

**A GODDESS OF  
AFRICA: A STORY OF  
THE GOLDEN FLEECE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649040209

A Goddess of Africa: A Story of the Golden Fleece by George Rathborne

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**GEORGE RATHBORNE**

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# A GODDESS OF AFRICA

*A STORY OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE*

BY

ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE

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"THE GIRL FROM HONG-KONG"

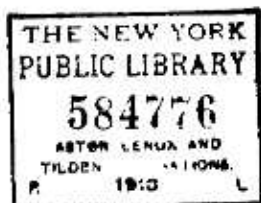


NEW YORK  
1912

THE HOBART COMPANY

NEW YORK CITY

27



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ROY WEN  
CLERK  
YRABLU



# A GODDESS OF AFRICA.

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## BOOK I.

### THE ARGONAUTS OF '96.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### FUGITIVES OF THE ZAMBEZI

It was in June, 1896.

South Africa was in a state of eruption, and grave questions presented themselves for solution. Jameson had made his historic ride over the border in response to the appeal of the Uitlanders in Johannesburg, to meet his Waterloo at the hands of bluff Oom Paul and his horde of Boers; while further north the hollow roll of the tom-tom or war-drum filled the land of the fierce Matabele.

Buluwayo had undergone a siege, and the renegade Zulus were only beaten back after a most desperate series of encounters in which the losses had been heavy on both sides.

It was indeed a period fraught with tremendous issues to the daring Anglo-Saxon settlers of South Africa. History was being made every-day. As in America thirty, fifty, an hundred years ago, so it is in this new wonderland of to-day—step by step the

border has been pushed forward, the country wrested from savage ignorance and superstition and made to bloom like the rose.

Perhaps half a century hence a South African Chicago with a million or two inhabitants may rear its mercantile palaces where to-day the horde of *impis* gather in their *kraals* to plot the destruction of their white enemies. It is fate.

Everywhere the torch of civilization has repelled the darkness of ignorance. Africa waited long and patiently, but the hour of her emancipation has arrived. The love of gold is the loadstone that has drawn tens of thousands to this end of the earth, just as it sent the Spaniards under Cortez to Mexico and Pizarro into Peru, opening up new worlds to be conquered.

How long would California have remained undeveloped had it not been for the wonderful discovery of her golden deposits that created a mad stampede from all quarters of the globe in that direction?

It was in this month of June, never to be forgotten by those pioneers of South African civilization, that the series of remarkable events which it is our pleasure to string together in the form of a romance, took place.

The day was just at its close when two rather sorry looking individuals staggered under the shelter of a giant tree in the heart of the wilderness far to the north of the Matoppo hills, and with their numerous bundles, dropped to the ground, evidently almost utterly exhausted.

There was that about the taller and more robust to indicate the American, while his companion's voice and manner of speech proclaimed him a son of fair France.

*Professor Jules Verdant* had, in his ardent desire to

discover new wonders that would send his name ringing down the ages, undertaken many Quixotic expeditions, from spending two years on the mighty, fever-haunted Amazon to dangerous pilgrimages to Fez, to old Khartoum, and Ashantee; but when he undertook to pierce the heart of Africa in company with a bold young American, in the hope of meeting the tribes of dwarfs, spoken of by other travelers, and possibly solving Darwin's great theory, he realized that it was destined to be the most serious expedition of his life.

His companion, Rex Hastings had been influenced by other motives than those connected with science, and what the nature of the mission might be that urged him to undertake such tremendous hazards will in due course of time be made manifest.

They had started in on the East Coast, just south of the Zanzibar country ruled by the Sultan Hamed, some months before with a retinue of many porters, and a guard of fighting men capable of doing considerable damage when armed with modern appliances for conducting the art of war.

Hence, their present wretched condition would indicate that they must have been engaged in numerous serious battles. Ill fortune seemed to have haunted them; men in whom they trusted deserted from the expedition; others were slain, or fell into the hands of the hostile negro tribes through whose country they were compelled to pass.

Thus their numbers had dwindled, but with undaunted courage they refused to turn back. Finally overwhelming disasters had come upon them, just when Hastings believed the tremendous work he had set himself was about to be carried out, and after a series of