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"The leopard leaped high into the air, then fell heavily to the ground."

KEVATT
NELSON

The Man Who Never Came Back

By PEARL NORTON SWET

*A shuddery story of a weird horror in the heart of the
Black Continent*

WE WALKED, prosaically enough, in a city park zoo, Bannister and I. It was autumn, golden, opulent. We were content in friendship, and London seemed a good and peaceful place.

Passing the leopard cages, Bannister looked quickly away from the sleek and yawning cats and swore emphatically in a voice that shook with a surprising emotion.

"—— ——— their spotted hides! I hate the damned beasts! Come, let's get away from the sight of them."

"Why?" I asked curiously and somewhat surprized at this show of feeling in the suavely handsome Bannister. Bannister was, and is, the vice-president of the British West Coast Products Company; learned the business "from the ground up," as the saying is. He was too valuable a man to waste in equatorial Africa. The company has him in London, where he has become a sedate husband and father, living in an equally sedate suburb.

What had *he* to do with leopards? So I asked again, "Why? What have you against leopards, anyway?"

We found a green bench far from the leopards' cages and Bannister told me, through that golden afternoon, the story of Herbie Tillson. Flirtatious nursemaids trundled their infant charges past our bench; a beggar stopped and whined for money; a gray squirrel, pertly curious and unafraid, came to squat beside us, hopeful of food.

These things went on about us, but while Bannister talked, I scarcely realized that we sat in a park with evidences of civilization thick about us. And there was sometimes sadness and sometimes bitterness in Bannister's voice as he told me about Herbie Tillson.

WHEN Herbie Tillson arrived on a cargo-boat at Pambia on the West Coast of equatorial Africa, he looked exactly what he was—a colorless, little, twenty-four-year-old London clerk who had been seasick all the way out from England.

Herbie Tillson was in that region so aptly called "the white man's graveyard," because, like a good many other clerks in musty London offices, he wanted a colorful and virile life. He happened to have

some business connections that finally landed him in the five-room frame bungalow at Pambia that was the West Coast Products Company's stronghold on the Guinea coast. And he thought Pambia must be colorful and virile.

There were living-quarters and offices and two men besides Bannister—Vierling and the red-headed Irishman, O'Donnel. The three who greeted Herbie at Pambia had slightly different views about Pambia, having been there a bit longer than they cared to be.

And then along came Herbie Tillson with his deprecatory manner and pale blond appearance—Herbie Tillson who thought that Pambia on the West Coast of Africa would give him color and glamor to dress up his life of drabness. So Bannister and the two others thought perhaps they had better tell Herbie right away that there was no such thing as colorful glamor in Pambia.

They thought they had better tell him that there were, though, plenty of dirty, sneaking Bendjabis, so steeped in superstition as to be afraid of their own shadows; that Pambia had tremendous, deluging rains that later, under terrific sun, made the land steam and give off a nauseating odor of decay. They would have liked to tell Herbie Tillson that the relentless ocean that was the foreground of this picture could, on an unusually hot day, take on a brassy look that made men dizzy and that the background of the Great Swabi forest harbored fearful beasts and still more fearful men in the eternal twilight of its swollen jungle.

But not one of the three could find it in his heart to tell Herbie any of these things. They reasoned that he'd learn it soon enough. The West Coast Products Company paid well, but there always came a time in the life of every Englishman who had ever come to Pambia, when he would quite willingly have given an

arm or a leg or even an eye for the opportunity of whiffing the damp, cool air of a London street, say on an autumn evening with the lights of the *Yorkshire Evening Post* glimmering down Fleet Street and the busses trundling by and the electric signs flashing.

That was the state to which they all had been reduced after a year or so in Pambia, that lay along a little river bank against which the jungle pushed. Bannister and Vierling and O'Donnel could see no reason why Herbie Tillson wouldn't, in time, be drooping about the lovely lime-juice signs in Picadilly and yearning for a sight of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street.

Herbie Tillson put on a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles and went to work with an apparent zest that made the other three stick their tongues in their cheeks knowingly. They thought Herbie looked a good deal like a thin, serious insect in those big spectacles; razzed him a bit about them in a good-natured way.

"Well, you see, I have to wear glasses—in the daytime," explained Herbie. "In the dark I don't need 'em."

"D'ye mean to say you can see in the dark better than in the light?" asked O'Donnel.

"Just that," replied Herbie. "You know, my eyes are a bit queer."

He took off his spectacles and turned to O'Donnel, and it was then that O'Donnel noticed for the first time that the pupils of Herbie Tillson's eyes were not round. They were elliptical, narrowing to slits in the daylight and giving out a hint of phosphorescence that was all but dimmed at that afternoon hour.

"So," said Herbie, putting on his spectacles again, "you see I really need the glasses, funny as they are, if I am to see well in the daylight."

"But you can see well at night, eh?" persisted the Irishman, curiously.

"Oh, quite." Herbie bent over his ledger, and as far as he was concerned the conversation was closed.

THE three at Pambia had been so long without stimulus, comic or otherwise, that the coming of Herbie Tillson gave them something to talk about.

"I'm beginning to think the spalpeen's a walkin' curiosity shop," said O'Donnel one morning, pausing in his work. "I got something to tell you, and since he's not here right now, I'll tell it."

He leaned forward in his chair toward Bannister's desk, and his face was comically mysterious. "The lad's not content with eat's eyes—he must have six toes on the foot of him—the left foot. I saw it with my own eyes when we swam two mornings ago."

As time went on and it became autumn, Pambia daily expected the rains and dragged to cover its few possessions. And at about that time Herbie Tillson began to take his solitary walks after dinner. He would leave the others playing a three-handed card game, or reading month-old copies of the *London Post*, and Herbie would go for a solitary walk, always toward the green, miasmatic twilight that was the jungle.

They warned him. He smiled at them a shade pityingly. "Why, I have no fear of the jungle. I can't just explain, but I feel often that I should be very much at home in the jungle. But there's something—I don't know—no doubt you think me a bit dotty."

They assured him with admirable candor that they did think so. But he didn't mind. He took his walks just the same.

And then the rains came, and there were no more walks for Herbie Tillson. Instead, while the rain fell monotonously and drummed on the roof like a giant bumble-bee, Herbie spent his evenings

hunched over books, which it soon became clear he wasn't reading.

When the Bendjabis, wet and miserable and coughing, came to beg quinine from Bannister, Herbie Tillson astonished them by trying to make friends. He persisted till a pot-bellied youth named Molu, but lately made house-boy at the bungalow, was won to a shy, animal-like friendship. One other, also, Herbie came to know—a black, lowering fellow, not of the Bendjabis, but said to come from the dread M'Banos who lived in the Great Swabi forest.

The M'Bano was in exile from his own people and tolerated by the Bendjabis only through fear and superstitious dread of a M'Bano's *gri-gri*, or spell. The sign language and jabberings of Herbie and the M'Bano filled Vierling and O'Donnel with a comical disgust.

"What does he want to chum up with a dirty, black M'Bano for? Why doesn't he spend the wet season readin' *Punch* or improvin' his mind some way?"

But Bannister saw more than they. He thought he saw in Herbie Tillson a loneliness so infinite that mere civilized talk with his own kind could not satisfy it. He felt, in a strange, repelling flash of knowledge, that Herbie Tillson was not one of them; that his puny personality held something which would be difficult for them to understand. So Bannister did not ridicule Herbie, but he watched him silently, as Herbie drank in the tales that Molu and the black M'Bano so laboriously told him.

AS SOON as the rains were over and the land lay lushly green and panting under hot suns, Herbie began his jungle prowlings again. He went sometimes alone, and twice he went with the exiled M'Bano.

He was gone one night till after ten, so that the others were on the point of setting

out to find him. But as they talked of it, Herbie returned. He came into the hall noiselessly out of the dark and stepped just inside the room where the others sat.

Herbie stood blinking at them, and they noted that he was not wearing his spectacles. His clothes were soiled with soft earth; his fair hair was wildly tousled. He was breathing hard, his mouth slightly opened, showing his strong, white teeth.

"Heavens, man! Where have you been?" They all three rose from their chairs and stared at Herbie.

For answer he turned those strange eyes of his full upon them in a sort of unseeing glare and brushed his chin sidewise in a queer manner against his left shoulder. His teeth bared themselves still more in something that was not quite a laugh and not quite a snarl. And abruptly turning, he re-entered the little hall and strode into his room, slamming the door.

"Whew!" exclaimed O'Donnel.

"Just that," said Vierling and raised his eyebrows. "You don't think our little Herbie has been drinking from the Bendjabi gourds?"

"No," said Bannister, shortly. "No. It's not drink. I—I've seen something like this once before. What a damned country this West Coast is, anyway!"

The other two were reticent for once; seemed to sense that Bannister would tolerate no curious questions. He stood at the door, looking into the hallway, and then he said without turning, "Don't say anything to Herbie, will you? I think it best not to speak of it. Good-night."

Bannister's room was next to Herbie's, and before he entered his own room, Bannister paused a second, as if listening. Then he went into his own room and softly closed the door.

HERBIE TILLSON was up early the next morning and in the office long before the others had begun work. He

had not come in for breakfast. Bannister entered the office quietly and went up to Herbie as he stood before a large calendar on the wall. With a thick blue pencil Herbie was marking a circle about a date.

He did not notice Bannister, till Bannister laid a hand on his thin shoulder. "Sorry you don't feel so good, old fellow. Better go in now and let Molu bring you a bite of breakfast."

But Herbie shook his head. "No, thanks. I'm quite all right." It was apparent that he wanted to be let alone.

Bannister's sharp eyes found opportunity to glance at the marked date on the big calendar. It was the twenty-fourth, the date of the full moon. When Bannister saw that, he looked at Herbie very hard and shut his mouth tightly to a thin line. For Bannister had been in the West Coast country for some time, and he knew a thing or two about it. But he kept his thoughts to himself.

Things went along in a sort of strained way at the offices of the West Coast Products Company, what with Herbie going about like a half-sick, little shadow and Bannister watching him with eyes that seemed to brood.

Vierling and O'Donnel were inclined to think that the long, dreary season of rains had brought an acute melancholy to Herbie Tillson. They knew, well enough, that was the usual reaction of the Britisher to Pambia's rains.

One evening they said as much to Bannister. It was terribly, suffocatingly hot. The day had been a trying one; the evening was buzzing with myriad insects. The three men sat indoors behind the protecting screens and smoked and talked, while each wondered how Herbie Tillson could endure the pest-ridden heat and stench of a jungle night.

For Herbie had disappeared, soon after dinner, hatless, shirtless, as nonchalant

as if bound for a walk in Hyde Park. He had gone straight across the river ford and at the steamy edge of greenness on the other side, Vierling had thought Herbie was joined by the M'Bano. He was not sure, but a shadow had stood at the water's edge and Herbie had joined it and had gone on with it.

"That black devil of a M'Bano has been hanging around here too much lately," said O'Donnel. "Pretends he needs medicines, but he's strong as an ox. D'ye know, some say his father was a leopard-man in the Swabi? Anyway the M'Banos are all rotten. Herbie's a fool to listen to his yarns."

"Yes. And he and Molu always jabbering—all that witch-doctor stuff. Herbie dotes on it. I think the rains have made him dotty." Vierling looked at Bannister, questioningly. "Don't you think so?"

"No, the wet season has nothing to do with the way Herbie's acting," said Bannister, a bit diffidently, as if he hated to talk about Herbie. "But—well, it's a case of the usual Swabi forest stuff—damnable place it is."

"Oh, sure," replied O'Donnel. "That rot they tell you would drive anybody out of his head. Herbie ought to have more sense than——"

At that moment they heard some one come into the hall. Soft footsteps, then a shuffling noise, and outside the door heavy, rasping breathing. Then louder footsteps past their door and the slam of Herbie's door followed by the grate of the lock.

The three men sat absolutely silent. Then Bannister got up and went outside. They heard him exclaim under his breath, and then he came back to the room and motioned for them to join him.

On the vine-shadowed veranda, Bannister turned his flashlight downward.

"Look," he said, in a low tone, and they saw dark tracks clearly marked on the dry boards. They were wet tracks, streaked with soft earth. A leaf lay near the door, no doubt brought in with the freshly made tracks.

O'Donnel bent over the imprints on the veranda. He straightened suddenly, as if struck, and as he always did in excitement, lapsed into the phrases of his religion.

"Mother Mary and the saints preserve us! It's—it's leopard spoor!"

"They're here—and here—and here," said Bannister, still in that guarded tone. "They go from the veranda into the hall. That fool Molu left this screen-door ajar tonight. And, look," he stooped to pick up the leaf that lay on the floor. "This is a leaf from a baobab tree. . . . The baobab tree grows only far in the jungle, in leopard country."

He motioned silently and they followed him into the hall. The flashlight showed plainly the progress of a leopard's padded feet to about the middle of the hall. At that point there was a blur of damp earth stains, and from there on to Herbie Tillson's door the board floor showed the print of a man's wet and muddy shoes—small, neatly fashioned shoes—Herbie Tillson's shoes.

O'Donnel was looking very wild, indeed, as the three went back to the room where they had sat while Herbie went down the hall to his room.

"You can't mean that the beast ran him right here into the middle of his own hall?" he stuttered, lighting a cigarette.

"No, I don't think anything of the sort," replied Bannister, calmly. "After all I know of this West Coast country and all I know of the Swabi forest and those devilish M'Banos, what I'm thinking can be expressed in one word. . . .

You probably know what I mean, both of you."

Almost under his breath Vierling said the word, said it fearfully, unbelievably.

"Lycanthropy! . . . You mean to say it *can* happen? Men *can* change into—into animal form? Surely, Bannister, you're wrought up; you're just a bundle of nerves over this thing. You can't believe any such rot."

"Run along!" scoffed O'Donnel. "Leave that to the natives. Perhaps a dirty M'Bano could change his black body into a beast—but Herbie Tillson is an Englishman, even if he is a deuced queer one."

And Vierling had more to say. "Come now, old fellow. Don't be silly. You're giving us a bit of Africanized Kipling, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not," Bannister almost snapped at him. "Mr. Kipling never dreamed of anything as horrible as these leopard-men out in the Swabi. I've been in this hole three years. It's an evil place, I tell you. There *are* leopard-men out there in the Swabi, and the M'Banos swear that their leaders are humansturned beast by a devilish alchemy which only one man in a thousand may possess."

He strode to the window and raised the blind to the top. He faced the others seriously. "Out there on that vine-shaded veranda we didn't notice, but, you see—it's the full of the moon . . . leopard time and the only time this hideous thing can take place, fully, completely, so that the man is lost and only the beast remains. Believe me, I'm older at this West Coast game than you are. . . . I know."

"I wonder," said Vierling, slowly. "I wonder just why Herbie Tillson came out here."

"Because he couldn't help himself, Vierling. He came out here to this hell because he *had* to come—it was in his

soul." Bannister paused a second and then said, softly, "He has the eyes of a cat."

"Cats! Leopards! You make me positively sick," said O'Donnel, with a wry face.

Bannister rubbed his forehead with his left palm and looked all at once very tired. "You know, I've had this thing on my mind, night and day, ever since I saw Herbie marking the calendar at the date of the full moon. And—when he turned about and looked at me that morning, I'm sure his eyes had changed and were the eyes of a leopard—not cat's eyes, but leopard eyes."

"Next boat is the *Astoria* with Captain Hines in command," said Vierling. Vierling was a very good man at the West Coast Products Company. He knew his work. A bit stolid, perhaps, but all the better for that particular place and job.

"All right," Bannister said, thoughtfully. "When the *Astoria* sails from Pambia, Herbie Tillson will be on board."

"We'll shanghai the young fool," said O'Donnel, emphatically.

"Well, Herbie Tillson will be on board," repeated Bannister. And later Bannister was to remember those words and feel a sadness over them.

IF VIERLING and O'Donnel had been still skeptical of Bannister's wild surmises, they admitted the next morning that something sinister was at work about Pambia.

The young wife of the house-boy, Molu, was found dead, horribly mutilated, at the river's edge. Molu admitted that she had gone to the edge of the green forest to fetch water. She had gone there at night, too, and ordinarily no one would have thought of venturing near the edge of that noisome place, that had, so the

natives claimed, an odor of death at the full of the moon.

But the young wife of Molu had laughed and had ventured to go for water, because the white brilliance of the moon made things light as day and she had thought to fill her jug and return quickly. But she had not returned. The jug of trickling water lay overturned beside her torn body when they found her.

Examining the small dark body the next morning, Bannister said to O'Donnel. "As I thought. The carotid artery is severed. It's a leopard killing."

The whimpering Molu stood near by. He caught at the English words which he understood, and he ceased his whimpering. He straightened, stood tense and listening for a moment, his eyes straining and focussed on the damp, green jungle across the little river. Molu raised one arm high and sailed his necklace of leopard teeth—teeth of his enemy—as far as it would go across the water toward the jungle. It was his gesture of vengeance. Then he turned and went back to his work in the bungalow.

WHEN Bannister and men went back to their work that morning, there was no Herbie perched on his high stool checking cargo-lists.

"He wasn't in to breakfast, was he?" Bannister asked the question quite mechanically. They knew Herbie hadn't been in to breakfast. They hadn't seen him since six o'clock of the evening before.

As one man, the three went down the hall toward Herbie's door and Bannister rapped. There was no response, and so they opened the door and entered.

The bare little room was in prim order. On a wall hung a picture cut from a magazine—a picture of the English royal family. On a table beside the bed was a book and a cheap easel photograph of a girl. Bannister picked it up and looked

at it a long time. The girl was calm-eyed, smooth-haired, and across the picture's base was scrawled, "Lovingly, Rosemary."

"Fancy him with a girl named Rosemary," murmured O'Donnel. "And he never once told us about her."

And then O'Donnel looked at the book's title. It was *The Lays of Ancient Rome*. He laid it down and shook his head. "You must be all wrong, Bannister. Herbie's not—not a case for a witch-doctor."

But Bannister, standing beside the bed which had not been slept in, was gazing out of Herbie's window. The window faced the river and the forest and Bannister seemed to be trying to see far into its steamy greenness.

A feeling of oppression lay over the three men as they tried to go on with their work that day—an oppression amounting almost to a physical weight which bore down upon them in waves of vertigo.

Twenty-four hours later Herbie Tillson had not returned, and Bannister said after dinner, "This can't go on. We'll all be dotty in no time at all. What's the matter with us, anyway? Are *we* afraid of the Swabi, too? Let's go—now—while there is bright moonlight to help us—let's go and find Herbie Tillson."

"We'll go, of course," they told him. And Vierling said, "Better leave a letter here—explaining where we've gone—in case——"

"Yes—in case," said Bannister, grimly.

They took rifles and sharp knives. The knives would help them cut through the tangle of vegetation, and no white man goes without a rifle in the West Coast country.

They put certain drugs and lotions in their kit, with food and drink. And the three set out across the river, under a brilliant moon, to look for Herbie Tillson in the Great Swabi. As they prepared

to go, they were thinking of Herbie Tillson as a little London clerk who had come to know the jungle too well. They did not think of him as a monster, a biological freak, a creature of horror. They were remembering the picture of the royal family which Herbie had put upon his wall. They were remembering the girl named Rosemary, and all the decent things that Herbie Tillson stood for came to his aid in their thoughts of him.

THEY went in darkness some of the time, a darkness that was damply pungent and swarming with insects, shut in by the curtain of the forest. And part of the time they cut their path through jungle ways that were fretted with moonlight.

After an hour's going they came to the edge of a moonlit clearing where the lush grass was bent low. The place was still, and there lay over it a smell, as of hot animal bodies—the smell of the jungle.

The staring moon blazed down on them in such a mad, white fury of light that Bannister fleetingly and irrelevantly wondered why the western world thought moonlight romantically lovely. There was nothing lovely and nothing romantic about this moonlight in the odorous jungle. This moonlight did not move men to amorous thoughts; rather it chilled their marrows in the way that any insane thing might do.

"Well, it's been a long pull and we've seen nothing but a lot of bugs," said Vierling, mopping his brow under the mesh of protecting netting.

"And are we to stop here for long? I don't like the looks—nor the smell—of this particular spot." O'Donnel was a bit peevish.

Bannister spoke in a low voice. "Keep quiet. That's leopard smell. I know it. Come, but don't speak."

(Please turn to page 142)

The Man Who Never Came Back

(Continued from page 32.)

He motioned and they followed him to a tall clump of bushes and at his direction huddled down behind them.

It seemed an hour that they lay uncomfortably hunched behind the bushes, fearful of reptiles when the grass behind them rustled; dreading the animal eyes that must stare at them from hidden places. Yet it was but a few moments actually, before there came to their straining ears the sound of a stealthy approach from the jungle across the clearing.

A baobab tree cast deep shadow on a strip of flattened, wiry grass and across this shadow there slowly moved into their vision a grotesquely inhuman group.

Men? Leopards? They were both—the terror-inspiring leopard-men of which the Bendjabis and the exiled M'Bano had told Herbie Tillson so many tales of horror. The creatures groveled, bellies to the grass. They went on all fours with a rippling leopard gait. They snarled among themselves. Subhuman, revolting, the lowest thing in the horror-ridden country of the jungle.

The three men in the shadows felt a dizzy nausea as they watched breathlessly. As the pack milled about, beating the long grass still flatter to the ground, there came a sudden, throaty snarl and into the clearing glided a huge leopard, flat head thrust forward, eyes gleaming, fangs showing. His powerful tail lashed slowly back and forth as he surveyed the groveling leopard-men who lay whimpering, bellies to the ground.

The leopard lifted its tawny head and gave out the eery, blood-thirsty cry of the hunting-leopard. The leopard-men, in their hideous obsession, threw back their heads to answer, but on the cry of the king-leopard there came a resounding

shot from behind the very bushes where Bannister and his men lay hidden.

Three things happened then, at the same time. The leopard-men ran screaming shrilly from the clearing, leaping and tearing at one another in their haste, as they disappeared into the jungle. The king-leopard leaped high into the air, spun about twitching and lashing his tail, then fell heavily to the ground, where he lay sprawled and still. At the same time, directly behind Bannister, there sprang a lithe, black figure, brandishing a rifle.

It was Molu. He bent over the dead leopard and pointed to a crimson hole behind the left ear.

"Him gone now. No more catch wife of Bendjabi." His voice was triumphant; his white teeth shone in a smile of satisfied revenge.

Bannister spoke to him sternly. "You followed us, Molu, to kill the leopard?"

"Oh, yes. I kill him," repeated Molu, only half understanding in his excitement. He peered at Bannister sidewise in a cunning, intent way. "Him no leopard for sure; *him man*; him lead leopard-men."

"My God! What is he saying?" exclaimed Vierling.

"You heard him," said Bannister, quietly. "Let me talk with him."

To Molu he said, "You're talking crazy, Molu. Your talk—no good. You don't know."

"Yes, I know," was Molu's stubborn reply. "I show you." He bent and lifted the left foot of the leopard and with a black finger he counted the toes of the animal. "One-two-three-four-five-six." Molu had been taught to count soon after he had come to the bungalow

to work, and he was very proud of the accomplishment. He counted the leopard's toes again.

Dropping the heavy foot, he said, as though closing the incident: "You see. Him white man—from Pambia—white man with six toes, too. Molu give him breakfast one time and he wear no shoes. I *know*."

The childish mind of the black man had brought horror to the three who listened to his explanation. It *was* childish, they tried to reason. It *was* an impossible and hideous thing Molu was telling them.

"My God, let's go—let's get away from this place," cried O'Donnel, with a long, shuddering breath. He crossed himself, muttering a prayer.

"Yes," said Vierling. "Let's get out of this cursed forest."

"Leopard-men come, take him away all right," said Molu with cheerful nonchalance, indicating the sprawled beast.

Bannister could not find words that he could speak. His thoughts were formless ones; chaotic; vague. He felt, too, a growing desire to hurry back to Pambia and see—he scarcely admitted to himself what he expected to see.

So with Molu trotting along beside them, they went back in a silence that was heavy with dread thoughts. They hurried, stumbling, breathing hard through the odorous jungle, fighting swarms of insects.

And they came to Pambia across the river at an hour when the mad moon's brilliance was at its height, the sands, the sea, the buildings of the West Coast Products Company all white and shining in its unreal light.

They bade Molu to keep silence and they all went into the hall of the bungalow and stood at Herbie Tillson's door.

BANNISTER was the one who quietly opened the door and looked into the little room. He put a hand to his eyes, then, in a dizzy way, as he spoke.

"It is as Molu said and—Herbie has come back."

Very quietly with throats that contracted painfully and with eyes that were filled with pity, they came and stood beside the bed. Herbie Tillson lay there, very white and very still. He was dead; they saw that at once—a crimson hole neatly drilled behind the left ear. He did not look at peace, for in the widely open eyes was something so unspeakably horrible that they could not look upon his face.

Molu, alone, was not moved to pity. Molu looked at the body of Herbie Tillson with hard, brilliant, black eyes.

"No, him no come back," he stated, baldly.

The three men turned to him frowningly. Molu enjoyed the attention. "No," he explained, complacently. "Him no come back. White man think so, but black man know different." He pointed dramatically to the bare feet of Herbie Tillson, feet wet and stained with jungle earth, and shudderingly Bannister saw the foot with the six toes.

Molu went on in his soft voice, "Bendjabi know. Him in the great Swabi for always. *He never come back.*"

THE *Astoria* came to Pambia. She took on the bales and barrels and boxes of the West Coast Products Company and left more bales and barrels and boxes when she sailed. And when the *Astoria* sailed, she took Herbie Tillson back to England, just as Bannister had said she would. For in the captain's vault was a small urn, chaste in shape and color, and containing all that remained of the man who never came back.