

THIS is the third installment of "The Golden Fetter," which is a more thrilling mystery story than either "Tainted Gold" or "The Mystery Box," both of which created a big sensation when published in the Sunday Call recently.

After "The Golden Fetter" will come "The Master of Appleby," a literary surprise that will create a positive furor.

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"OUR people dance as well as the Mapora, but not better," said Lord Winstone. "Indeed, they cannot jump quite so high, but that is because they carry guns instead of spears."

This satisfied Kanatto; then he sent for his picture book, the gift already mentioned, and went through it with Winstone, page by page, like a child. His Lordship had to tell the story of each beast, and when the animal described was one with which Kanatto was familiar it was amusing to see his attention and his readiness to catch the narrator in a falsehood or inaccuracy if possible. This, however, he could not do, and after the descriptions of the rhinoceros, lion, bush antelope, elephant and zebra, he uttered grunts of satisfaction, sometimes turning back to them, and "well again."

Further gifts concluded the night's entertainment and at dawn the expedition, much refreshed by its halt on the high ground, was ready to set for the river. Kanatto offered an additional regiment of fighting men, for the Ruaha bounded his country, and upon the other side of it dwelt his enemies—the tribe of Maga-Miga, who must now be Meldrum's enemies also, but Roy assured the monarch that an escort to the boundaries of Mapora territory was not required. Her enterprise was one of peace; she only desired to see a wondrous land which no white queen had ever seen before; but her heart was warm to all her fellow monarchs and she had no quarrel with any among them.

Upon this assertion Kanatto spoke with the wisdom of experience, declared universal peace impossible to human nature and warned the Queen of the Silver Sunrise not to put her trust in the Maga-Miga or their monarch.

"The door of Unyah's dwelling is built of Mapora skulls," he said grimly, "but I can wait; I am patient; his head will come to me presently, and to-morrow I will drink malwa out of the pan that today holds his lying brains."

"When we return from our journey, if the thought pleases you, and my Queen allows it, I will visit again the Elephant Spirit," declared Lord Winstone, "and send to you the wonders and prophecies concerning this enemy of the Mapora."

Kanatto expressed great gratification at this promise and bid the expedition farewell with a cordiality quite genuine and more than that with which he had welcomed it.

The way led by high lands and deep ravines to the bed of the gigantic Ruaha River, and the chart indicated a possibility of using that stream for a distance of at least a hundred miles, if not more, supposing canoes of sufficient size and stability were discoverable. The Mapora had no canoes, for they employed the river but seldom. They declared, however, that their enemies possessed them; but as to the Ruaha as a navigable stream they could give little information.

Long before the river was reached the rainy season had begun and the same dreary phenomena were presented day after day to a miserable and depressed company. The mornings often dawned fine, though sullen clouds of mist now covered most of the higher peaks and mountain crowns of the land and continued to do so, replenished with cold torrential rains. These usually began after five o'clock and were often accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning and a sort of livid darkness. The high lands speedily became impassable under these conditions and the woods, if less comfortable, were less dangerous to life.

Three days after leaving Kanatto two of Meldrum's Zanzibaris died, including Salem, whose wounds had only recently healed. The poor creatures dropped out of the ranks insensibly and evidently succumbed to sheer cold. Indeed the whole expedition suffered severely, for most of the carriers wore the lightest clothes, many from choice going almost naked, and now the temperature was often less than 50 degrees at nightfall, and the bravest men among them grew cowed and frightened.

But after ten days of long marches the Ruaha was reached without further misfortune, and under its densely wooded banks a temperature more congenial to the natives from Zanzibar and the Soufan was encountered. The awful rains, however, regularly reduced camp to a scene of dire misery, and firewood was only procured with difficulty. The fallen trees chosen for the purpose harbored every sort of horrible insect and reptile in their rotting hearts, and termites, beetles, centipedes, snakes, black wasps and hornets made the men's lives a burden to them.

It was vital to all, and Meldrum and Dan Hook daily set the example of pick and determination in collecting wood and scrub capable of burning.

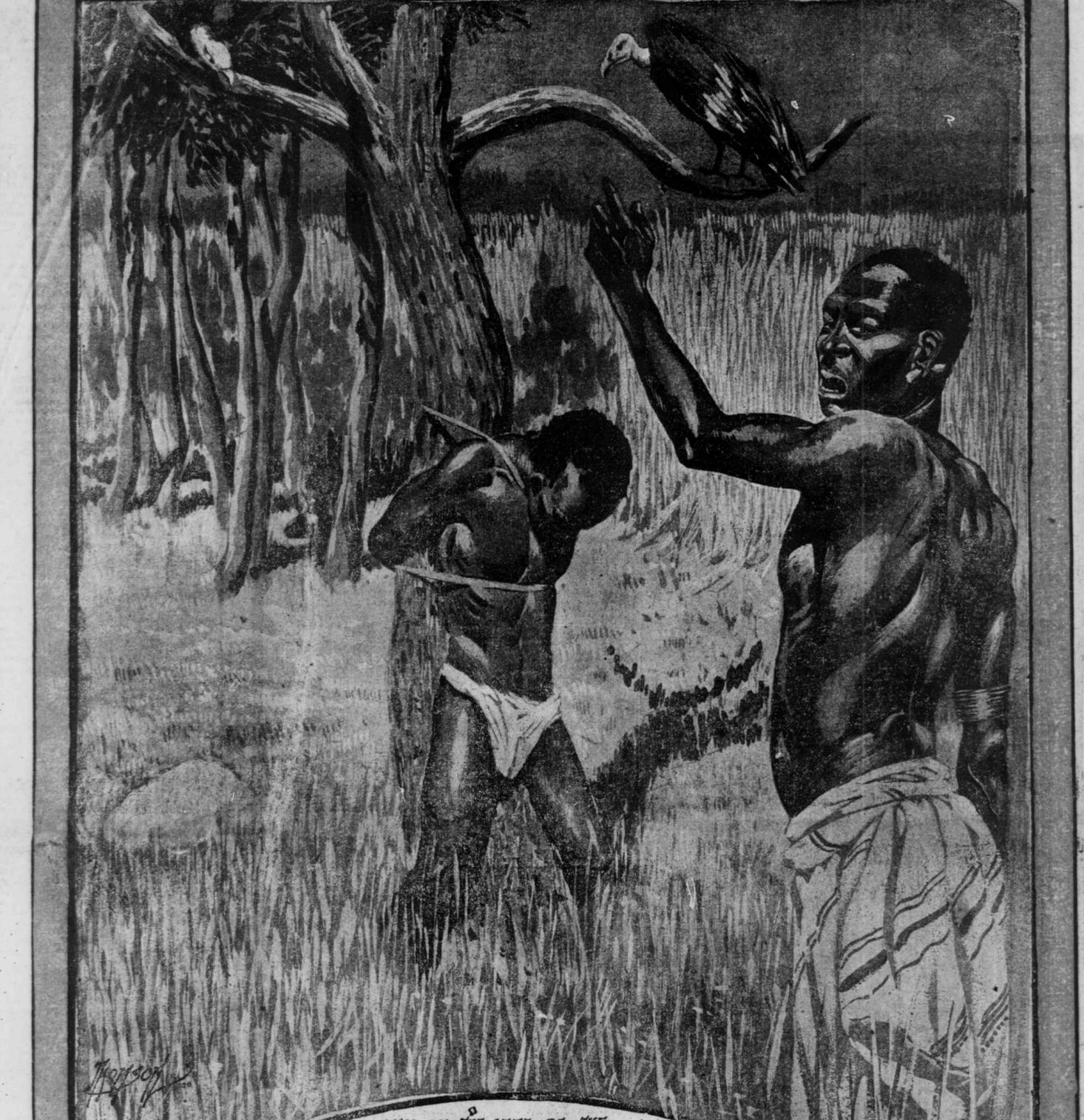
At one point on the river a bluff rock overhanging the water offered protection against the wind that blew from the north and northwest during the rains. Here exceptional advantages of position justified a brief halt. A little beach of white limestone pebbles spread from the cliff to the river in Mapora territory, and against the solid rock of the bluff it was possible to build penitents of grass thatch and leaves against the eternal rains, and thus allow of comparatively dry and healthful sleeping places for all.

As for the white leaders, Bessie's special double tent had thus far defied the tempest; Roy, Winstone and Tracy Fain shared a big and comfortable "fly," also impervious to most of the rain it had encountered, and Dan Hook occupied the remaining tent, sharing it with the Arab headman. The stream ran deep and wide, guarding the camp on the southern side, while a quarter of a mile from shore a little wooded islet broke the smooth surface with a picturesque knot of fine trees, twining creepers and gaudy flowers.

Meldrum's hope was that during this brief halt it might be possible to make friends of the Maga-Miga, but the few of his tribe who inspected the strangers did not seem in the least disposed to any signs of friendship, and they were within half a mile of the camp.

"That we are encamped in peace on their enemy's ground is enough for them," said Roy. "But we must make friends with the Mapora, or we shall have a damn canoe, like the big one, with about ten men in it, that came to look at us yesterday. This chap, Unyah, must surely be an fond of beads and rubies as the others; we shall have to send him a message with a gift or two and an assurance of who we are."

"How is it to be done?" asked Fain.



"A MAN ON THE LEFT OF THE LINE SUDDENLY RAISED A SHOUT"

his punt had reached the island in safety.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW DAN DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF

Next morning no vestige of the exploring party was visible from shore. The sun rose gloriously and delicate mists ascended from the Ruaha, revealing a silent, sleeping inlet on the silver river. Evidence of life there were none and it might have been a dream island magically conjured from the air and the water.

Nevertheless keen eyes and sharp wits were hidden within its green recesses, and long before sunrise turned the river into a scene of dire misery, and firewood was only procured with difficulty. The fallen trees chosen for the purpose harbored every sort of horrible insect and reptile in their rotting hearts, and termites, beetles, centipedes, snakes, black wasps and hornets made the men's lives a burden to them.

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"Who's going to run his head into the lion's den like that?"

"Nobodies," we've no lives to waste, heaven knows. My plan is simpler; we must set a trap for one or two of those inquiring cusses who drop down from the island in midstream, have a look at us, then paddle away again smartly. We've been here four days now and cannot delay much more. In fact, we've only five days' rations, though they're adding to their fare with little fish. We must build a boat and a good one, arm it, hide it one night in the tangles of undergrowth that fringes the island, and then, when a canoe comes creeping down to have a look at us, we can shoot out and intercept it. Dan's the man for this job. I wager he'll have a workmanlike tub of some sort ready in a few days—a boat that will seat three or four men and be fast and trim. Anyway, it's our only move, because, without friends and canoes, we cannot get over at all. Never saw such a country. There doesn't seem to be a river in it less than about thirty feet deep and a mile or so across."

Lord Winstone agreed to this suggestion as the most feasible, and Hook was straightway set about his task. The sailor pursued it with such energy that he had a capital flat punt of large size completed in three days, and upon the following evening, a carefully selected force of five men, armed with repeating rifles, set forth to the island. Dan Hook navigated the punt, while Lord Winstone commanded it, and with them were Blackbird, the hunter, and two of the most trustworthy Soufanese.

Roy Meldrum had naturally determined to lead this little enterprise himself, but he yielded to the entreaties of Hook.

"Do you bide ashore, there's a good man, Mr. Meldrum; 'cause I'm only a amateur boat builder, do 'e see? Her looks all right, for a fair water river, an' the oars on the thole pins will push her along faster'n you'd guess; but her's not built to carry giants like what you be; an' if her got 'em on her beams an' like varmits in midstream, 't would be a damn awkward circumstance for us all—beggin' pardon for the fery word."

So Roy kept his fifteen stone ashore, and waited with some anxiety until the prearranged signal—a torch thrice flashed through the darkness—told that the pride of Zelen, as Dan Hook christened

flowers and the boatmen shipped their paddles.

"What ho! my hearties!" roared Hook with his revolver covering the leading rower. "Now, don't 'e mak no fuss. You've run right in a h'amb sh—that's what you're done—an' you'm my prisoners so best to sing small an' come along quiet."

The savages, naturally unfamiliar with broad Devon, glared at Mr. Hook and a spear shivered within a fractional distance of his ear by way of reply. But it was the last missile that dusky warrior ever hurled at foe. Dan fired point blank at him and he fell backward, shot through the head.

"Bad luck to it, why can't 'e be civil!" he asked. "Drop them skewers this instant moment or I'll send 'e after t'other cove, sure's my name's Hook."

All this time the savage in the lion skin sat motionless and exhibited absolute self-control. Now he spoke quickly to his companion and the boatman dropped his spear.

"That's better," said Dan; "just step in my wherry, the pair of 'e; if 'tis all the same to you. You'm lawful prisoners of war, an' if the old gent in them heer go-to-meeting togs will only trust us, they won't find himself a penny the worse."

At this moment Lord Winstone, with the riflemen, arrived, and the Maga-Miga were assured by signs that they had nothing to fear from their conquerors. To converse with them was impossible until they returned to the punt, where they were collected at the boat which lay on that side of the island where canoes usually appeared, and so assist in the necessary capture.

It was nearly midday, and as yet no sign of the Maga-Miga had been reported by any of the watchers, when Dan Hook, knocking the ashes from his fifth pipe, and peering through the screen of creepers for the hundredth time, suddenly found his interest awakened before the prospect of an adventure.

Spending across from Unyah's territory and pointing straight into his own hiding place, there came a light canoe paddled by two men and containing three in all. The third was of remarkable appearance and looked no larger than a medium sized monkey as he sat crouched up in the stern sheers of the little vessel. But that he was a person of some note Dan guessed from his robe of lion skin, his scarlet feather head-dress and the heavy bracelets of brass that appeared upon his lean arms.

With such speed was his light craft propelled that the sailor saw there would be no chance of communicating with his scattered comrades before it arrived.

Some of his friends must have seen the strangers already and might at that moment be hastening to his aid; but there was no time to lose, and even as Dan tightened his belt, cocked his revolver, and prepared to attempt a single-handed capture, the noise of oars ceased and through the trailing curtains of leaves and

flowers and the boatmen shipped their paddles.

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At the landing place a mighty surprise awaited everybody. Before the boat touched shore yelling parties of the Mapora waded thigh-deep to meet it. They howled and danced in the water; they shook their spears; they showed in a thousand ways their extreme excitement and ferocious joy, while on every tongue rolled the same word in a guttural language. For the Mapora recognized the unarmed and defenseless old man as their sworn foe; they knew that the skulls of their grandfathers hung grinning at his portals.

Unyah, Unyah! Unyah! rang out the cry, and the savages tumbled and fought to reach the boat and bury arrow or spear in the carcass of their dearest enemy. But Lord Winstone, alive to this sudden danger, stopped and bade Dan pull out again into deep water. Even then a dozen frantic Mapora, dead to commands or threats, pursued them and swam round the boat.

"Snakes alive!" roared Dan at the spluttering and swearing Mapora. "I've caught a king; I've got an unsafe an' sound; an' he'm my prisoner of war; an' the first of you common swine as touches my king, I'll break your ugly jaws for you!"

Meldrum had now become aware of the strange scene being enacted within a hundred yards of the shore. Winstone shouted to him to call the Mapora back, and explained that they had better be disarmed and guarded for twenty still remained with the expedition at Kanatto's command; to see the strangers across the river and out of his territory.

"And a man, who can speak the dialect," he shouted, "and bring him to meet the boat. We have taken Unyah himself!"

"Beggin' your pardon, 'tis I that have!" yelled Dan.

The Mapora reluctantly returned ashore and were immediately disarmed, much to their indignation. It was explained to them that the monarch, though their enemy, was not an enemy of the Queen of the Silver Sunrise. With difficulty they were pacified, and the leader

of the boat, an old soldier, volunteered to become interpreter, as he had often fought against the Maga-Miga and knew their language. This man was accordingly brought to the shore, and while Unyah explained his presence at the island and the case of his captives, who in his regular character he had captured, he announced, after due coaching from Fain and Meldrum, the nature of the position and the character of the aid she required.

"Hearing from my people of a wondrous encampment upon the Ruaha River, and of white men with good store of thunder medicine—here he pointed to the rifles—"I myself proceeded in private to yonder island called Batu, with purpose to see in my own eyes the things reported. I came without evil purpose against the white men, but realizing that they were friends with the Mapora, I feared they would not make peace with me. I was captured by this warlord, and am his prisoner until his queen bids his release me. I repeat I have no quarrel with you. I will serve you with friends, but so can avail you nothing if you treat me ill. I am old, and my breath

comes slowly, and will soon flicker out. Nothing matters to me. I have lived a king's life. But you—you must answer to my people. So be it. Let me serve you if you desire it; if not, suffer me to depart in peace as one with whom your queen has no quarrel."

Then Bessie made answer:

"I desire no quarrel with Unyah—far from it. I have heard of his greatness and majesty and power and am willing to be his friend. We captured Unyah perceiving him to be a very great man, but not knowing that he was a king of the Maga-Miga. We captured him thinking that he would bear our messages of friendship and good will to the King, but behold this is better still, for the King himself comes among us and we welcome him with rare gifts and will make a feast for him before the day is over. The white Queen has come from afar off and is at peace with all men. She brings but fifty tubes of thunder medicine and fears not to trust herself with the monarchs of the land."

"To-day she is here, to-morrow she has departed. She has no enemies; she is not concerned with the feuds of the Mapora and the Maga-Miga any more than she is concerned with the feuds of the buffalo and lion. She comes in peace and desires that Unyah will permit her to pass through his kingdom in peace, that he will grant her good store of canoes to proceed along his river ways, and that he will proclaim among his people that the Queen of the Silver Sunrise is his friend."

"These messages I had designed to send by the first of Unyah's subjects who fell into my power and so I sent my servants to lay in wait and capture a man or woman of the Maga-Miga; but it is willed by fate that the monarchs should meet face to face and I am glad, most ancient and famous King, that it is so."

The old man's face exhibited many varying emotions as these amiable sentiments were conveyed to him piecemeal by the assistance of two interpreters. At the end of the speech he rose, bowed twice, then, taking a crimson feather from his wild bonnet, presented it to Bessie. She likewise bowed and placed the feather in a big white Panama hat which she usually wore.

Then Unyah spoke again:

"The Queen of the Silver Sunrise is wiser than her years and Unyah, who has lived through a hundred rains and seen more new moons than there are hairs in his head, will make a friendship and a compact and will lend the queen ten great canoes and will bestow upon her people twenty days' rations of millet and plantain; and Unyah will send gifts to the white queen; for though his head is red with blood and he has walked in blood to his knees, yet he has no love for war, but would rather be a man of peace and see no spear shaken upon his coming and no war cry lifted against his warriors."

Then the Mapora soldier who acted as interpreter had something to say on his own account, and he implored Winstone to permit him and his friends to convey the defenseless Unyah to Kanatto. He explained that the white queen could not by any possibility be the friend of both monarchs, and he swore by all the oaths he knew that once of the friends of Kanatto were well into the territory of his rival they would surely be surrounded, betrayed and destroyed. To trust Unyah was to trust a hyena. Not to destroy him now or give him to his hungry enemy was to release the snake under the heel, to pardon the stinging wasp, to rescue the drowning beast of prey.

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But Lord Winstone naturally felt disposed to listen to these suggestions, and King Unyah, being now quite satisfied of his safety, offered of his own free will to stay as the guest of the travelers until his messenger could reach his capital, situated some miles up the river, and bring therefrom the necessary canoes and stores. The difficulty centered with the Mapora aborigines, for Kanatto's people were already clamoring to depart, and if one escaped and got inland half a day's march, news of Unyah's capture would reach his rival and a rapid raid result. The King himself speedily showed means of escape from this difficulty.

"Cross to my side of the Ruaha and you are safe," he said. "A mile below here the stream narrows somewhat, and it may be possible to get a few canoes, which will suffice to take your party to the other side. Do this to-morrow; but meanwhile I will send my servant in his canoe to give him a day's start of the Mapora, and he will rejoin us in force before they can do us any hurt. Besides they have no canoes, and if they attempt to reach us your thunder medicine will pour their blood upon the river. With my men shall come one from the far coast and who is skilled in Swahili; then may we speak without need of this good and stoney warior, servant of Kanatto."

But the translator only scowled as he repeated these words, and then the conference terminated for the time being. The surviving boatman of the King's canoe was soon making the best of his way home up stream, while as for the Mapora, it became evident very speedily that if they were not released they would raise a war cry, on the chance of being heard by the fellow tribesmen far away. A Zanzibari was stationed with a loaded gun at the ear of each, and their position explained to them by Meldrum.

"Let one of you but lift up your voice so that it can be heard fifty yards distant and I will slay you to the man," he said. "To-morrow at midday you will be released—until then you are my prisoners—through your own fault. You shall have your promised gifts to-morrow if you obey me; but disobey and you will perish instantly."

Throughout that night a sharp lookout was kept, and Winstone, Meldrum and Fain alternately watched with the Zanzibari and Soufanese. Big Dan Hook was busy with the building of a big raft, and at this season the wind and the white clouds labored by the light of a huge fire.

Before this, however, Mr. Hook, at his own desire and as an honor to King Unyah, had been told off to wait upon that monarch. A special feasthouse was raised against the cliff and a strip of scarlet cloth wound round the pillars of it. Blankets were spread, a tin of soup opened and a bale of cloth and a big looking glass bestowed upon the King. He conducted himself with courtesy, but did not attempt to hide his gratification when the "war lord" as he was called, calling Hook was appointed to be his servant. Dan hustled about the monarch, spoke to him with absolute earnestness and delighted Unyah, who thought his only less great guest since the arrival of the white queen herself.

"You were my master this morning, you are my servant now," he said to Dan, but the sailor of course understood nothing.

"Good old Onon," said Hook. "You'd frighten the crown to rights, you would."

The King beamed, assuming a contented air.

"You a very great man with much wealth in your country, I suppose," suggested Unyah.

"I'm a man of no talk like a broody hen an' a water snake, but I'll tell you myself 'e had no better language than that there. 'T would shake a parcel to speak your damn lingo, beggin' pardon for the fery word."

"You shall be a war lord with the Maga-Miga, if you will. You are a man of war, and not afraid of spears, and my

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