Blake was poisoned by a fish and almost died. Jackals attacked the camp that night, but were driven off by Genevieve. Blake constructed an animal trap. He killed a hyena. On a tour the trio discovered honey and oysters. Miss Leslie was attacked by a poisonous snake. Blake killed it and saved its poison to kill game. For the second time Winthrop was attacked by fever. He and Blake disagreed. The latter made a strong door for the private compartment of Miss Leslie's cave home. A terrible storm raged that night. Winthrop stole into her room, but she managed to swing her door closed in time. Winthrop was badly hurt. He died the following morning. The storm tore down their distress flag, so a new one was swung from a bamboo pole.

CHAPTER XXII.

Understanding and Misunderstanding.

IN the morning she found Blake scraping energetically at the inner surfaces of a pair of raw hyena skins.

"So you've killed more game!" she exclaimed.

"Game? No; hyenas. I hated to waste good poison on the brutes; but nothing else showed up, and I need a new pair of pa—er—trousers."

"Was it not dangerous—great beasts like these?"

"Not even enough to make it interesting. I'd have had some fun, though, with that confounded lion when the moon came up if he hadn't sneaked off into the grass."

"A lion?"

"Yes. Didn't you hear him? The skulking brute prowled around for hours before the moon rose, when it was pitch dark. It was mighty lonesome, with him yowling down by the pool. Half a chance and I'd given him something to yowl about. But it wasn't any use firing off my arrows in the dark, and, as I said, he sneaked off before—"

"Tom—Mr. Blake!—you must not risk your life!"

"Don't you worry about me. I've learned how to look out for Tom Blake. And you can just bank on it I'm going to look out for Miss Jenny Leslie, too! But say, after breakfast, suppose we take a run out on the cliff for eggs?"

"I do not wish any to-day, thank you."

He waited a little, studying her down-bent face.

"Well," he muttered; "you don't have to come. I know I oughtn't to take a moment's time. I did quite a bit last night; but if you think—"

She glanced up, puzzled. His meaning flashed upon her, and she rose.

"Oh, not that! I will come," she answered, and hastened to prepare the morning meal.

When they came to the tree-ladder she found that the heap of stones built up by Blake to facilitate the first part of the ascent was now so high that she could climb into the branches without difficulty. She surmised that Blake had found it necessary to build up the pile before he could ascend with his burden.

They were at the foot of the heap, when, with a sharp exclamation, Blake sprang up into the branches and scrambled to the top in hot haste. Wondering what this might mean, Miss Leslie followed as fast as she could. When she reached the top she saw him running across towards an out-jutting point on the north edge of the cliff.

She had hurried after him for more than half the distance before she perceived the vultures that were gathered in a solemn circle about a long and narrow heap of stones on a ledge down on the sloping brink of the cliff. While at the foot of the tree Blake had seen one of the growsome flock descending to join the other, and, fearful of what might be happening, had rushed on ahead.

At his approach, the croaking watchers hopped awkwardly from the ledges and soared away; only to wheel and circle back overhead. Miss Leslie shrank down, shuddering. Blake came back near her, and began to gather up the pieces of loose rock which were strewn about beneath the ledges on that part of the cliff.

"I know I piled up enough," he explained, in response to her look. "All



"I'm Fixing It So It'll Do Me Even When It Rains."

the same, a few more will do no harm."

"Then you are sure those awful birds have not—"

"Yes, I'm sure."

He carried an armful of rocks to lay on the mound. When he began to gather more she followed his example. They worked in silence, piling the rough stones gently one upon another, until the cairn had grown to twice its former size. The air on the open cliff top was fresher than in the cleft, and Miss Leslie gave little heed to the absence of shade. She would have worked on under the burning sun without thought of consequences. But Blake knew the need of moderation.

"There; that'll do," he said. "He may have been—all he was; but we've more than done our duty. Now, we'll stroll out on the point."

"I should prefer to return."

"No doubt. But it's time you learned how to go nesting. What if you should be left alone here? Besides, it looks to me like the signal is tearing loose."

She accompanied him out along the cliff crest until they stood in the midst of the bird colony, half deafened by their harsh clamor. She had never ventured into their concourse when alone. Even now she cried out, and would have retreated before the sharp bills and beating wings had not Blake walked ahead and kicked the squawking birds out of the path. Having made certain that the big white flag was still secure on its staff he led the way along the seaward brink of the cliff, pointing out the different kinds of seawall and shouting information about such of their habits and qualities as were of concern to hungry cast-aways.

He concluded the lesson by descending a dizzy flight of ledges to rob the nest of a frigate bird. It was a foolhardy feat at best, and doubly so in view of the thousands of eggs lying all around in the hollows of the cliff top. But from these Blake had recently culled out all the fresh settings of the frigate birds and none of the other eggs equaled them in delicacy of flavor.

"How's that?" he demanded, as he drew himself up over the edge of the cliff and handed the big chalky-white egg to her keeping.

"I would rather go without than see you take such risks," she replied, coldly.

"You would, eh?" he cried, quite misunderstanding her, and angered by what seemed to him a gratuitous rebuff. "Well, I'd rather you'd say nothing than speak in that tone. If you don't want the egg heave it over."

Unable to conceive any cause for his sudden anger, she was alarmed and drew back, watching him with sidelong glances.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "Think I'm going to bite you?"

She shrank farther away, and did not answer.

At her call to the noon meal Blake took his time to respond, and when he at last came to join her he was

morose and taciturn. She met him with a smile and exerted all her womanly tact to conciliate him.

"You must help me eat the eggs," she said. "I've boiled it hard."

"Rather eat beef," he mumbled.

"But just to please me—when I've cooked it your way?"

He uttered an inarticulate sound which she chose to interpret as assent. The egg was already shelled. She cut it exactly in half and served one of the pieces to him with a bit of warm fat and a pinch of salt. As he took the dish he raised his sullen eyes to her face. She met his gaze with a look of smiling insistence.

"Come now," she said; "please don't refuse. I'm sorry I was so rude."

"Well, if you feel that way about it!—not that I care for fancy dishes," he responded, gruffly.

"It would be missing half the end and onions in the same dish."

"I'm sure, Mr. Blake—"

"Beats a burlesque all hollow—Mrs. Sint-Regis-Waldoff's chop-sooey tea and young Mrs. Vandam-Jones' autocottillon—with us sitting here like troglodytes, chewing snake-poisoned antelope, and you in that Kundry dress—"

"Do you—I was not aware that you knew about music."

"Don't know a note. But give me a chance to hear good music and I'm there if I have to stand in the peanut-gallery."

"Oh, I'm so glad! I'm very, very fond of music! Have you been to Bayreuth?"

"Where's that?"

"In Germany. It is where his operas are given as staged by Wagner himself. It is indescribably grand and inspiring—above all, the Parsifal!"

"I'll most certainly take that in, even if I have to cut short my engagement in this gee-lorious climate—not but what, when it comes to leopard ladies—!" He paused and surveyed her with frank admiration.

The blood leaped into her face. "Oh!" she gasped, "I never dreamed that even such a man as you would compare me with—with a creature like that!"



"I can't be sorry for that!"

"But even you felt how terrible it was—and then—Oh, surely, you must see how—how embarrassing—"

It was Blake's turn to look down and hesitate. She studied his face, her bosom heaving with quick-drawn breath; but she could make nothing of his square jaw and firm-set lips. His eyes were concealed by the brim of his leaf hat. When he spoke, seemingly it was to change the subject: "Guess you saw me making my hut. I'm fixing it so it'll do me even when it rains."

Had he been the kind of man that she had been educated to consider as alone entitled to the name of gentleman, she could have felt certain that he had intended the remark for a delicately worded assurance. But was Tom Blake, for all his blunt kindness, capable of such tact? She chose to consider that he was.

"It's a cunning little bungalow. But will not the rain flood you out?"

"It's going to have a raised floor. You're more like to have the rain drive in on you again. I'll have to rig up a porch over your door. It won't do to stuff up the hole. You've little enough air as it is. But that can wait a while. There's other work more pressing. First, there's the barricade. By the time that's done those hyena skins will be cured enough to use. I've got to have new trousers soon, and new shoes, too."

"I can do the sewing, if you will cut out the patterns."

"No; I'll take a stagger at it myself first. I'd rather you'd go eggging. You need to run around more, to keep in trim."

"I feel quite well now, and I am growing so strong! The only thing is this constant heat."

"We'll have to grin and bear it. After all, it's not so bad, if only we can stave off the fever. Another reason I want you to go for eggs is that you can take your time about it, and keep a look-out for steamers."

"Then you think—?"

"Don't screw up your hopes too high. We've little show of being picked up by a chance boat on a coast with reefs like this. But I figure that if I was in your daddy's shoes it'd be joyment to eat such a delicacy without some one to share it," she said.

Blake looked away without answer. But she could see that his face was beginning to clear. Greatly encouraged, she chatted away as though they were seated at her father's dinner-table and he was an elderly friend from the business world whom it was her duty to entertain.

For a while Blake betrayed little interest, confining himself to monosyllables except when he commented on the care with which she had cooked the various dishes. When she least expected, he looked up at her, his lips parted in a broad smile. She stopped short, for she had been describing her first social triumphs and his untimely levity embarrassed her.

"Don't get mad, Miss Jenny," he said, his eyes twinkling. "You don't know how funny it seems to sit here and listen to you talking about those things. It's like serving up ice cream high time for me to be cabling a ship to run up from Natal, or down from Zanzibar, to look around for jettison, et cetera."

"I'm sure papa will offer a big reward."

"Second the motion! I've a sort of idea I wouldn't mind coming in for a reward myself."

"You? Oh, yes; to be sure. Papa is generous, and he will be grateful to anyone who—"

"You think I mean his dirty money!" broke in Blake, hotly.

Her confusion told him that he had not been mistaken. His face, only a moment since bright and pleasant, took on its sullenest frown.

Miss Leslie rose hurriedly and started along the cleft.

"Hello!" he called. "Not going for eggs now, are you?"

She did not reply.

"Hang it all, Miss Jenny! Don't go off like that."

"May I ask you to excuse me, Mr. Blake? Is that sufficient?"

"Sufficient? It's enough to give a fellow a chill! Come, now; don't go off mad. You know I've a quick temper. Can't you make allowances?"

"You've—you've no right to look so angry, even if I did misunderstand you. You misunderstood me!" She caught herself up with a half sob. His silence gave her time to recover her composure. She continued with excessive politeness: "Need I repeat my request to be excused, Mr. Blake?"

"No; once is enough! But, honest, now, I didn't mean to be nasty."

"Good-day, Mr. Blake."

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE



"Excuse me, gents, would you mind givin' a dime to er poor feller wot was shot in der war?"

"Where were you shot?"

"In der spinal column, sir!"

"Beat it! There wasn't any such battle!"

On Ghosts. James H. Hyslop, the brilliant psychologist, narrated, during a discussion of the Paladin case in New York, an original old lady's opinion of ghosts.

"Ghosts!" exclaimed the old lady, scornfully. "I don't take any stock in them. If you die and go to the good place it isn't likely that you'd want to waddle back to this poor vale of trouble, while if you go to the bad place you'll be kept there."

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