

**An African Romance**

**By**

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## NOTES

It may interest readers of this story to know that its author believes it to have a certain foundation in fact.

It was said about five-and-twenty or thirty years ago that an adventurous trader, hearing from some natives in the territory that lies at the back of Quilimane, the legend of a great treasure buried in or about the sixteenth century by a party of Portuguese who were afterwards massacred, as a last resource attempted its discovery by the help of a mesmerist. According to this history the child who was used as a subject in the experiment, when in a state of trance, detailed the adventures and death of the unhappy Portuguese men and women, two of whom leapt from the point of a high rock into the Zambesi. Although he knew no tongue but English, this clairvoyant child is declared to have repeated in Portuguese the prayers these unfortunates offered up, and even to have sung the very hymns they sang. Moreover, with much other detail, he described the burial of the great treasure and its exact situation so accurately that the white man and the mesmerist were able to dig for and find the place where it had been--for the bags were gone, swept out by the floods of the river.

Some gold coins remained, however, one of them a ducat of Aloysius Mocenigo, Doge of Venice. Afterwards the boy was again thrown into

a trance (in all he was mesmerized eight times), and revealed where the sacks still lay; but before the white trader could renew his search for them, the party was hunted out of the country by natives whose superstitious fears were aroused, barely escaping with their lives.

It should be added that, as in the following tale, the chief who was ruling there when the tragedy happened, declared the place to be sacred, and that if it were entered evil would befall his tribe. Thus it came about that for generations it was never violated, until at length his descendants were driven farther from the river by war, and from one of them the white man heard the legend.