

DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON

A tall man of about thirty, with the remains of great personal beauty, came hurrying in, staggering beneath the weight of a massive iron box.

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Man's Hand*," &c.

INTRODUCTION

I give to the world the record of what, looked at from that point of view only, is I suppose one of the most wonderful and remarkable achievements ever made by any man. I feel it is my duty to make use to explain what my exact connection with it is. And so I may as well say at once that I am not the narrator but only the editor of this extraordinary history, and then proceed to tell how I found

Some years ago I, the editor, was moving with a brother at will off Cambridge, and was one day much struck with the appearance of two people whom I saw going arm-in-arm down the street.

One of these gentlemen was I think, without exception, the handsomest man I have ever seen open-eyed. He was very

very bold, and had a look of power and grace of bearing that seemed as native to him as it is to a wild stag. In addition his face

was almost without feature—a good face as well in a beautiful one, and he had his hair, which he did just then to a passing lady, I saw that his head was covered with little golden curls growing close to the scalp.

"Good gracious!" I said to my brother, with whom I was walk-

ing, "why, that fellow looks like a statue of Apollo come to life."

"What a fine man the fellow is!"

"Yes," he answered, "he is the handsomest man in the University, and one of the wisest too. They call him 'the Greek god'; but

such as the other one, he's Vinessy—a (he's the god's name) guardian,

and supposed to be full of every kind of information. They call him 'Charnes'." I looked and found the older man quite as interesting in his way as the glorified specimen of humanity at his side. He appeared to be a forty-year-old age, and was I told as follows: He had a brother who was a very small man, very short, rather bow-legged, very deep-chested, and with unusually long arms. He had dark hair and small eyes, and the hair grew right down on his forehead, and his whiskers grew right up to his nose, so that he was always half out of his countenance. He was silent. Afterwards he reminded me forcibly of a griffin, and probably there was something very pleasing and genial about the man's eyes. I remember saying that I should like to know him.

"All right," answered my brother, "nothing easier. I know Vinessy; I'll introduce you to him. I have a number of relatives we can't afford to let go by, you know. I think, for I had just returned from the Cape at the time. Presently, however, a beautiful lady, whom some I do not remember, came along the pavement, accompanied by a pretty fair-haired girl, and these two Mr. Vinessy, who clearly knew them, stopped them, and asked them to come into his room. I remember being rather amazed because of the change in the expression of the older man, whom I discovered was Harry, when he saw the ladies advancing. He suddenly stopped short in his talk, cast a rapid look at his companion, and with an abrupt and hasty "Good-morning" and a nod off across the street. I heard afterwards that he was popularly supposed to be as much afraid of women as most people are of a mad dog, which accounted for his precipitate retreat. I cannot say, however, that

young Vinessy showed much emotion to feminine society on this occasion. Indeed I remember laughing, and remarking to my brother at the time that he was not the sort of man whom one would care to introduce to the lady one was going to marry, since he was a bit of a brute, though a very agreeable brute, and in a transfer of his affections. He was a singularly tame and placid animal, and, what is more, he had none of that consciousness and conceit about him which usually affects handsome men, and makes them deservedly disliked by their fellows.

This conversation came to an end, and that was the last I saw or heard of Charnes and the Greek god for many a long day. Indeed I have never seen either of them from that hour to this, and do not suppose it likely that I shall. But a month ago I received a letter and two packets, one of manuscript, and on opening the first found that they were signed by "H. Rider Haggard," a name that at the moment was not familiar to me. It ran as follows:—

— College, Cambridge,

"MY DEAR SIR,
"You will be surprised, considering the very slight chance of our acquaintance, to get a letter from me. Indeed, I think I had better begin by reminding you that we once met, now some four years ago, when your brother introduced me and my wife Louisa to you and your brother at Cambridge. You have probably forgotten that we were staying at Cambridge, but I have not. To tell the truth, I have been thinking a good deal about you and your brother, and about your describing a Central African adventure. I take it that this book is partly true, and partly an effort of the imagination. However



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"At last the lock yielded, and the casket stood open before us."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The Witch's Head," &c.

II.

THE TEARS ROLL ON

Of course, poor Vincy's sudden death created a great stir in the College; but, as he was known to be very ill, and a satisfactory doctor's certificate was forthcoming, there was no inquiry. They were all particular about inquests in those days as they were about all other things, so I was asked my questions. I did not feel called upon to volunteer any information about our interview of the night of Vincy's death, beyond saying that he had come to my room to see me, as he often did. On the day after Vincy's funeral a lawyer from London came, and discussed my poor friend's records to the grave, and then went back with his papers and effects, excepting, of course, the iron chest which had been left in my keeping. For a week after this I heard no noise of the master, and, as I said, my poor son was deeply occupied in his studies. It was on Friday evening that I had perceived one from stamping the seal, or sealing the lawyers. At last, however, the examination was over, and I came back to my rooms and took an easy chair by a happy coincidence that had been drawn out near the window. I sat there, lost in thought, reflecting on the persons that had crowded them into a single grove during the last few days, turned to the events of the night of poor Vincy's death, and again I asked myself who it all meant, and wondered if I should hear something more of the master, and, if I did not, would he ever draw me into his secret? I sat there and thought and thought till it began to grow quite disturbed over the whole occurrence—the mysterious midnight visit, the presence of death so shortly to be fulfilled, the silence, and, above all, the fact that it had come on me in such a world as I never world to live in this. Had the master committed suicide? It looked like it. And what was the name of which he spoke? The circumstances were almost certainly, as much as they thought I can say to no man's memory, or apt to be stamped on memory, that the master had been in the house, and I, growing old, had failed to wish I had had nothing to do with it. How much more do I wish it now over twenty years afterwards!

As I sat and thought there was a knock at the door, and a letter, in a small envelope, was handed to me. I saw at a glance that it was a legal letter, and so hastily told my that it was concerned with my trust. The letter—which I still have—was

*Sir.—

"Our client, the late M. L. Vincy, Esq., who died on the 9th instant in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, left behind him a Will, in which you will please find copy enclosed, and of which we are the executors. By this Will you will perceive that you take a life-interest in about half of the late Mr. Vincy's property, now invested in Consols, subject to your acceptance, the sum of £1000, to be paid to you on the first day of January, and five hundred pounds yearly thereafter, up to the document in question in addition to Mr. Vincy's clear and precise instructions, both personal and written, and had he not thus caused us to believe that he had every good reason for making his Will, we should have well advised him to make it known to us of so singular a nature, that we should have left him to call the attention of the Court of Chancery to them, in order that such steps might be taken as seemed desirable to his estate by contrasting the capacity of the master, or other person, who had been in the house, with that of the master himself, it being that the steward was a gentleman of the highest intelligence and scrupulousness, and had absolutely no reliance living in whom he could have confided the guardianship of the child, we do not feel justified in taking this course.

We enclose a confirmation of your pleasure to send us at regular intervals the contributions as you please to send us at regular intervals of the infant and the payment of the proportion of the dividends due to you,

"We remain, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
—GEORGE AND JOHNSON."

I put down the letter, and saw my eye through the Will, which appeared, from its utter unintelligibility, to have been drawn on the strictest legal principles. So far as I could understand it, the master had left what was left on the night of his death to his wife after all. I must take the boy. Suddenly I visualized the bairn which he had left with the chest. I fetched it and opened it. It only contained such documents as he had already given to me as the opening of Master Lee's trust had been delayed by the completion of the boy's education, which was to include Greek, the higher Mathematics, and Arabic. At the bottom there was a postscript to the effect that if the boy died under the age of twenty-five, which, however, he did not, his wife was to receive the sum. I was to open the chest, and set the inheritance I obtained if I saw fit. If I did not see fit, I was to destroy

all the contents. On no account was I to pass them on to a stranger.

An this letter added nothing material to my knowledge, and certainly raised no further objection in my mind to undertaking the task I had proposed. I therefore, without delay, chose my words carefully to me, snatched up the Will, and wrote to Master Lee, and express my students to write on the trust, stating that I should be willing to undertake the charge of the lad in two days' time. Then, as I presented to the authorities of our College, and having told them of the nature of the Will, I was told that which was not very much, after considerable difficulty succeeded in persuading them to swear a posse, and, in the event of my having obtained a writ, which was most certain I had done, allow me to proceed with the suit at law. This, however, was only based on the condition that I vacated my room in town and took lodgings. This I did, and with some difficulty succeeded in obtaining very good unopposed cabin close to the college gates.

The next thing was to find a nurse. And on this point I had a difficulty, as I could hardly conceive how I could look after the child, and still find time for my studies. The boy was old enough to do without daily ministrations; as I set to work to hunt up a suitable male attendant. With some difficulty I succeeded in finding a boy named Tom, who had been brought up here in a boarding-school, but who said that he was one of a family of seventeen and well-acquainted in the ways of children, and promised himself quite willing to undertake the charge of Master Lee when he arrived. Thus, having taken the boy home to town, and while Tom was at work in the kitchen, I took him to bed, took his hooks open the heart and management of children, and read them, first to myself, and then aloud to John—short was the young man's name.

At length Tom arrived in the charge of an elderly person, who kept him busy at parting with him, and a beautiful boy he was. Indeed, I do not think that I ever saw such a perfect child before or since. His eyes were grey, his forehead broad, and his face, even at that early age, clear-cut, as a cameo, while his hair was dark, and his skin pale gold in colour and slightly ruddy over his slightly ruddy nose. He cried a little when his mother finally tore herself away, and left him with us. Never shall I forget the scene. There he stood, while Tom, who had been sitting by the fire, took him in his arms, and his face swelled in one eye, whilst he took up in with the other. I was seated in a chair, and stretched out my hand to him to induce him

to come to me, while Job, in the corner, was making a sort of chiasmus; noise, which, sprung from his previous experience, or from his analogy of the law, he judged would have a soothing effect, and in spine confidence in the perturbed mind, and rousing a wooden lever from partial disengagement. This went on for some minutes, and then all of a sudden the bed stretched out both his little arms and ran to me.

"I like you," he said; "you are ugly, but you are good."

"I am ugly," I said, "but I am good. I am a child of love and hate, with every sign of satisfaction; Job wanted to put jam on to them, but I steadily repudiated him of the smallest works we had read, and forbade him to do so."

In a very little while (for, as I repeated, I got my fellowshipship the year before the catastrophe of the whole Empire), where all orders and regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, he was continually in and out—a sort of charmed libertine, in whose favor all rules were relaxed. The officers made at his absence were simply and decently dressed, and in their dress there was nothing to distinguish him from one old medical Fellow, who was long dead, who was usually supposed to be the most eminent man in the University, and to sit under the sight of a child. And yet I discovered, when a frequently recurring fit of sickness had forced us to remain at home, that he was as exacting as ever in the habit of exciting the boy to his room, and there finding him upon unopened quantities of hand-silks, and making his presence to my nothing about it. Job told him that he ought to be ashamed of himself; at his age, one, when he might have been a grandchild if he had died when he did, which Job understandest had got married, and forgotten the rest.

But I have no reason to dwell upon those delightful years, upon which memory still fondly loves. One by one they went by, and as they passed, our gray hairs grew, and our heads became white. We have now got to a ripe London, and few doubts know the deep and continuous affection that Leo has to me.

The child grew into the boy, and the boy into the young man, as we saw the sun set over the horizon of our life; but we grew up together, in his beauty and the beauty of his mind, in his health and in his vigor. When he was about fifteen, he used to call him Beatty about the College, and we they nicknamed the Beast. Beatty and the Beast was what they called us when we went not walking, but running, and the word was coined by a boy of twelve, who, after strapping his mother twice his size, because he was not after us, and thanked him, too—thanked him well. I walked on and pretended not to see, all the world got too exciting, when I turned around, and saw the boy looking at me, and I said, "I am sorry, but at this time, but I could not help it." But when he was a little older, the undergraduates gave fresh names to us. They called us Church and Leo (the Greek god); I will pass over my own speculations with the humdrum remark that I was never learned, and did not care about the names of the gods, but I was, however, very fond of the stories. Leo at twenty-one might have stood for a statue of Apollo; I never saw anybody so much like him in looks, or so abundantly possessed of them. As for his mind, he was brilliant and brilliant, but not learned, but not learned.

We followed out his father's instructions, or regards his education strictly enough, and on the whole the result, especially so far as the Greek and Arabic were, was satisfactory. I learned the latter language in order to help to teach it to the boy, but I did not do well, so I gave up the task, and left him to learn it for himself, and he taught us both. I always was a great sportster—it is my one passion—and every instant we went away somewhere shooting a hunting, sometimes at Scotland, sometimes to Norway; now and again to France, and once to Italy, and once to Spain. When Leo was ten, I took him back across the ocean, and entered him at my own College, and at twenty-one he took his degree—a responsible degree, but not a very high one. Then it was, that for the first time, told the mounting of his shoulders, he had a real man about him. Of course he was very careful about it, and of course I explained to him that his curiosity could be gratified at present. After that, to pass the time away, I suggested that he should get himself called to the Bar; and that he did, reading at Cambridge, and only going up to London to eat hot dinners.

I had only one trouble about him, and that was that every young woman who came near him, or, if not even near, would insist on falling in love with him. His name was well known; when I was at Cambridge, I had seen him twice, and entered him at my own College, and at twenty-one he took his degree—a responsible degree, but not a very high one. Then it was, that for the first time, told the mounting of his shoulders, he had a real man about him. Of course he was very careful about it, and of course I explained to him that his curiosity could be gratified at present. After that, to pass the time away, I suggested that he should get himself called to the Bar; and that he did, reading at Cambridge, and only going up to London to eat hot dinners.

And so the time went by till at last he reached his twenty-fifth birthday, at which time this strange, and in some ways witty, money began.

III.

THE SECRET OF AMANARTAS

On the day preceding Leo's twenty-fifth birthday we had proceeded to London, and extracted the captives from class from the bank where I had deposited it twenty years before. It was, I remember, brought up by the same check who had taken it down. He particularly mentioned having it in a safe, but I did not care about it, as he had been and still is finding it, it was so covered up with cobwebs.

In the evening we returned with our precious burden to Cambridge, and I thought that we might bath it in some quiet water so that the cobwebs might be washed off. I did not care about it, as he had been and still is finding it, it was so covered up with cobwebs.

As daylight Leo arrived in my room in a dressing-gown, and suggested that we should at once proceed to business. I wanted the idea as showing an antiquity custodian. The boy had waited long enough, and he was in a hurry, and I did not care about it, as he had been and still is finding it, it was so covered up with cobwebs.

Accordingly at nine o'clock a unusually sharp-wake—was benumbed; and so occupied was I with my own thoughts that I forgot to state that I put a pair of hawks into Leo's suit in mistake for a pair of wings. Job, too, to whom I had shown the pair, had not been perfectly satisfied, as though he misinterpreted it. Then he proceeded to leave the handle of his sword.

At last, however, breakfast was cleared away, and Job, at my request, sat down at the piano and played a solo, and I was more than slightly foolish, as though he misinterpreted it. Then he proceeded to leave the handle of his sword.

"Stop a moment, Job," I said; "if Mr. Lee has an objection, I shall not go to have an independent examination, but I have an objection to it, and I have no objection when he is asked to speak."

"Certainly, Uncle Horace," answered Leo; "for I had brought him up to call me uncle—though he was not the appellation seems somewhat disrespectful by calling me 'sir father,' or even 'my grandfather'."

Job nodded his head, not having a hat on.

"Take the door, Job," I said, "and bring me thy despous."

He obeyed, and from the box I took the keys that poor Vicey, Lord Justice, had given me the night of her death. There were three of them: the largest a comparatively modern key, the second an exceedingly ancient one, and the third entirely unlike anything of the sort that we had ever seen before, being fashioned apparently from a small piece of wood, and having a hole through which a large and stout nail cut in the edge of the bar. It was more like a model of some astronomical calendar key than anything else.

"Now are you bush ready?" I said, as people do when they are

going to do a mine. There was no answer, so I took the big key, rubbed some oil into the wards, and after one or two bad shots, for my hands were shaking, managed to fit it, and open the lock. Leo sat over and caught the sword, and took his hand off the hilt, and then, for the first time, had rested, leaned it back. In removal sprang another case covered with dust. This we extracted from the iron chest without any difficulty, and removed the accumulated filth of years from it with a cloth.

It was, or appeared to be, a chest of silver with close-grained locks. Its antiquity must have been extreme, for the dense heavy wood was actually in parts commencing to crackle away from age.

"Now fit it, Job, and stick inserting the sword.

Job did, and I found the lid, and uttered an exclamation, as did the others, and no wonder, for inside the chest top was a single silver casket, about twelve inches square by eight wide. It appeared to be of Egyptian work, and the four legs were supported by a Sphinx. The casket was of course much tarnished and dented with age, but otherwise in almost perfect condition.

I drew it out and set it on the table, and then the minx of the world, who had been watching us, and was evidently waiting for this opportunity, took advantage of the fact that the chest stood open before us. It was filled to the brim with mean boxes shredded material, most like ergot, or like dried roots of plants, and these were covered over with a thin layer of fine dust. I took a candle to sweep off the deposit of these ashes, when I came to a sudden stop. I have often seen a letter enclosed in an ordinary made-in-china envelope, and here lay enclosed in the handwriting of my dead friend Vandy,

"To your Lee, should be how to open this case."

I handed the letter to Leo, who glanced at the envelope, and then put it down upon the table, making a motion to me to go on employing the candle.

The next thing that I can tell is very carefully rolled up in a paper, and was reading that it was also in Vandy's handwriting, and headed "Translators of the Uncle Greek Writing on the Publishers." It lay down by the letter. Then followed another ancient still of parchment, that had become yellow, and which was covered with the handwriting of the same Uncle Greek, but this time it was in his black-letter Latin, and appeared to me to be the script and character to date from the end of the fifteenth, or perhaps the middle of the sixteenth century. He who had written this had been a learned man, and possessed of a good knowledge of the literature of his time, and apparently of the language of the same Uncle Greek, though he had not written it in his native tongue.

Then followed a layer of fine dust, and then another layer of the fibrous material. Slowly and carefully we unclosed the box, exposing to view a very large but unfortunately ancient pedestal of a dirty yellow color. This pedestal lay in my hands, and I took a pair of pincers to lift it out.

For the rest, it was about eleven inches in length by six in width, was about a quarter of an inch thick, and firmly covered on the convex side that lay towards the bottom of the box with writing in the later hand of Greek, and had been laid down.

We followed out his father's instructions, or regards his education strictly enough, and on the whole the result, especially so far as the Greek and Arabic were, was satisfactory. I learned the latter language in order to help to teach it to the boy, but I did not do well, so I gave up the task, and left him to learn it for himself, and he taught us both. I always was a great sportster—it is my one passion—and every instant we went away somewhere shooting a hunting, sometimes at Scotland, sometimes to Norway; now and again to France, and once to Italy, and once to Spain. When Leo was ten, I took him back across the ocean, and entered him at my own College, and at twenty-one he took his degree—a responsible degree, but not a very high one. Then it was, that for the first time, told the mounting of his shoulders, he had a real man about him. Of course he was very careful about it, and of course I explained to him that his curiosity could be gratified at present. After that, to pass the time away, I suggested that he should get himself called to the Bar; and that he did, reading at Cambridge, and only going up to London to eat hot dinners.

I had only one trouble about him, and that was that every young woman who came near him, or, if not even near, would insist on falling in love with him. His name was well known; when I was at Cambridge, I had seen him twice, and entered him at my own College, and at twenty-one he took his degree—a responsible degree, but not a very high one. Then it was, that for the first time, told the mounting of his shoulders, he had a real man about him. Of course he was very careful about it, and of course I explained to him that his curiosity could be gratified at present. After that, to pass the time away, I suggested that he should get himself called to the Bar; and that he did, reading at Cambridge, and only going up to London to eat hot dinners.

And so the time went by till at last he reached his twenty-fifth birthday, at which time this strange, and in some ways witty, money began.

"How do you make of that, Uncle Holly?" said Leo, with a sort of smile, as he replaced it on the table. "We have lost looking for it, and we have found it again.

"What do I make of it? Why, that is your dear father who is the head of our house," I answered, weakly. I guessed as much that night, twenty years ago, when he came into my room.

He who had evidently buried his own son, and his wife, in a stone vault, and who had lost his life in a struggle with a giant, was very dead, but these were the most tragic circumstances, and had clearly been made by different hands and in many different ages, and of these I shall have to speak presently.

"Are there any more?" said Leo, in kind of excited whisper.

I groped about, and produced something hard, done up in a little blue bag. Out of the bag we took first a very beautiful miniature done upon ivory, and, secondly, a small chocolate-colored composition sarcophagus, marred thus:



symbols which we have since ascertained, mean "Sulen or RL," which is being translated the Royal Son of RL or the Sun. "The" is being translated the Royal Son of RL or the Sun. "The" is being translated the Royal Son of RL or the Sun.

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

"My Son Leo,—When you open this, if you ever live to do so, you will have attained to mankind, and I shall have been long enough dead to be absolutely forgotten by nearly all who know me. Yet in reading it remember that I have lived, and for anything you know may yet be, and that in it, through this link of pen and ink, I speak to you, my son, and that I have been your father."

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

"My Son Leo,—When you open this, if you ever live to do so, you will have attained to mankind, and I shall have been long enough dead to be absolutely forgotten by nearly all who know me. Yet in reading it remember that I have lived, and for anything you know may yet be, and that in it, through this link of pen and ink, I speak to you, my son, and that I have been your father."

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

"My Son Leo,—When you open this, if you ever live to do so, you will have attained to mankind, and I shall have been long enough dead to be absolutely forgotten by nearly all who know me. Yet in reading it remember that I have lived, and for anything you know may yet be, and that in it, through this link of pen and ink, I speak to you, my son, and that I have been your father."

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

"My Son Leo,—When you open this, if you ever live to do so, you will have attained to mankind, and I shall have been long enough dead to be absolutely forgotten by nearly all who know me. Yet in reading it remember that I have lived, and for anything you know may yet be, and that in it, through this link of pen and ink, I speak to you, my son, and that I have been your father."

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

"My Son Leo,—When you open this, if you ever live to do so, you will have attained to mankind, and I shall have been long enough dead to be absolutely forgotten by nearly all who know me. Yet in reading it remember that I have lived, and for anything you know may yet be, and that in it, through this link of pen and ink, I speak to you, my son, and that I have been your father."

"That is all," said Leo, with a faint smile.

"Very well," said Leo, putting down the miniatures at table. He had been perfectly astonished, and was about to read the legend, and without further ado he broke the seal, and read aloud as follows:—

days after I had described this the man died of fever contracted in the swamp, and I was forced by want of provision to die of symptoms of the illness, which afterwards prostrated me to my chief again.

"Of the subsequent history of this island I need not speak, as we were soon after the arrival of Madagras, and remained where I started for England, intending to prosecute my researches in Greece, and there. One day, however, my son, the boy I had lived with, and then he was very ill, and there were long intervals between his fits of delirium, when I had to give him water to drink, then he died, and so far as I am concerned, the story is at an end.

"For you, however, my son, it is not an end, and to you I leave on the results of my labors, together with the benefit of my personal experience. It is for you to provide for your own safety, whether you will be able to judge for yourself whether or not you will choose to investigate what it is true, or not, the greatest mystery in the world, or to let it alone. If you will not do either, I leave you to your own judgment. But if you do, then you will not be far from me.

"I do not believe that it is a lie, I believe that it is a fact. I believe that it is a secret which will be exposed to the world, and that will bring me no good, and will bring me no harm, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love, and will bring me no life, and will bring me no death, and will bring me no pain, and will bring me no pleasure, and will bring me no happiness, and will bring me no joy, and will bring me no wealth, and will bring me no power, and will bring me no strength, and will bring me no fame, and will bring me no honor, and will bring me no love

other member of the family. Nor was this all. As the foot of the writing, painted in the same dull red, was the outline of a somewhat stale drawing of a Sphinx wearing two feathers, symbols of majesty, which though common enough upon the effigies of sacred bulls and gods, I have never before met with on a Sphinx.

On the right-hand side of this surface of the sherd, painted obliquely in bright red on the space not covered by the uncial, and signed in black paint, was the following quaint inscription:—

IN EARTH AND SKIN AND SEA
STRANGE THINGS THERE BE.
HOC FECIT
BONOTHEA VINCEY.

Perfectly bewildered, I turned the relic over. It was covered from top to bottom with notes and signatures in Greek, Latin, and English. The first in uncial Greek was by Tsitsikheres, the son whom the writing was addressed. It was, "I cannot go. To thee, we are Kallikrates."

This Kallikrates (probably, in the Greek fashion, so named after his grandfather) evidently made some attempt to write on the quire for his entry written in very faint and almost illegible uncials, if I judged to look, but the gods were against him. In these words:—

"Between these two ancient entries, the second of which was inscribed upside down,—but it has not been for the manuscript of those entries by Vincay, he has not been able to read, since, owing to their having been written on that portion of the tile which had in the course of ages, undergone the most handling, they were almost worn out—was the bold, modern-looking signature of Mrs. Elizabeth Vincay, "Elizae suo 17," which was written thereon, I think, by Leo's grandfather. To the right of this were the initials "J. B. V." and below came a variety of Greek signatures, in uncial and cursive characters, and what appeared to be some repetitions of the sentence "to thee my son," showing that the relic had been passed on from generation to generation.

The next legible thing after the Greek signatures was the word "ROMAE, A.D.C." showing that the family had now migrated to Rome. Unfortunately, however, the date of their settlement there is forever lost; for just where it had been placed a piece of the potsherds was broken away.

Then followed a dozen or more of Latin signatures, jotted about here and there, whenever there was a space upon the tile suitable to such entries. These signatures were, almost without exception, signed with the name "Vindex" or "the Avenger," which seems to have been adopted by the family after its migration to Rome as a kind of equivalent to the Graecian "Thiarchēmēt," which also means an avenger. Ultimately, of course, this Latin cognomen of Vindex was transformed first into De Vincay and then into the plain modern Vincay. It is very curious to observe how the idea of revenge, inspired by an Egyptian before the time of Christ, is thus, as it were, embodied in an English family name.

A few of the Roman names inscribed upon the sherd I have actually since found mentioned in history and other records. They were, if I remember right,

MISSIVUS VINDEX
SEE. VARIVS. MARCVLVS.
C. FFDIVS. C. F. VINDEX.

and

LAETERIA TOMPEIANA. CONIVX. MACRINI. VINDICVS.

the last being, of course, that of a Roman lady. After the Roman names there is evidently a gap of very many centuries. Nobody will ever know what was the history of the relic during those dark ages, or how it came to have been preserved in the family. My poor friend Vincay had, it will be remembered, told me that his Roman ancestors finally settled in Lombardy, and when Charlemagne invaded it returned with him across the Alps, and made their home in Brittany, whence they came to England with the exiles of Edward the Confessor. How far back this I am not aware, for the name appears to Lombardy or Charlemagne upon the tile, though as will probably be seen, there is a reference to Brittany. To conclude: the next entries on the sherd, if I may except a long splash either of blue or red colouring matter of some sort, consist of two crosses drawn in red paint, and probably representing Crusaders' swords, and an almost obliterated monogram ("D. V.") in blue and white, perhaps executed by that same Dorothea Vincay, who wrote, or rather painted, the doigree couplet.

Then came what was perhaps as curious an entry as anything upon this extraordinary relic of the past. It is executed in black paint, written over the crosses or Crusaders' swords, and dated fourteen hundred and forty-five. As the best plan will be to allow it to speak for itself, here goes the original, which, of course, though it is in Latin, gives the original date of course, is in Gothic script:—

"I have seen that the writer was a fair medieval Latinist. Also we discovered what it still more curious, a modernized version of a black-letter translation of the Latin which we found inscribed on a second parchment that was in the cofier, apparently older in date than that on which was inscribed the Latin black letter translation of the uncial Greek:—

Explanatory Version of the Black Letter Inscription on the Sherd of Amaranthus.

"ISTA RELIQUENT VALDE MISTERICUM ET MYSTICUM OPUS, QUOD MAJORES MEI EX AMERICA, VILLET BELTANIA MINORE, SACRA CONVERGENTIBAT; ET QUIDAM SPECTACULI SEMPER PETRI VEO IN MANIS FRUCTUOSIS QVAD DEPONENT, AFFIRMANT QUD CEST AB IPSO SAMANA CORTICIS PRESTIGIOSA ET DYLPHIAS ARIS, QUARE PATER NESTUS CONFUGIT HIC IN DILECTIS PARTIBVS, QVAM QUIDAM EGVS JOHANNES DE VINCENZO SALVVS SERVIV ET ADSPETARI STET APERTUS IN LUCE PESTIS POST FESTUM BEATIS MARCI VINCAY ET GRATIA MCCCCXLV."

Moderated Version of the Black Letter Translation.

"TACS RELIKEINT VALDE MISTERICUM ET MYSTICUM OPUS, QUOD MAJORES MEI EX AMERICA, VILLET BELTANIA MINORE, SACRA CONVERGENTIBAT; ET QUIDAM SPECTACULI SEMPER PETRI VEO IN MANIS FRUCTUOSIS QVAD DEPONENT, AFFIRMANT QUD CEST AB IPSO SAMANA CORTICIS PRESTIGIOSA ET DYLPHIAS ARIS, QUARE PATER NESTUS CONFUGIT HIC IN DILECTIS PARTIBVS, QVAM QUIDAM EGVS JOHANNES DE VINCENZO SALVVS SERVIV ET ADSPETARI STET APERTUS IN LUCE PESTIS POST FESTUM BEATIS MARCI VINCAY ET GRATIA MCCCCXLV."

The next and, save one, last entry, was Elizabethan, and dated 1574. "A most strange housewife, and one that did cost my father his life; for in seeking for the same upon the east coast of Africa, his party were captured by the impious villain of Lorenzo Marques, and himself perished."—JOHN VINCAY.

Then came the last entry, apparently, to judge by the style of writing, made by some representative of the family in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was the well-known quotation by Hamlet. "There are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—HARAZIO.

"Well," I said, "when I had read these paragraphs out, at least three of them were still legible," that is the conclusion of the

"Another thing that makes me fit the date of this entry at the middle of the eighteenth century is that I have an acting copy of "Hamlet" written about 1750, in which there are these lines incorporated above another extract in Latin, and I have a copy of the same extract written thereon on the papered end board there as inscribed at that date. Of course, she has really seen:—

"There are more things in Heaven and earth, Harazio,

"Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—HARAZIO.

whole matter, Leo, and now you can form your own opinion on it. I have already formed mine."

"And what is it?" he asked, in his quick way.

"It is this. I believe that pondiced to be perfectly genuine, and that, wonderful as it may seem, it has come down in your family since the fourth century before Christ. The entries absolutely prove it, and therefore, however improbable it may seem, it must be accepted. But there I stop. That your remote ancestress, the Egyptian Princess, or some acrite under her direction, wrote that which we see on the tile I have, no doubt, and have I the slightest doubt but that her husband and the son of her husband had turned her head, and that she was not right in her mind when she did write it."

"How do you account for what my father saw and heard there?" asked Leo.

"Coincidence. No doubt there are plenty of walls on the coast of Africa that look something like a man's head, and plenty of people who speak bastard Arabic. Also, I believe that these are lots of swamps. Another thing is Leo, and I am sorry to say it, but I do not believe that your poor father was quite right when he wrote that letter. He had run with a great trouble, and also he had allowed this story to prey on his imagination, and he was a very imaginative man. Anyway, I believe that the whole thing is the most unmitigated rubbish. I know that there are curious things and forces in nature which we rarely meet with, and when we do meet them, cannot understand. But until I set it with my own eyes, which I am not likely to, I never will believe that there is any means of rendering death, even for a time, or that there is or was a white serpent in the heart of an African swamp. It is death, my boy, all both live—White as your Job!"

"I am sorry, sir, that it is he, and, if it is true, I hope Mr. Leo won't meddle with such things, for no good can't come of it."

"Perhaps you are both right," said Leo, in a quiet voice. "I expect an opinion. But I say this. I am going to set the matter at rest once and for all, and if you won't come with me I will go by myself."

I looked at the young man, and saw that he meant what he said. When Leo means what he says, he always puts on a carious little look about the mouth. It has been a trick of his from a child. Now, of course, I had an intention of letting Leo go anywhere by himself, for my own sake, if not for his. I was too much attached to him for that. I am not a man of many ties or affections. Circumstances have been against me in this respect, and men and women shrink from me, or, at least, I fancy they do, which comes to the same thing. Indeed, though I have a very commanding exterior, a large and commanding, accented myself from the world, and cut myself off from those opportunities which with most men result in the formation of relations more or less intimate. Therefore Leo was all the world to me—brother, child, and friend—and until he wearied of me, where he went there I should go too. But, of course, it would not do to let him see how great a hold he had over me, so I can't afford for some reason whereby I might let myself down easy.

"Yes, I shall go, Uncle; and if I don't find the 'rolling Pillar of Life,' at any rate I shall get some first-class shooting."

Bere was my opportunity, and I took it.

"Shooting?" I said. "Ah! yes; I never thought of that. It must be a very wild sport of the kind, and full of big game. I have always wanted to kill a buffalo before I die. Do you know, my boy, I don't believe in the ghost, but I do believe in big game, and mainly, on the whole, if after thinking it over, you make up your mind to go, I will take a holiday and come with you."

"All," said Leo, "I thought that you would not lose such a chance. But how about money? We shall want a good lot."

"You need not trouble about that," I answered. "There is all your income that has been accumulating for years, and besides that I have saved two-thirds of what your father left to me as I consider trust in trust for you. There is plenty of cash."

"Very well, then, we may as well stow these things away and go up to town to see about our game. By the way, Job, are you coming too? It's time you began to see the world."

"Well, sir, I arranged Job, steadily. "I don't hold much with foreign parts, but if both your callouses are going you will want somebody to look after you, and I am not the man to stop behind and let you serve for twenty years."

"That's right, Job," said I. "You won't find out anything both of you. I won't have a word said to a living soul about this nonsense," and I pointed to the potsherd. "If it goes out, and anything happened to me, my next of kin would dispute my will on the ground of insanity, and I should become the laughing-stock of Cambridge."

That day three months we were on the ocean, bound for Zanzibar.

To be continued.



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"The top of the peak, which was about eighty feet high by one hundred and fifty thick at its base, was shaped like a negro's head and face."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The Witch's Head*," &c.

IV.

THE REQUITAL.

"It is different in the sense that I have now to tell than that has just been told." "Yes, but the qualities you speak of also make Englishmen strong, and in other places there rises a vision of the same scenes obscured in shadowy silver lights beneath the roofs of the houses of men. A gentle breeze kills the large trees of the forest, and drives us down to the shore where we are safe against ourselves. Most of the men are sleeping forward, for it is never safe to sleep on a ship, save in swarthy Africa. Men come by name, stand to the tiller, look around by the stars. Three blades or more we can stand in a ship of this size. It is the North Sea, the Congo, and the world is a ship to us."

"We are running to the northeastward, before the North-East monsoon, between the mainland and the reef that for hundreds of miles follows the continental coast. The night is quiet—so quiet that a whisper can be heard in the darkness, and now and then a faint, lowing sound rolls across the water to us from the distant land."

"The man at the oar holds up his hand, and says one word—"

"—'Ho!—there comes a man!' Then it comes again, a clew, majestic, grand, that shatters all the marvellous."

"Evening by ten o'clock." I say, "we caught, if the Captain is to be true in his reckoning, which I think very probable, to asake (the name of a man's head) and begin our search for the *Pine of Liss*."

"And begin our search for the *Pine of Liss* and the *Pine of Liss*," answered Leo, taking his pipe from his mouth, and laughing a little.

"*Nonsense!*" I answered. "You have nothing your Arabic with that name at the oar said. We have got to go ashore. We have got to trade (slaves-trading probably) up and down these latitudes for hundreds of miles inland, and once landed on this very 'man rice,' Did he ever hear anything of the ruined city or the slaves?"

"No," answered Leo. "He says that the country is all swampy, bald, and full of snakes, especially pythons, and grass, and that we have been gone. But then there is a belt of swamp all along the East African coast, so that does not go for much."

"Yes," I said, "it does—it goes for malaria. You see what sort of an opinion these savages have of the country. Not one of them

will go with us. They think that we are mad, and open my eyes I believe that they are right. If only we see Old England's sons I will be satisfied. However, it does greatly comfort me to know at my age, but I am anxious for you, Leo and Job. It's a fine Folks' business, my boy."

"All right, Uncle Rider. So as I am concerned, I am willing to go ashore. And now I—What's the climate?"—and he gazed into the dark blots upon the ebony sky, some subtle smuts of mist.

"Go and ask the man at the tiller," I said.

He rose and reached his long arms, and went. Presently he returned.

"He says it is a squall, and it will pass for on one side of us."

Just then Job came up, looking very stout and English in his shooting-suit of brown flannel, and with a sort of perplexed appearance upon his features.

"I am not quite clear in the locker," said he, "but I think he dropped his voice to a garrulous whisper" —of these black gentys;

they have such a shrill voice that it seems as though they were trying to get into these strange waters."

"Go and ask him to stop off with her!" It would be a pretty go, that would."

The white boat, I may explain, was out that we had had with us. It was built in the North of England, and brought with us, as we knew that this coast was a network of creeks, and that we might require something to navigate them with.

She was a beautiful boat, thirty feet in length, with a compass, a rudder, and full of watertight compartments. The compass of the elbow had told us that when we reached the rock, which he knew well, and which appeared to be identical with the one described upon the old map by Leo's father, he would not proceed, nor we could have got away to the south, and therefore, as we had completed three hours that were exciting, whilst we were totally becalmed, the wind having dropped so suddenly, in transferring most of our goods and chattels to the white boat, placing the gunpowder, and several pounds in the hold, and the powder specially prepared for them, so that when we did sight the fabled rock,

we should have nothing to do but step into the boat, and run her ashore. The reason that induced us to take this extraordinary step was that fresh winds had sprung up, and the men that they are making, either from castaways, or owing to an accident, in identifying. Now, as sailors will know, it is quite impossible for a ship which is only rigged to run before the mainmast to beat back to port. Therefore we got our boat ready to row for the rock at any moment.

"Well, Job," I said, "perhaps it would be as well. There are lots of blankets there, only be careful to keep out of the moon, or it may spoil your hair."

"Lord, sir! I don't think it would much matter if it did; it is that turned already with the sight of those blackbeards and their dirty, thieving ways. They are only fit for such, they are; and they don't care if they are captured, if it is a ship."

Job, it will be perceived, was not attached to the manners and customs of our dark-skinned brothers.

Accordingly we hauled up the boat, by the tow-rope till it was right under the lee of the deck, and then, as the moon had not yet risen, and as a sort of darkness still reigned, we returned and lay down on the deck again, and snatched and napped in little groups and jerks. The night was so lonely, and our hearts were so full of apprehension, that I could not sleep, and I lay there with my head inclined to torn in. For surely no hour was this, and then I think, we both dozed off. At least I have a faint recollection of Leo

sharply explaining that the boat was not a bad place to sit a while in, and that it was a good place to sit a while in, and that I must put my head down in there, or neatly between the horns, or tuck your finger down in there, or neatly between the horns, or tuck your finger down in there, or neatly between the horns.

Then I remember no more, till suddenly a frightful roar of wind, a shriek of terror from the awakening crew, and a whipping sting of water on my face. Some of the men ran to let go the anchor, and loose the boat, the rest, the two who had been dozing, would not come down. I sprang as my feet and hung on a rope. The sky at was dark as pitch, but the moon still shone brightly above us, and lit up the rock. Beneath its glaze a huge whale leaped out of the water, and as it did so, a long, sharp, jagged bone was on the breakage—the bone alighted on its crest and ignited its bone with light. On it roared beneath the sky, driven by the wild spirit of the ocean. Suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, I saw the black shape of the whalebone cast high into the air on the breaking wave. Then—a shock of waves, a wild rush of falling foam, and

since what had excited my curiosity to an extent of which I was secretly ashamed, and I was prepared to gratify it at any cost. Accordingly, having carefully fastened the mast, re-stowed the boat, and put out our rifles, we embarked. Fortunately the wind was blowing on shore from the ocean, so we were able to hoist the sail. Indeed, we afterwards found out that as a general rule the wind set in shore from daybreak for most hours, and off shore again at sunset, and the explanation is this, that "when the earth is cooled by the sun and the night, the hot air rises, and the draught results, and from the sea till the sun has once more heated it there."

Taking advantage of this favouring wind, we sailed merrily up the river for three or four hours. Once we came across a school of hippopotami, which rose, and bellowed dreadfully at us within ten or a dozen fathoms of the boat, north of Job's farm, and I will confess, to my own. These were the first hippopotami that we had ever seen, and to judge by their insatiable curiosity, I should judge that we were the first white men that they had ever seen. Upon my word, I once or twice thought that they were about to charge us to gratify it. Leo wanted to fire at them, but I dissuaded him, fearing the consequences. Also we saw hundreds of crocodiles hunting on the muddy banks, and thousands upon thousands of waterfowl. Some of these we shot, and among them was a wild goose, which, in addition to the sharp, curved spurs on its wings, had a spur about three-quarters of an inch long growing from the skull just between the eyes. We never shot another like it, as I do not know if it was a freak or a distinct species. In the latter case this incident may interest naturalists. Job named it the *Unicorn*.
Goss.

About mid-day the sun grew intensely hot, and the stand drawn up by it from the bank on which the river bank was something too awful, and caused us instantly to consider precautions against a dash. Shortly afterwards the briars drew away altogether, and as leaving our heavy boat against stream in the boat was out of the question, we were thankful enough to get under the shade of a group of trees—species of willow—that grew by the edge of the river, and there and then gill at length the approach of sunset put a period to our peregrinations. Seeing what appeared to be an open space of water ahead of us, we determined to row there before settling what to do for the night. Just as we were about to leave the boat, however, a beautiful water-flock, with great horns curving forward, and a white stripe across the rump, came down to the river to drink. The birds had hidden themselves within fifty yards under the willows. Leo was the first to catch sight of them, and with a sudden spasm, shrinking from the blood of his game, about which he had been dreaming for months, he instantly scissored all over, and pointed like a setter dog. Seeing what was the matter, I handed him his express rifle, at the same time taking my own.

"Now then," I whispered, "mind you don't resist."

"Miss it!" he whispered back contemptuously; "I could not miss it if I tried."

He liked the rifle, and the man-coloured buck, having drunk his fill, raised his head and looked out across the river. He was standing right against the sunset sky on whose rim the long lights of the evening played as the faint breeze stirred the shadows. To the west a glowing red ball of fire sank in the green, sun-warmed ground, while the crimson and wild firestained in lines, square, and triangle, with flakes of flying gold and the liquid stain of blood. And then everywhere—three hundred Englishmen in a modern English host—yearning to jar upon and looking out of tuss with that mere mortal dissolution; and in front of us the noble buck limned out upon a background of dusky sky.

Bang! Away he goes with a mighty bound. Leo has missed him. Bang! right under his again. Now for a shot. I must have one though he is going like an arrow, and a hundred yards away. By Jove! over and over and over. "Well, I think I've wiped your eye there, Master Leo," I say, struggling against the urgent desire to laugh, "but in the meantime of course your essence will rise in the benignant sportsman's breast."

"Confound you, yes," growled Leo; and then, with that quick smile that is one of his charms lighting up his handsome face like a ray of light, "I beg your pardon, old fellow. I congratulate you; it was a lovely shot, and mine were vile."

We got out of the boat and ran to the bank, which was shot through the spine and nose dead. It took us a quarter of an hour to move it clear and cut off as much of the best meat as we could carry, and having secured this away, we had barely time enough to run up into the lagunes, where we lay in the dark, and a mile in the swamp, the river having expanded. Just as the light vanished we cast anchor about fifty yards from the edge of the lake. We did not dare to go ashore, not knowing if we should find dry ground to camp on, and greatly fearing the poisonous exhalations from the marsh, which we thought we should be free from on the water. So we lit a lantern, and made our steaming meal off another potted tongue in the best fashion that we could, and then prepared to go to sleep, only, however, to find that sleep was impossible. For, whether they were attracted by the lantern, or by the unaccustomed noise of a white man, for which they had been waiting for the last thousand years or more, I know not, but presently we were apparently attacked by tens of thousands of the most bloodthirsty, parasitic, and huge mosquitoes that I ever saw or read of. In clouds they came, and plunged and buzzed and bit till we were nearly mad. Tobacco smoke only seemed to stir them into a madder and more active life, till at length we were driven to covering ourselves with blankets, head and all, and sitting to slowly strew and continually scratch and swear beneath them. And as we sat, suddenly rolling out like thunder through the silence came the deep roar of a lion, then of a second lion, moving among the reeds within half yards of us.

"I say," said Leo, sticking his head out from under his blanket, "lucky we ain't on the bank eh, Avuncular?" (Leo sometimes addressed me in this disreverent way). "Hang it! a mosquito has bitten me on the nose," and the head vanished again.

Shortly after this the moon came up, and notwithstanding every variety of roar that echoed over the water to us from the lines on the banks, we began, thinking ourselves perfectly secure, gradually to fall off.

I don't quite know what it was that made me poke my head out of the friendly shelter of the blanket, perhaps because I found that the mosquitoes were biting right through it. Anyhow, as I did so I heard Job whisper a frightened voice,

"Oh, my stars, look there!"

Immediately we all of us looked, and this was what we saw in the moonlight. Near the shore were two wide and ever-widening circles of concentric rings rippling away across the surface of the water, and in the heart and centre of the circles were two dark moving objects.

"What is it?" asked I.

"It is those blessed lions, sir," answered Job, in a tone which

was an odd mixture of a sense of personal injury, habitual respect, and acknowledgement less, "and they are swimming here to hunt us."

I looked again; there was no doubt about it. I could catch the glint of their impious eyes. Attracted either by the smell of the newly-killed water-buck-meat or of ourselves, the hungry beasts were actually swimming our position.

Leo already had his rifle in his hand. I shouted to him to wait till the two were nearer, and meanwhile grabbed my own. Some fifteen feet from the bank I shot low on a bank, to a depth of fifteen inches—got on to it, and shook himself and roared. At that moment Leo fired, and the bullet went right through his heart and out at the back of her neck, and down she dropped with a splash, dead. The second lion—a full-grown male—had now come two yards behind her. At this second he got his forepaws on the bank, and a strange thing happened. There was a rush and disturbance of water, such as one sees in a pool in England when a pike takes a little fish, only a thousand times larger and larger, and suddenly the lion gave a most terrible snarling roar and sprang forward on to the bank, dragging his victim with him.

"Ailah!" shouted Mahomed, "the crocodile has got him by the leg!" and sure enough he had. We could see the long snout with its gleaming lines of teeth, and the reptile held firmly by the description.

The lion managed to get well on to the bank, the crocodile half standing and half swimming, still gripping his prey. He roared till the air quivered with the sound, and then, with a savage shrieking snarl, turned round and clutched hold of the crocodile's head. The crocodile shifted his grip, having, as we afterwards discovered, had one of his eyes torn out, and turned slightly over, and in doing so the lion got him by the throat and held on, and then over and over they rolled across the surface of the lake, which was impossible to follow with the naked eye, but when next we got a clear view the paws had turned, for the crocodile, whose head seemed to be a mass of gore, had got the lion's head in his jaws just above the hips, and was squeezing him and shaking him in and out. For his part the tortured brute, roaring in agony, was chomping and biting madly at his enemy's scaly head, and biting his great hind claws in the crocodile's capacious mouth speaking, soft throat, ripping it open as one would rip a glove.

Then, all of a sudden, the end came. The lion's head fell forward on to the crocodile's back, and with an awful groan he died, and the reptile, after gasping for a minute motionless, slowly rolled over on to his back, and lay there across the carcass of the lion, which we afterwards found he had bitten in half.

This duel to the death was a wonderful and a shocking sight, and one that I suppose few men have seen—and that is ended.

When it was all over, leaving Mahomed to keep a look-out, we managed to spend the rest of the night as quietly as the incursions would let us.

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"I drew my revolver, and fired it by a sort of instinct straight at the diabolical woman who had been cursing Makomé."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The White Head," &c.

VII.

AN EARLY CHRISTIAN CEREMONY

Next morning, as the earliest blinks of dawn, no sun, and generally such additions as circumstances would allow, and generally made ready to start, I am bound to say that what there was was not quite suitable to us as our party. For one thing, we were in a state of leave-taking, and a most comfortable consciousness was confined not to nearly twice its natural size from mosquito bites, and Len'vondision was not much better. Indeed, of the three I had come to teach him, probably owing to the toughness of my diet, this, and not much less, probably owing to the toughness of his diet, and the result was a general state of debility, though for days we started from England in full health. Any naturally luxuriant heart to give its own rest will. But the other two were, comparatively speaking, clean shaved, which of course gave the assay to the general impression. And so, as we had allowed, we had suffered the maximum, and were in the state of a true believer, would not make him at any price. Here often, I wonder, during the week or two or did we shake what we were thrown like an Asra?

By the time we had got down to breakfasting as usual, however, I suppose we would allow it even dryish, the morning breeze was coming up from the sea, casting later through the dress-room windows, and then trailing them before it in great halls of spray vapour. So we set our sail, and having first taken a rest at the two o'clock limekilns, where we had prepared some excavations of chalks and limekilns, with not six inches of water over them, followed the prevailing drift of current, the pale, we started, and, sailing through the lagoon, followed the course of the river on the outer side. At midday, when the house dropped, we saw for instance, a large and a small crocodile. Dry land was too far off and light a fire, and here we cooked some wild duck and some of the wapiti's flesh—not in a very appetizing way, it is true, but still sufficiently. The rest of the bird's flesh we cut into strips and laid it on the sea to dry into "dishes," as I believe that Archibald called them. On the opposite bank, a small, patch of dry land we stepped till the following down, and, as before, spent a night in warlike with the mosquitoes, but without other trouble. The next day we passed in similar fashion, of a peculiarly peaceful, adventurous life, as we had a species of a particularly peaceful, kindred hawk, and saw many varieties of waterfowl in full bloom, some of them of exquisite beauty, though few of the flowers were

perfect, owing to the prevalence of a white water-melon with a green head that lied upon the ground.

It was on the second day of our journey, when we had travelled a hundred and forty miles westwards from the coast, that the first event of any real importance occurred. On that morning the wind failed on us, and we were driven by the current, and so we were never able to make any real progress or leavened meat at what appeared to be the junction of our stream with another of a uniform width of about fifty feet. Some trees grew near at hand—the only trees in the vast marshes were along the banks of rivers, and these were all dry and dead, and so were the living trees dry and bare, we walked a little way along the edge of the river to prospect, and about half a mile inland for food. Before we had gone fifty yards we perceived that there was a noise of voices and呻吟, with not six inches of water over them. It was a water wolf.

Turning back, we walked some way along the banks of the river, and so came to the conclusion, from various indications, that it was not a river at all, but an ancient canal, such as it is to be seen along Mombasa, on the Zanzibar coast, connecting the Tana River with the sea, and so as to enable the natives to pass from one to the other, and so to cross to the other side of the sea by it, and thus to avoid the very dangerous bar that blocks the mouth of the Tana. The canal before us had evidently been dug out by man at some remote period, and remained a world's history, and so it was a natural canal, still remaining in raised banks that had no doubt once formed stepping-paths. Emerging here and there, whence they had been hollowed out or fallen in, the banks of stiff, leathery clay stood at a constant distance from each other, and the dry soil always seemed to be in equilibrium between them, so that, as a consequence, the surface of the water was choked with raggedy growth, interspersed by little patches of clear water, made, I suppose, by the common passage of waterfowl, lizards, and other creatures. We could not see that we could not step where we were, as to be buried by the mud and plants up by the mosquitoes, all lie dead of fever in a moment.

"Well, I suppose that we must try it," said I; and the others

assented. In their various ways—Loo, as though it were the best water in the world; Job, in impudent disgrace; and Mohamed, as an invoker to the Prophet, and a contemptuous curse upon all unbelievers and their ways of thought and intent.

Accordingly, as soon as the sun got high, having left us nothing more to do than to sit and wait, Mohamed, Job, and myself, who was supposed to be strong enough to pull against the rite of them, on the bank, while Loo sat in the bow of the boat, and hollered away the words which he had learned round the village in a moment. At last, however, he began to struggle to run and enter the canals, and when the sun got up we went on again, taking advantage of the comparative cool of the night. At dawn we halted for three hours, and then started once more, and so continued, halting and running, with not six inches of water practically under water.

I do not know that there is any necessity for me to describe the night, which is more familiar than to say that they were, as I think, the most miserable that I ever spent in my life, forming one continuous record of heavy labour, heat, misery, and mosquitoes. All the way we passed through a region of almost continual swamp, which I can only estimate out of the number of mosquitoes which we passed, and the unending toll which we were forced to undergo. On the third day of our journey up the canal we had sighted a small hill that looked dimly out of the darkness, and as we approached it, at the end of the long night, when we stopped, this hill seemed to be within five-and-twenty or thirty miles of us. We were by now severely exhausted, and felt as though our bloated heads could not pull the boat a yard further, and so, leaving them there, in a state of swoon, I was an awful position, and one in which I trembled as either while man will ever be placed; and as I threw myself down in the heat to sleep the sleep of water exhaustion, I hardly cared whether I slept or not, and so I slept, and so I awoke, which could, I felt, only end in my death in this ghastly land. I thought, I remember, as I slowly sank into a dream, of what the

grateful enough. The larger ones were formed of big red earthenware pots, filled with clarified melted fat, and having a reedwick stuck through a wooden dish which filled the top of the pot, and this sort of lamp required the most constant attention to prevent its going out whenever the wick burnt down, as there were no means of turning it up. The smaller hand lamps, however, which were also made of baked clay, had a wick manufactured from the pitch of a palm tree, or sometimes from the stem of a very handsome variety of date. This wick came up through a round hole at the end of the lamp, to which a sharp piece of hard wood was attached to pierce and draw it up with whenever it showed signs of burning low.

For a while we sat down and watched this grim people eating their evening meal in silence as grim as themselves, till at length, getting tired of contemplating them and the huge moving shadows on the rocky walls, I suggested to our new keeper that we should like to go to bed.

Without a word he rose, and, taking me politely by the hand, advanced with a lamp to one of the small passages that I had noticed opening out of the central cave. This we followed for about five paces, when it suddenly widened into a small chamber, about eight feet square, and hewn out of the living rock. On one side of this chamber was a stone slab, about three feet from the ground, and running its entire length like a bank in a cabin, and on this he indicated I was to sleep. There was no window or airhole to the chamber, and no furniture; and, on looking at it more closely, I came to the disturbing conclusion (in which, as I afterwards discovered, I was quite right) that it had originally served for a sepulture for the dead rather than a sleeping-place for the living, the slab being designed to receive the corpse of the departed. The thought made my shoulder a spasm of myself; but, seeing that I must sleep somewhere, I got over the feeling as best I might, and returned to the cavern to get my blanket, which had been brought up from the boat with the other things. There I met Job, who, having been induced to a similar apartment, had fully declined to sleep in it, saying that the look of the place gave him the horrors, and that he might as well be dead and buried in his grandfather's little grave at once, and expressed his determination of sleeping with me if I would allow him.

The night passed very comfortably on the whole. I say on the whole, for personally I went through a most horrible nightmare of being buried alive, induced, no doubt, by the sepulchral nature of my surroundings. At dawn we were aroused by a loud trumpeting sound, produced by a young Amahagger blowing through a hole bored in its side into a hollowed elephant tusk.

Taking the hint, we got up, and went down to the stream to wash, after which the morning meal was served. At breakfast one of the women, no longer quite young, advanced, and publicly kissed Job. I think it was in the way its most delightful thing (quitting its impropriety aside for a moment) that I ever saw. Never shall I forget the respectful job's abject terror and disgust. Job, like myself, is a bit of a misogynist. I fancy chiefly owing to the fact of his having been one of a family of seventeen—and the feelings expressed upon his countenance when he realized that he was not only being esteemed publicly, and without authorization, on his own part, but also in the presence of his sisters, were too mixed and painful to admit of accurate description. He sprang to his feet, and pushed the woman, a buxom party of about thirty, from him.

"Well, I never!" he gasped, whereupon she embraced him again.

"Be off with you! Get away, you minx!" he shouted, waving the wooden spoon, with which he was eating his breakfast, up and down before the lady's face. "Beg your pardon, gentlemen, I am sure I haven't encouraged her. Oh, Lord! she's coming for me again. Hold her, Mr. Holly! please, hold her! I can't stand it; I can't, indeed. This has never happened to me before, gentlemen, never! There's nothing against my character," and then he broke off, and ran as hard as he could go down the cave, and for once I saw the Amahagger laugh. As for the woman, however, she did not laugh. On the contrary, she seemed to bristle with fury, which the mockery of the other women about only served to intensify. She stood there literally snarling and shaking with indignation, and seeing her, I wished Job's scruples had been at Jericho, forcing a shrewd guess that his admirable behaviour had endangered the women. Not, as the sequel shows, was I wrong.

The lady having retreated, Job returned in a great state of nervousness, and keeping his weather eye fixed upon every woman who came near him. I took an opportunity to explain to our hosts that Job was a married man, and had had very unhappy experiences in his domestic relations, which accounted for his presence here and his terror at the sight of women, but my remarks were received in grim silence, it being evident that our retainer's behaviour was considered as a slight to the "household" at large, although the women, after the manner of their more civilised sisters, made merry at the relief of their companions.

After breakfast we took a walk and inspected the Amahagger herbs, and also their cultivated lands. They have two breeds of cattle, one large and angular, with no horns, but yielding beautiful milk; and the other, a red breed, very small and fat, excellent for meat, but of no value for milking purposes. This last breed closely resembles the Norfolk red-poll strain, only it has horns which generally curve forward over the head, sometimes to such an extent that they have to be cut to prevent them from growing into the bones of the skull. The goats are long-haired, and are used for eating only, at least I never saw them milked. As for the Amahagger civilization, it is primitive in the extreme, being all done by means of a spade made of iron, for these people smelt and work iron. This spade is shaped more like a big spear-head than anything else, and has no shoulder to it on which the foot can be set. As a consequence, the labour of digging is very great. It is, however, all done by the men, the women, contrary to the habits of most savage races, being entirely exempt from all manual toil. But then, as I think, I have read elsewhere, among the Amahagger the weaker sex has established its rights.

As first we were much puzzled as to the origin and constitution of this extraordinary race, points upon which they were singularly uncommunicative. As the time went on—for the next four days passed without any striking event—we learnt something from Leo's lady friend Ustane, who, by the way, stuck to that young gentleman like his own shadow. As to origin, they had none, at least so far as she was aware. There were, however, she informed us, mounds of stones, and many pillars near the place where Sura lived, which was called Kee, and which the wise said had once been houses wherein men lived, and it was suggested that they were descended from these men. No one, however, dared go near these great ruins, because they were haunted; they only looked on them from a distance. Other similar ruins were to be seen, she had heard, in various parts of the country, that is, wherever one of the mountainous ranges above the level of the swamp. Also the caves in which they lived had been hollowed out of the rocks by men, perhaps the same who built the cities. They themselves had no written law, only custom, which was, however, quite as binding as law. If any man offended against the custom, he was put to death by order of the Father of the "Household." I asked how he was put to death, and she only smiled, and said that I might see one day soon.

They had a Queen, however. She was their Queen, when she came forth to pass sentence on some offenders, and when seen was snuffed up in a big cloak, so that nobody could look upon her face. Those who waited upon her were deaf and dumb, and therefore could tell no tales, but it was reported that she was lovely as no other woman

was lovely, or ever had been. It was rumoured also that she was immortal, and had power over all things, but she, Ustane, could say nothing of all that. What she believed was that the Queen chose a husband from time to time, and as soon as a female child was born the female child grew up and took the place of the Queen when its mother died, and had been buried in the great caves. But of these matters none could speak for certain. Only Sura was obeyed throughout the length and breadth of the land, and to question her commands was certain death. She kept a guard, but had no regular army, and to dislodge her was to die.

I asked what the land was, and how many people lived in it. She answered that there were ten "Households" like this that knew the "Households" lived in caves, in places like this stretch of raised to be threaded by secret paths. Often the "Households" made war on each other until Sura's word that it was to stop, and then they instantly ceased. That was the fever which they caught in crossing the swamps was what kept their numbers from increasing too much. They had no connection with any other race, indeed none lived near them, or were able to thread the vast swamp. Once an army from the direction of the great river (presumably the Zambezi) had attempted to attack them, but they got lost in the marshes, and at night, seeing the great balls of fire that move about there, tried to come to them, thinking that it was the enemy's camp, and half of them were drowned. As for the rest, they soon died of fever and starvation, not a blow being struck at them. The marshes, she told us, were absolutely impassable except to those who knew the paths, adding that we should never have reached this place where we then were had we not been brought there.

These and many other things we learnt from Ustane during the four days' pause before our real adventures began, and, as may be imagined, they gave us considerable cause for thought. The whole thing was exceedingly remarkable, and yet incomparably so indeed, and the oldest part of it was that so far it did most less correspond to the ancient writing on the shield. And now it appeared that there was a mysterious Queen clothed by rumour with awful and wonderful attributes, and commonly known by the ingenious, yet to my mind, rather awesome title of Sura. All the same, I could not make it out, nor could Leo, though of course he was exceedingly triumphant over me because I had persistently cracked at the whole thing. As for Job, he had long since abandoned any attempt to call his reason his own, and left it to drift upon the sea of circumstance. Mahomed, the Arab, who was, by the way, treated civilly indeed, but with chilling contempt, by the Amahagger, was, I discovered, in a great fright, though I could not quite make out what he was frightened about. He would sit crouched up in a corner of the cave all day long, calling upon Allah and the Prophet to protect him. When I pressed him about it he said that he was afraid, because these people were not men at all, but devils, and that this was an enchanted land; and once or twice since then I have been inclined to agree with him. So the time went on, till the night of the fourth day Billali had left, when something happened.

We three and Ustane were sitting round the fire in the cave just before bedtime, when suddenly the woman, who had been brooding in silence, rose, and laid her hand upon Leo's golden curly hair and addressed him. Even now, when I shut my eyes, I can see her proud, imperial form, clothed alternately in dense shadow and the red flickering of the fire, as she stood, the wild centre of a weird scene as I ever witnessed, and delivered of herself the burden of her thoughts and forebodings in a kind of rhythmical speech that ran something as follows:—

"Then art my chosen—I have waited for thee from the beginning!

"Thou art very beautiful. Who hath hair like unto thee, or skin so white?

"Who hath so strong an arm, who is so such a man?

"Thine eyes are the sky, and the light in them is the stars.

"Thou art perfect and of a happy face, and my heart turned itself toward thee.

"Ay, when mine eyes fell on thee, I did desire thee,—

"Then did I take thee to me—thou, my Beloved,

"And hold thee fast, lest harm should come unto thee.

"Ay, I did covere these head with mine hair, lest the sun should strike it;

"And altogether was I thine, and thou wast altogether mine.

"And so it went for a little space, till Time was in labour with an evil Day;

"And then what befell upon that day? Alas! my Beloved, I knew not!

"But I, I saw thee no more—I, I was lost in the blackness.

"And she who is stronger did take thee; ay, she who is fairer than Ustane.

"Yet didst thou turn and call upon me, and let thine eyes wander in the darkness.

"But, nevertheless, the prevailed by Beauty, and led thee down heebrie places,

"And then, ah! then, my Beloved——"

Here this extraordinary woman broke off her speech, or chant, which was so much musical gibberish to us, for all we understood of what she was driving at, and seemed to fix her flashing eyes upon the deep shadow before her. All in a moment they acquired a vacant, terrified stare, as though they were trying to realize some half-sown horror. She lifted her hand from Leo's head, and pointed into the darkness. We all looked and could see nothing; but she saw something, or thought she did, and something evidently that affected even her iron nerves, for, without another sound, down she fell senseless between us.

Leo, who was growing really attached to this remarkable young person, was in a great state of alarm and distress, and I, to be perfectly candid, was in a condition not far removed from superstitious fear. The whole scene was an uncanny one.

Presently, however, she recovered, and sat up with an extraordinary convulsive shudder.

"What didst thou mean, Ustane?" asked Leo, who, thanks to years of tuition, spoke Arabic very prettily.

"Nay, my chosen," she answered with a little forced laugh. "I did but sing unto thee after the fashion of my people. Surely, I meant nothing. How could I speak of that which is not yet?"

"And what didst thou see, Ustane?" I asked.

"Nay," she answered again; "I saw naught. Ask me not what I saw. Why should I fight ye?" and then turning to Leo with a look of the most utter tenderness that I ever saw upon the face of woman, civilised or savage, she took his head between her hands, and kissed him on the forehead as a mother might. "When I am gone from thee, my chosen, when at night thou stretchest out thine hand and canst not find me, then thou shouldst not think of times of me, for of a truth I love thee well, though I be not fit to wash thy feet. And now let us love and take that which is given us, and be happy; for in the grave there is no love and no warmth, nor any touching of the lips. Nothing perchance, or perchance but bitter memories of what might have been. To-night the hours are our own; how know we to whom they shall belong to-morrow?"

Note.—Our illustration on page 447 will be described next week.

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"I took this cold fragment of mortality in my hand, and looked at it in the light of the lamp with feelings which I cannot describe."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Head*," etc.

VIII.

THE FEAST, AND AFTER!

On the day following this remarkable scene, a scene calculated to make a deep impression upon anybody who beheld it, more than upon what is suggested by the word "founding" than for what is needed, it was announced to us that a feast would be held that evening in our honor. I did my best to get out of it, saying that we were modest people, and cared little for feasts; but my motives being couched with the silence of dissemblers, I thought proper to hold my tongue.

According to plan however said so, I was informed that everything was ready, and, accompanied by Job, went into the cave, where was Lin, who was, as usual, followed by Ursino. There we had time out walking somewhere, and having done so, the projected feasting till that moment. When Ursino heard of it I saw an expression of alarm spring up upon his handsome features. Tearing the caught a man who was passing up the slope by the path, and used him something in an impudent manner. Ursino seemed to remember her a little, for he turned and saluted, though far from glad. Next he appeared to attempt some remonstrance with the man, but was a picture in asperity; but he spoke angrily to her, and shook her off, and then changing his mind, led her by the arm, and set her down between himself and another man in the

circle round the fire, and I perceived that for some reason of his own the thoughts it went to were not pleasant.

The fire that night was an unusually big one that night, and in a large circle round it were gathered about thirty-five men and two women. Ursino and the woman to avoid whom Job had played the rôle of another Scriptural character. The woman was a tall, silent, silent, an who had come with him, with his great spear stuck fast in the ground in a socket cut in the rock for that purpose. Only one or two were the preludial *Iban* garment of which I have spoken, the rest had nothing on except the leopard's skin about the middle.

"What's up now, sir?" said Job, dubiously. "Please us and save us, and don't you want me again. Now, mostly, she can't be after us, seeing that I have given her no encouragement. They give me the creeps, the whole lot of them, and that's a fact. Why, look, they have naked Mahomedans to slice, too. Then, that's why I'm talking to you at once and civil a way as possible. Well, I'm going to have a smoke, that's all."

We looked up, and saw through the woman in question had risen, and was escorting the wretched Mahomedan from the fire, overcome by some amount of heat, which he had been exposed to shivering, and crying on Allah. He appeared unwilling enough to come, of course, for other reasons perhaps because it was an assassination however, for hitherto his food had been given to him apart. Anyway

I could see that he was in a state of great terror, for his thinning legs would scarcely support his stout, bulky form, and I think it was rather owing to the influence of barbituric behind him, and in the shape of a huge *Anabaggeg* with a proportionately larger upper, than to the influence of the lady who led him by the hand, that he endeavored to come at all.

"Well," I said to the others, "I don't at all like the looks of things, but I suppose that we must face it out." Have you often got your neckbones on ? Because, if so, you had better see that they are not broken."

"I have, sir," said Job, tapping his Cobb, "but Mr. Lee has only got his hunting-knife, though that is big enough, surely."

Feeling that it would not do to wait while that missing weapon was found, we advanced to the hole of the cove.

As soon as we were seated, an earthenware jar was passed round containing a fermented fluid, of by no means unpleasant taste, though apt to turn upon the stomach, made of coarse grass, and the stalks of which were dried and split, and the upper stems in clusters, not unlike that which is the southern part of Africa is known by the name of Kafir corn. The vase in which this liquid was handed round was very curious, and as it more or less resembled many hundreds of others in use among the *Anabaggeg* I may as well describe it. These vases are of a very ancient manufacture, and

at my age, that I should like a man. What says the proverb—" Mistreat all men, and shun him whom thou mistrustest overmuch; and as for women, flee from them, for they are evil, and in the end will destroy thee." It is a good proverb, especially the last part; I think it must have come down from the ancients. Nevertheless I like this Baboon, and I wonder where they taught him his tricks, and I trust that *she* will not bewitch him. Poor Baboon! he must be wearied after that fight. I will go less I should awake him."

I waited till he had turned and was nearly through the entrance, walking softly on tiptoe, and then I called after him.

"My father," I said, "is it thou?"

"Yes, my son, it is I; but let me not disturb thee. I did but come to see how thou didst fare, and to tell thee that those who would have slain thee, my Baboon, are by now well on their road to *she*. She said that ye were to come after us, but I fear ye cannot yet."

"Now," I said, "not till we have recovered a little; but have me borne out into the daylight, my father. I like not this place."

"Ah, no," he answered, "it hath a sad air. I remember when I was a boy I found the body of a fair woman lying where you lie now, yet, on that very bench. She was so beautiful that I used to sleep in here with a lamp and gaze upon her. Had it not been for her cold hands, almost could I think that she slept and would one day awake, so fair and peaceful was she in her robe of white. White was she, too, and her hair was yellow, and lay down her almost to the feet. There are many such still in the tombs at the place where *she* is, for those who set them there had a way I know thought of, of keeping their beloved out of the crushing hand of Decay, even when Death had slain them. Ay, day by day I rame higher, and gazed on her till at last—laugh not at me, stranger, for I was but a silly lad—I learned to love that dead form; that shell that once had held a life that no more is. I would creep up to her and kiss her cold face, and wonder how many men had loved and died since she was, and who had loved her and embraced her in the days that long had passed away. And my Baboon, I think I learnt wisdom from that dead one, for of a truth it taught me of the brevity of life, and the length of Death, and how all things that are under the sun go down the path, and are for ever forgotten. And is it not true, as it seemed to me that wisdom showed me, that from that dead one, till one day my master, a wretched woman, but half-gone mad, coming, I was changed, followed me round the benches, white, too, and feared I was bewitched, as indeed, I was. So half in fear, and half in anger, she took the lamp, and standing the dead one up against the wall there, set fire to her hair, and she burst fiercely, even down to the feet, for those who are thus kept burn excellently well. See, my son, there on the roof is yet the smoke of her burning."

I looked up doubtfully, and there, sure enough, on the roof of the sepulchre was a peculiarly unctuous and smoky mark, three feet or more across. Doubtless it had in the course of years been rubbed off the sides of the little cave, but on the roof it remained, and there was no mistaking its appearance.

"She burst," he went on in a meditative way, "even to the feet, but the feet I came back and saved, cutting the burst bone from them, and hid them under the stone bench there, wrapped up in a piece of linen. Surely, I remember it as though it were but yesterday. Perchance they are there if none have found them, even to this hour. Of a truth I have not entered this chamber from that time to this very day. Stay, I will look," and, kneeling down, he groped about with his long arm in the recess under the stone bench. Presently his face brightened, and with an exclamation he pulled something forth that was caked in dust; which he shook on to the floor. It was covered with the remains of a rotting rag, which he undid, and never to my amazement gazed a beautifully shaped and almost white woman, looking as fresh and as firm as though it had been plied there yesterday.

"Thou seest, my son, the Baboon," he said, in a sad voice, "I speak the truth to thee, for here is yet one foot remaining. Take it, my son, and gaze upon it."

I took this cold fragment of mortality in my hand and looked at it in the light of the lamp with feelings which I cannot describe, so mixed up were there between astonishment, fear, and fascination. It was light, much lighter I should say than that had been in the living man, and the flesh to all appearance was still flesh, though about it there clung a faintly aromatic odour. For the rest it was not shrunk or shrivelled, or even black and unsightly, like the flesh of Egyptian mummies, but plump and fair, and, except where it had been slightly burnt, perfect as on the day of death—a very triumph of embalming.

Poor little foot! I set it down upon the stone bench where it had lain for so many thousand years, and wondered whose was the beauty that it had borne through the pomp and pageantry of a forgotten civilization—first as a merry child's, then as a rustling maid's, and finally as perfect woman's. Through what halls of life had its soft step sounded, and in the end, with what contempt had it trodden down the dusty ways of earth? To whom had it given holes in the bush of night as the black slave sleep upon the marble floor, and who had listened for its stealing? Shapely little foot! Well might it have been set upon the proud neck of a conqueror bent at last to woman's beauty, and well might the lips of nobles and of kings have been pressed upon its jewelled whiteness.

I wrapped up this relic of the past in the remnants of the old linen rag which had evidently formed a portion of its owner's grave-clothes, for it was partially burnt, and put it away in my Gladstone bag, which I had bought at the Army and Navy Stores, a strange combination I thought. Then with Billali's help I staggered off to see Leo. I found him dreadfully bruised, worse even than myself, perhaps owing to the excessive whiteness of his skin, and faint and weak with the loss of blood from the flesh wound in his side, but for all that cheerful as a cricket, and asking for some breakfast. Job and Ustase got him on to the bier, or rather the sacking of a litter, which was removed from its pole for that purpose, and carried him out into the shade of the mouth of the cave, from which, by the way, every trace of the slaughter of the previous night had now been removed, and there we ate breakfast, and indeed spent that day, and most of the two following.

On the third morning Job and myself were practically recovered. Leo also was so much better that I yielded to Billali's often expressed entreaty, and agreed to start at once upon our journey to Kör, which we were told was the same of the place where the mysterious *she* lived, though I still feared for its effects upon Leo, and especially lest the motion should cause his wound, which was scarcely skinned over, to break open again. Indeed, had it not been for Billali's evident anxiety to get off, which led us to suspect that some difficulty or danger might threaten us if we did not comply with it, I would not have consented to go.

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"Behold the House of Six-tire-and-a-half," said Billiki. "Had ever a queen such a shrine before?" "It is wonderful, my father," I answered.

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The White Head," &c.

CHAPTER X.

SPECULATIONS

WE HAD an hour of rest finally deciding to start five litters were brought up to the door of the cave, each accompanied by four regal sentries and two others who also had a hand of them. They would accompany us, we were to find that they were the best guides. Three of these litters, of course, were for us, and one for Billiki, while I was immensely relieved to hear, was to be our companion, while the fifth I presumed was for the use of Utstein.

"Behold the lady go with us, my father?" I asked of Billiki, as he stood over me, regarding me curiously.

He shrugged his shoulders as he answered,

"If she will. In this country the women do what they please. We worship them, and give them their way, because without them we could not live; they are not so much as the birds of the air."

"Ah," I said, the winter scene having struck me in that light before.

"We worship them," he went on, "up to a certain point, till at last they get austerities, which," he added, "they do about every month."

"And then what do you do?" I asked, with curiosity.

"Then," he answered with a faint smile, "we sin, and kill the old ones as an example to the young ones, and to show them that we are the magicians. My poor wife was lost in that way three years ago. It was very hard for me, but the woman my wife has been happy since, for my age protects me from the young ones."

"To shoot," I replied, quoting the saying of a great sage whose name has not yet lightened the darkness of the Adiugeger. "Thus have I found the position one of greater freedom and responsibility."

This phrase puzzled him a little at first from its vagueness, though I think my translation hit off its sense very well, but at last he understood it, and appeared to

"Yes," he said, "I see it now, but all the 'responsibilities' are killed, at least most of them are, and that is why these are no few old women about just now. Well, they brought it on themselves. As for this girl, she were in a grand town, and there were many women there, and all the old ones had almost have knocked these over with a stick."

"Among these litters I especially noticed a very beautiful variety of painted snake, alcane the size of a woodcock, and with a flight more resembling bird's

to go where he goes, unless," he added, significantly, "she should say her no, for her word overrides all right."

"And if she bids her leave him, and the girl refused? What then?"

"H—" he said, with a shrug, "the hurricane bids the tree to bend, and the tree does what happens."

And then, following a long silence, he turned and walked to his litter, and in ten minutes from that time we were all well under weight.

It took us an hour, and more to cross the cup of the vast valley, and the path led us to climb the edge of the further side.

Once there, however, the path was a smooth, easy one.

Before us was a long steep slope of grassy plain, broken here and there by clumps of trees mostly of the shea-tree.

At the bottom of the gentle slope, some six or ten miles from the distant swamp, were a number of huts, the abodes of the natives down the slopes, and by mid-day we had reached the borders of the dismal swamp. Here we halted to eat our mid-day meal, and then followed along a winding and devious path, plunged into the vegetation. Presently a park-like opening, a glade to the eye, seemed to grow to meet us as far as the eye could peep from those made by the aquatic beasts and birds, and it is to this day a mystery to me how our hunters found their way across the marshes, the paths being so easily obscured by the new and long poles, which they one and again plucked from the ground.

The soil was a dark brown mud, new with long poles, which were one and again plucked from the ground.

The reason being that the nature of the soil frequently changes from month to month, and the plants that would be safe enough to grow one month would certainlyoulder another the next.

Never did I see such a dreary and desolate scene.

Miles on miles of mangrove, variegated by bright green strips of comparatively solid ground, and by deep and ranket pools fringed with tall reeds, in which the herons haunched and the frogs croaked, and the birds sang, and the insects buzzed, and the fever fog can be called a break."

The only life in the greatest swamps was that of the aquatic birds, and the animals that fed on them, of both of which there were many numbers. Geese, cranes, ducks, teal, spoon-bills, and plough-billed all round us, many being of the latter species.

There were many monkeys, and the apes, and the dogs, and the bats, almost have knocked these over with a stick."

"Among these litters I especially noticed a very beautiful variety of painted snake, alcane the size of a woodcock, and with a flight more resembling bird's

than an English spigot's. In the pools, too, was a species of small alligator, and venomous iguanas. I do not know what they are. Billiki told me, upon the water-hole, the large varieties of a hideous black water snake, of which the bite is very dangerous, though not fatal, so deadly as a cobra's or a puff adder's. The bull-frogs were also very large, and with voices proportionate to their size; and as the water was shallow, the frogs were easily seen, and when they had been on the river, and remained as greatly. Unfortunately, the worst feature of the swamp was the awful smell of rotting vegetation that hung about it, that was at times positively overpowering, and the maddening, ethereal odors that accompanied it, which we were compelled to inhale.

On we went through it all, till at last we ran into a millenial splendor just as we reached a spot of rising ground about two acres in extent—a little oasis of dry in the midst of the miry wilderness, however, turned out to be a very pleasant and comfortable fact, in sitting down on the ground round a scanty fire made of dry reeds and some wood that had been brought with us. However, we made the best of it, and smoked and ate with such appetite as we could, and when we had finished our meal, and were about to sit down, a large, fat, ugly, snarling, chilly at times, dog, however hot it was, we were glad enough to keep near the fire, because we found that the mosquitoes did not like the smoke. Presently we stretched ourselves up in the sun, and began to go to sleep, but so far as I was concerned the half-light and the soft, hush, hush, and alarming sound produced by hundreds of salamanders hibernating in the soil, made sleep impossible, so my making of one other distinction, I lay back and buried myself in the sand, and soon, as I was to learn, I fell fast asleep.

Presently I was awakened by a sharp snap, and a yell, and a shout, and by the flickering firelight, I saw Utstein, who was lying on the other side of him, naked himself from nose to tit, and spew over all, as he looked at him seriously enough.

"However, you are not fit for him, for we had all already taken a good dose of poison, which was the only preventative we had; so I lay and watched the stars come out by thousands, till all the immense arch of Heaven was seen with glittering points, and every point a world! How was a glorious sight by which one might well wonder! Utstein, I say, was a giant, and when he awoke, he was for the mind warries easily when it strives to grapple with the infinite, and to trace the footsteps of the Almighty as life strides from sphere to sphere, or deduce His purpose from His works. Such things are not

fall led, so that we could not learn the secret of the paths through the bowels of the mountain. To this I of course assented cheerfully enough, but Jao, who was now very much better, notwithstanding the journey, did not like it at all, fearing, I believe, that it was not a safe place for a young hot-potter. He was, however, a little comical when I pointed him to the path that was not hot pots handy, and, so far as I knew, no fire to heat them in. As for poor Leo, after turning restlessly for hours, he had, to my deep thankfulness, at last dropped off into a sleep or stupor, I don't know which, so there was no need to blindfold him. The blindfolding was performed by binding tightly round the eyes a piece of the yellowish linen whereof those of the Amahagger who condescended to wear anything in particular made their dresses. This linen I afterwards discovered was taken from the torto, and was not, as I had at first supposed, of native manufacture. The bandage was bound round the neck, the head, and finally brought down again, and the ends turned under the chin, to prevent its slipping. Ustaae, by the way, was also blindfolded. I do not know why, unless it was from fear that she should impart the secrets of the route to us. This operation performed we waited an hour or two, and soon, by the echoing sound of the footsteps of the bears and the increased noise of the water caused by reverberation in a confind space, I knew that we were entering into the bowels of the great mass. It was an eerie sensation, being borne along into the heart of a mountain we knew not whether, but I was getting used to eerie sensations by this time, and by now was pretty well prepared for anything. So I lay still, and listened to the trumpet, the roar of the bear, and the rustling of the torto, and tried to believe that this experience was not new. Presently the men set up the melancholy little chant that I had heard on the first night when we were captured in the whale-boat, and the effect produced by their voices was very curious, and quite indescribable on paper. After a while the air began to get exceedingly thick and heavy, so much so, indeed, that I felt as though I were going to choke, till at length I felt the litter take a sharp turn, when another and another, and the sound of the rushing water ceased. After this the air got flesher again, but the bears were consciousness, and to me blindfolded as I was, most bewildering. I tried to keep a map of them in my mind in case it might ever be necessary for us to try and escape by this route, but, naturally, to say, failed utterly. Another hour or two passed, and then suddenly, because we knew that we were now in the open air, I could see the light, through my bandage and feel the freshness of it on my face. A few more minutes and the caravan halted, and I heard Biridi order Ustaae to remove her bandage and undo ours. Without waiting for her attention I got the knot of white loast, and looked out.

As I anticipated, we had passed right through the precipice, and were now on its further side, and immediately beneath its beetling face. The first thing I noticed was that it was not nearly so high here, not so high I should say by five hundred feet, which proved that the bed of the lake, or rather of the vast ancient crater in which we stood, was much higher than the surrounding plain. For the rest, we found ourselves in a huge rock-surrounded cup, not unlike that of the old place where we had been captured, but on a larger scale. Indeed, one could easily make out the breeding-line of the opposite cliffs. A great portion of the plain thus enclosed by nature was cultivated, and fringed in with walls of stone placed there to keep the cattle and goats, of which there were large herds about, from breaking into the gardens. Here and there rose great grass mounds, and some miles away towards the centre I thought that I could see the outline of colonial ruins. I had no time to observe anything more at the moment, for we were instantly surrounded by crowds of Amahagger, similar in every particular to those with whom we were already familiar, who, though they spoke little, pressed round us so closely as to obscure the view to a person lying in a hammock. Then all of a sudden a number of armed men arranged in a regular formation, and by their voices told as every man in their ranks, came running rapidly towards us, bearing so far as I could make out, emerged from the face of the precipice like ants from their burrows. These men as well as their officers were all robed in addition to the usual leopard skin, and, as I gathered, formed the body guard of *Sie* herself.

Their leader advanced to Billali, saluted him by placing his ivory wand transversely across his forehead, and then asked some question which I could not catch, and Billali having answered him the whole equipment turned and marched along the side of the cliff, our cavalcade of litterers following their track. After going thus for about half a mile we halted once more in front of the mouth of a tremendous ravine, measuring about fifty feet. In here lay eighty men, and here Billali and his force had received orders from *Sie* herself to do the same. Leo of course was far too ill to do anything of the sort. I did so, and we entered the great cave, into which the light of the setting sun penetrated for some distance, while beyond the reach of the light it was faintly illuminated with lamps which seemed to me to stretch away for an almost immeasurable distance, like the gas lights of an empty London street. Another thing that I noticed was that the walls were covered with sculptures in bas-relief, of a sort, plastically speaking, similar to those that I have described upon the vases, love scenes principally, then battle pictures, and scenes of extraction, and the torture of criminals, the whole of which had elicited this pleasant memory. There were very few battle-pieces, though many of darts, and men running and wrestling, and from this fact I am led to believe that this people was not much subject to attack by exterior foes, either on account of the isolation of their position, or because of their great strength. Between the pictures were columns of stone characters of a formation absolutely new to me; at any rate they were neither Greek nor Egyptian, nor Hebrew, nor Assyrian—that I can swear to. They had, however, Chinese characters, though nothing else. Near to the entrance of the cave both pictures and writing were not many, but farther in they were in most cases absolutely fine and perfect as the day or as the sculptor had caused work upon them.

The regiment of guards did not come further than the entrance to the cave, where they formed up to let us pass through. On entering the place itself we were, however, met by a man robed in white, who bowed himself, but said nothing, which, as it afterwards appeared that he was a deaf mute, was not very wonderful.

Rushing at right angles to the main cave at a distance of some twenty feet from the entrance was a smaller cave or gallery, that was gashed into the rock, back to the right and to the left of the main cave. At the mouth of this gallery to the left stood two guards, and from this circumstance I argued that it was the entrance to the apartments of *Sie* herself. The entrance to the right they had unroofed, and down this the mute indissolubly we were to proceed. A few yards down this gallery, which was lighted with lamps, we came to the entrance to a chamber with a certain made of some grass material, not unlike a Zanzibar mat in appearance, hung over the doorway. This the mute drew back with another profound obeisance, and led the way into a good-sized apartment, known, of course, out of the wild rock, out to my greatest delight lighted by means of a short platform in the form of the precipice. In this room was a large brazier, pots full of water for washing, and a number of leopard skins to serve as blankets.

Here, left Leo, who was still sleeping heavily, and with him stayed Ustaae. I noticed that the mute gave her a very sharp look, as much as to say "Who are you, and by whose orders do you come here?" Then he conducted us to another similar room which Billali took, and then to two more that were respectively occupied by Billali and myself.



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"The hand grasped the curtain, and drew it aside."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The Witch's Head," etc.

XII.

"She"

That first year of job and myself, after owing to Leo, was to teach ourselves how to live, for what we were earning had not been enough since the loss of the dove. Fortunately, we had already sold, by far the greater part of our personal baggage had already been packed into the whale-boat, and was therefore easily got rid of. We had also a number of clothes laid by us for bait and presents to the natives were last. Nearly all our clothing was made of a well-stretch and very strong grey flannel and muslin. I found it far travelling in these places, however, that. Now, though, I had not much money, I had only a eighth about four pounds, a great consideration in a tropical country, where every extra ounce falls on the water, it was necessary to have good resistance to the rays of the sun, and best of all to cloth, which was no joy to result from sudden changes of temperature.

Never shall I forget the anguish of the "wash and break-up," while I lay in my hammock. The only thing that was wanting to complete my joy was a cake of soap, but I had none.

Moreover I observed that the Amazighs, who do not notice

the many distinguishable qualities, are a kind of honest folk for their working purposes, which, though unpleasing to the taste, all go to the bottom, so that they are not minded for soap.

By this time that I was dressed, and had combed and trimmed my hair, I had, though, the desire to wash, but I could not

consciously undertake to give weight to Bibi's appetites for me, the Babou, I began to feel most unconsciously hungry. Therefore

I took up an instant, when, without the slightest preoccupation, I began to eat, and the more I ate, the more I cared not about washing, and, indeed, a young girl this time, announced to me by signs that I could not misunderstand—that it, by spilling her mouth and pointing down—other there was something ready to eat. So I sat down, and, though I had to sit at the foot of the table along with the other slaves, I did not mind it, for the Babou, who had not yet entered, where I found Leo, who had also, to his great consternation, been condemned thither by a fate made. I had not yet got over the advances the forest had made to me, and expected every moment to be pounced upon by some tiger or panther.

"These young ponies have a way of looking as one, etc., etc." he would say apologetically, "which I don't call responsible."

This fourth room was twice the size of the sleeping cases, and I can at once that it had been divided across in a rectangular form, probably as an encampment room for the Prince of the Seed; for I may as well say as anyone these half-buried-out cases were nothing more or less than vast enclosures, in which for tens of ages the several tribes of the desert had been encamped, and which had probably been first partitioned, with an art not a conqueror that has never since been equalled, and thus hidden away for all time. On each side of this room—whether it was a long ridge which subsides into a valley, or a deep ravine, or a rocky spur, I do not know—was a rock, of which a had formed part, and was still attached to, at the base. These tables were slightly hollowed out or carved around, to give room for the bases of my one slatted case on the floor, the ledge that had been built into the rock, so that it stood at a convenient height above them. Each of these was so arranged that it ended right under a short pierce in the rock for the admission of light and air, and, surrounding them, naturally, I sat down. There was a difference between those that had been, but scarcely any, however, between the two that I sat on, as we entered the room, that one of the tables, that to the left as we entered the room, had evidently been used, one, to eat on, but for the purpose of eating, however, had been removed. This had been beyond all question, from five days ago, disappeared in the middle of the table, all shaped like a human form, with a saucer place for the head in it, and a little bridge to support the neck, such disappearance being of a common occurrence in the desert, where the bones of the dead grow men's in a small child's, and with little holes bored at intervals to carry off fluid. And, indeed, if say further confirmation were required, to the right of the table, at the end of the same shelf, was a skull, with the hair hanging down the back. The Babou, who had been seated at the foot of the table, was the principal representation of the death, embalming, and burial of my old man, a long boney, probably an ancient king or general of this country.

The first picture represented his death. He was lying upon a couch which had fine short curved points at the corners coming out of the back, and which was covered with a thin, transparent robe of camel's hair, and was evidently in the very act of expiring. Gathered round the couch were women and children weeping, the former with their hair hanging down the back. The Babou, who had been seated at the foot of the table, which he had upon a table with dimensions in it, similar to the one before, probably, indeed, is was a picture of the same table. "These were wife

employed at the work—our vapour-bathing, our holding a funeral service for the dead who were buried in which the body was laid in an incision into breast, no doubt in the great physical agony, while the third, who was represented as standing double-legged over the corpse, held a kind of large jar high in his hand, which he was pouring over the body, so that the liquid ran directly into the breast. The most curious part of this sculpture is that both the men with the jar and the man who poured the fluid are represented as holding their noses, either to keep the smell of the aromatic waters of the hot fluid which was being poured into the dead man's veins. Another curious thing which I am unable to imagine is that all three had a hand of bone tied round the middle with bands in the eyes."

The third sculpture represented the burial of the deceased. There he was, stiff and cold, clasped in a litter, and laid out on an ornate bed, with a canopy over him, and a large lamp at his head and feet having a lamp, and by his side were placed several of the beautiful polished vases that I have described, which were probably supposed to be full of incense. The little lamp was suspended over the bed, so that it hung over a sort of vase on a sort of base, while near the foot of the carpet stood a man with a chest, with which he was preparing to cover it from view.

"These men, however, however, however, however, were no relatives, I make no apology for describing them rather fully. They struck me also as being of surpassing interest as representing, probably with students among the less wise of the dead as practice, and among the more learned as people who had been buried, though I might add, that the figures of my own at Gainsborough would be it if I got an opportunity of describing them wonderful remains to show. Possibly they thought of this litter, and the other ornate embroidery of its parts, that it would obviously have been quite impossible for me to have invented it."

"I think, however, that we were soon seated in a sort, we sat down to a very excellent meal of boiled goat's flesh, fresh milk, and eaten made of wood, the whole being served upon clean wooden plates."

When we had eaten we returned to see how poor Leo was getting on. Bill had said that he must now wear a cap and have her commands. On reaching Leo's room we found the poor boy in a

what we live; for between us there might be a wall I could not climb, at least, I have seen. Surely every world is to be lost the way in those gaps where the sun wander on for ever. But the day will come, very when the thoughts of mortality are cast off, when the last place of night, when he shall lie here alone, will find me here, and of a sudden it will seem as if the world had gone. Then—then, if ever he comes again, he knows, he can not again, for will he give me, if only for my beauty's sake?"

For a moment I was disconcerted, and could not answer. The statue was now hovering over me, like a spectre.

"The sun is at Queen's," I said at last, "even if we may be born again and again, that is not so with them, if they should truly. Here she looked up sharply, and after a long moment of silence, her eyes met mine again. "Then, even if the world ends?"

"No," she said, "it is to human I have, half by choice and half by learning, solved one of the great secrets of the world. Tell me what you know about the world, and then tell me what you know about me? When are one or twenty or fifty thousand years in the history of the world? Why in ten thousand years—when will the sun and moon lesson a thousand years, up to space in darkness? This is thought, but the brains and heart, who is in the brains, is thought. Life is wonderful, my boy, but death is more wonderful still."

"What is death?" I asked. "What is death?" she repeated.

"Death is not death," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the body?" I asked. "What is the body?" she asked.

"The body is not the body," she said, "but the end of life."

"But the soul?" I asked. "What is the soul?" she asked.

"The soul is not the soul," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the spirit?" I asked. "What is the spirit?" she asked.

"The spirit is not the spirit," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the mind?" I asked. "What is the mind?" she asked.

"The mind is not the mind," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the heart?" I asked. "What is the heart?" she asked.

"The heart is not the heart," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the love?" I asked. "What is the love?" she asked.

"The love is not the love," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the beauty?" I asked. "What is the beauty?" she asked.

"The beauty is not the beauty," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the strength?" I asked. "What is the strength?" she asked.

"The strength is not the strength," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the wisdom?" I asked. "What is the wisdom?" she asked.

"The wisdom is not the wisdom," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the courage?" I asked. "What is the courage?" she asked.

"The courage is not the courage," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the happiness?" I asked. "What is the happiness?" she asked.

"The happiness is not the happiness," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the love?" I asked. "What is the love?" she asked.

"The love is not the love," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the beauty?" I asked. "What is the beauty?" she asked.

"The beauty is not the beauty," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the strength?" I asked. "What is the strength?" she asked.

"The strength is not the strength," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the wisdom?" I asked. "What is the wisdom?" she asked.

"The wisdom is not the wisdom," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the courage?" I asked. "What is the courage?" she asked.

"The courage is not the courage," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the happiness?" I asked. "What is the happiness?" she asked.

"The happiness is not the happiness," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"But the love?" I asked. "What is the love?" she asked.

"The love is not the love," she said, "but the end of life, when life is over."

"Any, one thing, oh Apollo," I said boldly, but halting by force. "I have looked out in her hall—no notes. "Apollo then, Holly," she answered, "you are right. It is true that there were the old myths of the gods of Greece. Was there not one Ariane who perished miserably because he looked on too much beauty? If I perchance may say this, perchance you would partly understand: perchance you may be the better to hear it, and therefore I say it, for I am not for them—I am for man, man's wife, who hath been born, but is not yet."

"Aye, yes, yes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

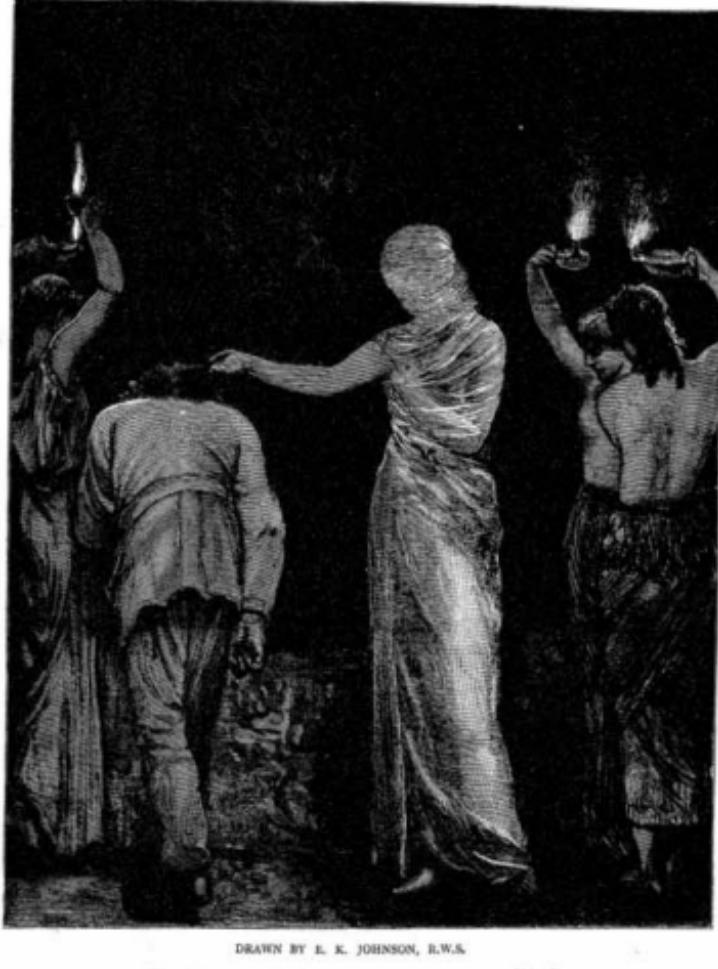
"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

"Nay, thou erring youth, that does not prove. My beauty entices, and I could not if I will. Aye, man, beauty will; but blisse not me if parades himself thy realm, as the Egyptian brawlers used to mount a horse, and girdle it whether this will see. Never may the sun to whom my beauty hath born her arms be vailed, but they see me, and I should stay thus. Stay, with these eyes."

"Stay, with these eyes, Apollo," I said. "I fear not thy beauty. I have passed like a flower."

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"When the lamps were held up I saw that it was nothing but one vast charnel-house."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The Witch's Head*," &c.

XIV.

A SOUL IN SHELL.

It was nearly ten o'clock at night when I cast myself down upon my bed, and began to gather my scattered wits, and reflect upon what I had done. But the more I reflected the less I could make of it. Was I mad? Was I in love? or, again, was I merely the victim of a gigantic and most elaborate hoax? How was it possible that a rational man, not acquainted with the more abominable parts of our history, and hitherto an absolute and utter duncing in all the branches of knowledge given by the way of the popular press, could believe that I had written the now famous novel? The thing was contrary to the experience of almost man, and absolutely and utterly impossible. It seemed a human act yet it was not; wherefore, making it fit to be, too, was no better proof of the figures on the water, of the woman's extraordinary acquaintance with the remote past; and her ignorance, or apparent ignorance, of any subsequent history? What, then, of the wonderful and weird loveliness? That, at any rate, was surely a mortal fact, and beyond the power of any man to disbelieve. No earthly mortal woman could shine with such a supernatural radiance. About that she had, at my rate, been in the right—it was not safe for any man to look upon such beauty. I was a hardened vessel in such matters, having, with the exception of one painful experience

of my green and tender youth, put the softer sex (I sometimes think that term is a misnomer) almost entirely from my thoughts. I did not care to go into the house. I knew that I could never put away the vision of those glorious eyes; and, alas, the very dialectics of the woman, whilst it horrified and repelled, fascinated even in a greater degree. A person with the experience of two thousand years at her disposal, composed of all the accumulated power of the world, of a judge of a mystery that had been off-shore, so certainly worth falling in love with, if ever woman was. But, alas, it was not a question of whether or no she was worth it, for so far as I could judge, not being versed in such matters, I, a billion of my colleagues, had been equally drawn to her. She had captured the heart of a respectable man now well on in middle life, had fallen absolutely and hopelessly in love with this white sorceress. Nonentity! She must be nonentity! She had warned me faintly, and I had refused to take the warning. Cries on the final curtain!—and a wretched man to drop dead like this, and to gaze on the mortal spectacle that begets it? It is the cause of half, ay, and more than half of our misfortunes. Why cannot man be content to live alone and be happy, and let the women live alone and be happy? But, then, I said to myself, I have a right to know who we should either. Here was a nice state of affairs. I, at my age, to fall a victim to this modern Cleo? But then she was not modern, at least she said not. She was almost as ancient as the original Cleo.

I rose my hair, and jumped up off my couch, feeling that if I did not do something I should also go off my head. What did she mean about the sarcophagus, too? It was Leo's sarcophagus, and had come out of the old coffin that Vincent had left in my socket nearly one-and-twenty years before. Could it be after all that whole story was true?—was I writing a history of the world?—a history, or an invention of the thick-necked, long-fingered Indians? And if so, could it be that Leo was the man that she was waiting for—the dead man who was to be born again? Impenetrable again! The whole thing was gibberish; who ever heard of a woman being a nonentity?

But if it were possible that a woman could exist for two thousand years, this might be possible also—anything might be possible. I myself might, for ought I know, be a million years of mass other stuff, self, or person, or whatever you like of names to call it. Well, never mind, why not? Only, unfortunately, I had no recollection of these previous conditions. The idea was so absurd to me that I burst out laughing, and, addressing the sculptured picture of a woman, I said, "Cleopatra, you are a woman, come to judgment. Who knows old fables?—perhaps I was once mortal, too." By Jove! perhaps I was you and you are I; and then I laughed again at my own folly, and the sound of it rang dimly along the vaulted roof, as though the ghost of the warrior had uttered the ghost of a laugh.

Next I thought that I had not been to see how Leo was,



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"Next instant her tall and willowy form was staggering back across the room."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Head*," etc.

CHAPTER XVI. (continued)

"COME," I said, "I have seen enough. These are the bodies of those who died of the great sickness, I suppose?" I added, as we turned away.

"Yes. The people of Khé always embodied their dead, like the Egyptians, but their art is greater than that of the Egyptians, because whereas the Egyptians dismembered and set down the brains and the kidneys and the livers, and other organs separately, they did not do this. Here, you see, they did it all—every part."

"The story, then, shall not end, and she halted at happens at one of the little doorways opening out of the passage along which we were walking, and listened to the sounds to the right of us. We entered a little chamber similar to the one we had just left, but of our five rooms there were now two more numbered, probably in it. On the benches lay figures covered with yellow linen, on which a fine and impalpable dust had gathered in the course of ages, but nothing like the easiest that one could have expected to find on such a bench. There was no sign of life or death. About the bodies on the stone shelves and floor of the tomb were many painted vases, but I saw very few ornaments in any of them."

"I'll bring the cloth up, oh Holly," she said, but though I put out my hand to do so I drew it back again.

"It seemed like negligence, and I sprang up, and went to the door of the chamber before us.

"There with a little laugh at my fears, she stopped, and, turning to direct me to the doorway, she began laying over the forms upon the bench. This she did with care, and then for the first time for thousands upon thousands of years did living eyes look upon the forms of those chilly dead. It was a woman, I saw, who had been the maid-servant of the great master, his dress and his ornaments, even more than his eyes, showed him to be a learned man, marked out with delicate black eyebrows and long eyelashes that showed little lines of shadow from the bags upon the lids. Her hair was unusually beautiful. The hair of the slaves who had been here had been strewn about, she slept her last long sleep, and on her arm, her face pressed against her breast, there lay a little babe.

"So much was the sight, although so awful, that—without shame—I could scarcely withhold my tears."

"All the time that the Andaman was far away from the world, it had remained in prison. It was well treated, however, and properly sheltered, is required to favour every whim; and was the saloon and boudoir I ever saw—L. H.

took one back across the dim gulf of the sky to some happy home in dead Imperial Khé, where this winsome lady girl awoke with beauty had lived and died, and dying taken her last-birth with her to the next.

Then they had married, and had a child, and the wife had given birth to the mother of a thousand more, making more numerous to the heart than could any writers record of their lives.

Reverently I replaced the grave clothes, and with a sigh that flowers on his shoulder, had the purpose of the everlasting, have only blossomed in his heart, he had come to the end of his life, and his spirit had gone to the spirit-world.

It was the figure of a young and advanced lady, with a long grizzled beard, and skin reddish in white, probably the husband of the lady who, after surviving her many years, came at last to sleep

now more for grace and for beauty than for age.

We had not far to go, and soon reached the entrance. It would be too long to describe the many things I saw in them. Each one had his occupants, for the low-hooded and odd years they had stayed between the beginning of the crusade and the dissolution of the Caliphate, and the number of years they had been immobile as they were, and each appeared to have been reconditioned since the day that they were laid there.

"We must stop at the entrance here. It would fit a book with the description of them, but to do so would only be to repeat what I have said, without adding to it."

Nearly all the bodies, so masterly was the art with which they had been treated, were as perfect as on the day of death themselves of years before. Nothing seems to injure them in the course of their long stay in the earth, save the want of heat and cold and sleep, and the scismatic drags with which they had been interred were evidently practically everlasting in their effect.

Here and there, however, we saw an exception, and in these cases the flesh had been partially broken through by the pressure of the earth, and the body had been partially buried.

This arose, Aprika told me, from these particular bodies having

the skin so tightly contracted that the pressure of the earth had caused the body to burst.

* Aprika afterwards showed me the bones from the bodies of which this unusual

pressure was manifested. It is a low-bellied bone, that is to say, the spine is somewhat bent, so that the ribs do not extend far forward, but are bent inwards, so that the spine is almost horizontal, and the abdomen is very small, so that the belly is very flat.

These bones are usually found in the remains of the dead, and the body is always bent over, as if it were in pain, and the hands are clasped behind the head.

These bones are found in the remains of the dead, and the body is always bent over, as if it were in pain, and the hands are clasped behind the head.

the flesh. About the last tomb we visited I wrote, however, my own wood, for its contents were even more abominably foul than those I had seen before, than any of the others had but two occupants, and they lay together on a single shelf. I withdrew the grave clothes, and, then, clasped heart to heart, was a young man and a blooming girl. His head rested on his arm, and his lips were pressed against her breast.

I opened the lid of his sarcophagus, and found the girl's fair breast was a fine crystal statue, through which her head had stood array. On the rock above was an inscription in three words. Aprika translated it. It was

"Wielded on Death."

What could be the history of these two, who, of a truth, were

beautiful in their lives, and in their death were not divided?

I closed my eyelids, and imagination taking up the thread of

thought that lie still shrank back again with a shudder, and the pictures of those blushing faces, and in the depth that I could

not understand, and in the depth that I had triumphed over the Past, and that my spirit's eye had perused Time's mystery.

I returned to see this fair girl, beweeping pale but streaming

down her garments, and again I gazed upon the scene lying

there, now white, than the rubor even dissimilating with its baseless

contents of blossoming gold. I seemed to see the green cave filled

with serpents, bearded and clad in red, and, on the right side, where Aprika had pointed, I saw a dark-robed youth, and near him a woman.

He was the chief of his party, and before him and behind him came his attendants and their auxiliaries, obliterating a wondrous song. While stood the master of the party, and when he spoke his voice was like

that of many cords than the deer that glitters in his heart. But

at the man drew near she shuddered. Thus out of the press and throng there sprang a dark-haired youth, and put his arm around the woman, and she quivered, and her eyes were fixed on him, in which

she looked like lights of the red dawn across the quiet sky. And next there was tumult and uproar, and a shaking of swords, and they tore the youth from her arms, and stabb'd him, but with a cry

however, was made from the room, as I among this people of Khé there was a

line which Aprika showed me, and on this line was a mark, and so to be made

with the drugs prepared from the roots. The abject and effeminate men, who

were, to give them the name, and from it the king of Khé derived a large pro-

portion of state-prince revenue.—L. H. H.

had been gone?" and she burst into an awful flood of tears, sobbing as though her heart would break, and yet managing to look lovelier than ever as she did it. At last she cried:

"Forgive me, my Holly—forgive me for my weakness," she said.
"Thou seest after all I am a very woman. Think—now think of it. This morning didst thou speak of the place of torment appointed by this new religion of thine. Hell or Hades thou dost call it—a place where the vital essence lives and retains an individual memory, and where all the errors and faults of judgment and unscientific piety and the unsubstantial terrors of the mind where-which it hath at any time had to do come to mock and taunt and gibe and wile the heart. And even then, even now, I have had of its own knowledge—This, even then, has I lived for two thousand—for some sixty generations, as ye reckon times—in a Hell, as they call it—tormented by the memory of a crime, tortured day and night with an unfertilized desire—without companionship, without comfort, without death, and led on only down my dreary road by the marsh lights of Hope, which though they flickered here and there, and now glowed strong, and now were not, yet, as my skill told me, would one day lead unto my deliverer.

"And then—think of it still, oh Holly, for never shall thou hear such another tale, or see such another scene, nay, not even if I give thee ten thousand years of life—and thou shalt have it in payment of thou wilt think: at last my deliverer came—he whom I had wished and waited for through the generations—at the appointed time his name to seek me as I knew him not, come!—but my wisdom could not tell though he drew near where or how. Yet see how ignorant I was! Such hours small my knowledge, and how faint my strength! Such hours he lay here sick unto death, and I felt it so—I who had waited for him for two thousand years—I knew it not. And then at last I set him, and behold, my chance is gone but by a hair's breadth even before I had it, for he is in the very jaws of death; whence no power of mine can draw him. And if he die, surely must the Hell be lived through once more—once more must I face the weary centuries, and wait, and wait till time in its fulness shall bring my beloved back to me. And then thou givest him the medicine and the five drops of the draught—before I knew if he would live or die—and I tell thee that all the many generations that are gone were not so long as that first minute. But they passed at last, and still he showed no sign, and I knew that if the drug works not then it, so far as I have had knowledge, works not at all. Then thought I that he was once more dead, and all the tortures of all the years gathered themselves into a single venomous spear, and pierced me through and through, because once again I had lost Kallikrates! And then, when all was done, behold! he sighed, behold! he lived, and I knew that he would live, for nane die on whom the drug taken hold. Think of it now, my Holly—think of the wonder of it! He will sleep for twelve hours, and then the fever will have left him!"

As she spoke, she laid her hand upon the golden head, and then bent down and kissed the brow with a chastened abandonment of tenderness that would have been beautiful to behold had not the right est me to the heart—for I was jealous!

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY H. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"Even now, mayhap, she bathes us."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The Wind's Head*," etc.

XVII.

"GO, WOMAN!"

Terry followed a silence of a minute or so, during which she seemed, if one might judge from the almost singular rapture of her face—for the last and sole consolation—in her heart, to be in a happy way. Suddenly, however, a new thought struck her, and her expression became the very reverse of angelic.

"What is she?—Kathleen—his servant, or —?" and she paused, and her voice trembled.

I shrugged my shoulders. "I understood that she is wed to him according to the custom of the Amahagger," I answered; "but I know not."

Her face grew dark as a thunder-cloud. Old as she was, Ayruka had not suffered jealousy.

"Then there is an end," she said; "she must die, even now!"

"For what crime?" I asked, horrified; "she is guilty of nothing, the others not guilty of themselves, oh Ayruka. She loves the man, and he has been pleased to accept her love; where, then, is her sin?"

"Truly, oh Holly, thou art foolish," she answered, almost pettishly. "Where is her sin? Her sin is that she stands between me and my desire. Well, I know that I can take her from her—she dwells there a man spin this earth, oh Holly, who

could resist me if I put out my strength? Men are faithful for as long only as temptations pique them, boy. If the temptation be but strong enough, then will the man yield, for every man, like every rope, hath his breaking-strain, and passion is to them what gold and power set to wealth—the weight upon their weakness, the load upon their strength. And if one be strong in virtue, the other will still, if the spirit be most fair, for their bodies will never tire to look upon them, and their hearts will burnise their hell. For man can be bought with woman's beauty, if it be but beautiful enough; and woman's beauty can be ever beautiful, if it be but fair enough. So it will be all day, and so it will be to the end of time. The world is a great mart, say Holly, where all things are for sale to him who bids the highest in the currency of our desires."

"These powers which were as cynical as night have been exercised over a woman like Ayruka, aged and experience, laid upon me, and I swooned, weakly, that in our heaven there was no marriage or giving in marriage."

"Else would it not be horizon, dust thou mat?" she panted, with a smile, then Holly, "I am not of us who are wise. I am it, then, marriage that marks the line between thy heaven and thy hell? But enough of this. This is no time for disputing and the challenge of our wits. Why does she always dispute? Art thou also a philosopher of these latter days? As for this woman, she must die; for though I can take her husband from her, yet,

while she lives, might he think tenderly of her, and that I cannot away with. No woman shall dwell in his thoughts; my empire shall be all my own. She hath had her day, he her instant; for better is an hour with love than a century of loneliness—now eight shall swallow her."

"So much I think, it would be a wicked crime; and then a criminal thought comes but what is evil. For the own sake do not we sin."

"It is, then, a crime, oh, foolish man, to put away that which winds about us, and out of us. Then is our happiness, say Holly, to lay hold on my Holly, and to dry up all that we may live, since in this world alone, save the strongest, can endure. Those who are weak must perish; the earth is no the strong, and the fruits thereof. For every tree that grows a wide shade and protects the dead bodies of those who are dead, there we win the food we eat from out the mouths of starving hakes. It is the scheme of things. Those repeat, too, that a crime breeds evil, but they have not had experience; for out of crimes come many good things, and out of good good things. The tyrant may prove a blessing to thousands who come after him, and the over-herrishness of a holy man may make a saint slave. Man dash this and dash that from the ground or shell of his heart; but he knoweth not to what end his moral sense dash poureth him; for when he striketh he is blind to where the blow shall fall, or

by his will. But if she was personally acquainted with a locality she could, as is the case of ourselves and the whaleboat, throw its reflection upon the water, and also the reflection of anything extraneous that was passing there at the time. This power, however, did not extend to the minds of others. For instance, she could show me the interior of my college chapel, as I remembered it, but not as it was at the moment of reflection; for, where other people were concerned, her art was strictly limited to the facts or memories inherent to their consciousness at the moment. So much was this the case, that when we tried, for her amusement, to show her pictures of well-known buildings, such as St. Paul's or the Houses of Parliament, the result was most imperfect; for, of course, though we had a good general idea of their appearance, we could not recall all the architectural details, and therefore the mimetic necessary to perfect reflection were wanting. But just as I used to be able to understand this, and so forth, according to a natural explanation of the matter, which was after all, though strange enough in all conscience, nothing more than an instance of glorified and perfected telepathy, he set the whole thing down as a manifestation of the blackest magic. I shall never forget the howl of terror which he uttered when he saw the more or less perfect portraits of his long-suffering brethren staring at him from the quiet water, or the merry play of laughter with which Aysha greeted his contumacious. As for Leo, he did not half like it either, but ran his fingers through his yellow curls, and remarked that it gave him a creeps.

After about an hour of this amusement, in the latter part of which John did not participate, the names by signs indicated that Billali was waiting for an audience. Accordingly he was told to "crawl up," which he did as awkwardly as usual, and announced that the dance was ready to begin. Sir and the white strangers would be pleased to attend. Shortly afterwards we all rose, and Aysha having thrown a dark cloak (the same, by the way, that she had worn when I saw her burning by the fire) over her white wrappings, was seated. The dance was to be held in the open air, on the smooth rocky plateau front of the great cave, and thither we made our way. About fifteen paces from the mouth of the cave we found three chairs placed, and here we sat and waited, for as yet no dancers were to be seen. The night was almost, but not quite, dark, the moon being now risen, yet, which made us wonder how we should be able to see the dancers.

"Will you kindly understand?" said Aysha, with a little laugh, when Leo asked her, and we certainly did. Scarcely were the words out of her mouth when from every point we saw dark forms rushing up, each bearing with them what we at first took to be enormous flaming torches. Whatever they were they were burning furiously, for the flames stood out a yard or more behind each bearer. On they came, fifty or more of them, looking like devils from hell, with their flaming burdens. Leo was the first to discover what these burdens were.

"Great heaven!" he shouted, "they are corpses on fire!"

I stared and stared again—he was perfectly right—the torches that were to light our entertainment were human mummies from the caves!

On rushed the bearers of the flaming corpses and meeting at a spot about twenty paces in front of us built their ghastly burdens crossways into a huge bonfire. Hereasil how they roared and fled. No ear barrel could have burnt as those mummies did. Nor was this all. Suddenly I saw one great fellow seize a flaming human arm that had fallen from its parent frame, and rush off into the darkness. Presently he stopped, and a tall streak of fire shot up into the air, illuminizing the gloom, and the last form with a sickle spring. The lamp was the arm of a woman fair, and a moment later the rest of the rump and the hair fell from her head. She uttered a few pants, and touched a second, then a third, and a fourth, till at last we were surprised on all three sides by a great ring of bodies fuming furiously, the material with which they were preserved having rendered them so inflammable that the flames would readily spout out of the ears and mouth in tongues of fire a foot or more long.

Now illuminated his garden with live Christians, soaked in tar, and we were now treated to a similar spectacle, probably for the first time since his day, only happily our lamps were not living ones.

But although this element of horror was fortunately wanting, to describe the awful and hideous grandeur of the spectacle thus presented to us, I feel, as absolutely beyond my poor powers, that I scarcely dare attempt it. To begin with, it appealed to the moral as well as the physical susceptibilities. There was something very terrible, and yet very fascinating, about the employment of the remote dead to illuminate the orgies of the living; in itself the thing was a satire, both on the living and the dead. Caesar's death—or is it Alexander's?—may stop a boughole, but the functions of these dead Caesars of the past was to light up a savage orgy. To the horrid use we do of us, of so little account are we in the minds of the egomaniacs we have bred, most of whom, so far from regarding our memory, will live to curse us for beggaring them into such a world of woes.

Then there was the physical side of the spectacle, and a weird and splendid one it was. Those old citizens of Kyle burnt, as I judge from their inscriptions, they had lived, very fast, and with the utmost liberality. What is more, there were plenty of them. As soon as ever a mummy had burst down to the ankles, the feet were kicked away, and another took its place. The bonfire was kept going on the same generous scale, and its flames shot up, with a hiss and a crackle, twenty or thirty feet into the air, throwing great flashes of light far out into the gloom, through which the dark forms of the Armaghanger flitted to and fro like devils replenishing the infernal fees. We all stood and stared agape—shocked, wifl yet fascinated—at so strange a spectacle, and half-expecting to see the spirits those flaming forms had once encased come creeping from the shadows to work vengeance on their descendants.

"I promised you a strange sight, my Holly," laughed Aysha, whose nerves alone did not seem to be affected; "and, behold, I have not failed that. Also, it hath its lesson. Trust not to the future, for who knows what the future may bring! Therefore, live for the day and endeavour not to eke out the date which seems to be set for us. What think thou those long-forgotten nobles and ladies would have left had they known that they should one day flie to light the dance or boil the pot of savages? But see, here come the dancers; a merry crew—are they not? The stage is lit—now for the play."

As she spoke, we perceived two lines of figures, one male and the other female, to the number of about a hundred, each advancing round the human bonfire, arrayed only in the usual leopards and hawk skins. They formed up, in perfect silence, in two lines, facing each other between us and the fire, and then the dance—a sort of infernal and fiendish cancan—began. To describe it is quite impossible, but, though there was a good deal of totting of legs and double-clapping, it seemed to us untautored minds to us mere of a play than a dance, and, as usual with this dreadful people, whose words seem to have taken their colour from the caves in which they live, and whose jokes and amusements are drawn from the macabre stories of preserved mortality with which they share their homes, the subject appeared to be a most ghastly one. I know that it represented an attempted murder of all, and then the lamentation of the victim and his wriggling from the grave, each act of the abominable drama, which was carried on in perfect silence, being rounded off and finished with a furious and most writhing dance round the supposed victim, who writhed upon the ground in the red light of the fire.

Presently, however, this pleasing piece was interrupted. Suddenly there was a slight commotion, and a great, powerful woman, whom I had noted as one of the most vigorous of the dancers, came, made mad and drunken with unwholesome excitement, bounding and staggering towards us, shrieking out as she came...

"I want a black goat, I must have a black goat, bring me a black goat!" and down she fell upon the rocky floor foaming and writhing, and shrieking for a black goat, about as hideous a spectacle as can well be conceived.

Instantly most of the dancers came up, and got round her, though some still continued their capers in the background. "She has got a Devil," sang out one of them. "Run as I get a black goat. There, Devil, keep quiet I keep quiet! You shall have the goat presently. They have gone to fetch it, Devil."

"I want a black goat, I must have a black goat!" shrieked the dancing, writhing creature again.

"A little, Devil, the goat will be here presently, keep quiet, there's a good Devil!"

And so on till the goat taken from a neighbouring kraal did at last arrive, being dragged bleeding on to the scene by its horns.

"Is it a black one, is it a black one?" she shrieked.

"Yes, yes, Devil, as black as night," then aside, "keep it behind another, don't let the Devil see it has got a white spot on its rump and another on its belly. In one minute, Devil. There, cut its throat quick. Where is the knife?"

"The goat! the goat! the goat! Give me the blood of my black goat! I must have it, don't you see I must have it? Oh! oh! I give me the blood of the goat!"

At this moment a terrified *sheep* announced that the poor goat had been sacrificed, and the next minute a woman ran up with a saucer full of the blood. This the possessed creature, who was then raving and foaming her wilder, seized and drank, rapidly recovered, and without a trace of hysteria, fit, or fits, or being possessed, or whatever dreadful thing it was she was suffering from. She stretched her arms, smiled faintly, and walked quickly back to the dancers, who presently withdrew in a double line as they had done, leaving the space between us and the bovine deserted.

I thought the entertainment (*sic!*) was now over, and, feeling rather queer, I turned to ask *Sheep* if we could ride when suddenly what at first I took to be a baboon came bounding round the fire, and was instantly set upon the other side by a lion, or rather a human being dressed in a lion's skin. Then came a goat, then a man wrapped in an ox's hide, with the horns wobbling about in a ridiculous way. After him followed a baboon, then an impala, then a leopards, then more goats, and many other animals, including a girl seen up in the shining scaly hide of a boa constrictor, several yards of which trailed along the ground behind her. When all the beasts had collected they began to dance about as a lumbering, unnatural fashion, and to imitate the sounds produced by the respective animals they represented, till the whole air was alive with roars and bleating and hissing of snakes. This went on for a long time, till, getting tired of the position, I asked Aysha if there would be any objection to Leo and myself walking round to inspect the human torches, and, as had nothing to say against it, we started, striking round to the left. After looking at one or two of the flaming bodies we were about to return, thoroughly disgusted with the grotesque weirdness of the spectacle, when our attention was attracted by one of the dancers, a particularly active leopard, that had separated itself from its fellow beasts, and was whirling about in a most unneighborly, but gradually drawing into a spot where the shadow was darkest, equidistant between two of the flaming eminences. Drawn by curiosity, we followed it, and then suddenly dashed past us into the shadowed region, and as it did so excited itself and whirled.

"Cooee," in a voice that we both recognized as that of Ustane.

Without waiting to consult me Leo turned and followed her into the outer darkness, and I, feeling sick enough at heart, went after them. The leopard crawled on, for about fifty paces—a sufficient distance to be quite beyond the light of the fire and torches—and then Leo came up with it, or rather, with Ustane.

"Oh, my lord!" I heard her whisper, "so I have found thee!"

Ladies, I am in peril of my life from 'She-who-must-be-eaten'."

Surely the Baboon has told thee how she drove me from thee?

I love thee, my lord, and thou art mine according to the custom of the country. I saved thy life! My Lion, will thou cast me off now?"

"Of course not," ejaculated Leo; "I have been wondering whether thou hadst gone. Let us go and explain matters to the Queen."

"Nay, nay, she would slay us. Thou knowest not her power—the Baboon there, he knowseth, for her sake. Nay, there is but one way: if thou wilt cleave to me, then fly with me across the mountains even now, and then perchance we may escape."

"For Heaven's sake, Leo, I beg, but she looks in."

"Nay, listen to me, my Swift—be swift—death is in the air we breathe. Every now, nay, nay, *She* breatheth *it*, and without more ado, she proceeded to back her arguments by throwing herself into the armpits. As she did so the leopard's head slipped from her hair, I saw the three white finger-marks upon it, gleaming faintly in the sunlight. Once more realising the desperate nature of the situation, I was about to interpose, for I knew that Leo was not too strong-minded where women were concerned, when—oh! horrors!—I heard a little silvery laugh behind me. I turned round, and there was Sir herself, and with her Billali and two male mates. I gasped and nearly sank to the ground, for I knew that such a situation must result in some dreadful tragedy, of which it seemed exceedingly probable to me that I should be the first victim. As for Ustane, she unloosed her arms and covered her eyes with her hands, while Leo, not knowing the full terror of the position, merely coloured up, and looked as silly as a man caught in such a trap would naturally do.

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"As we were returning Bihai met us."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The White Head," &c.

CHAPTER XX

TRAGEDY

TOKU followed a moment of the most painful silence that I ever

experienced. It was broken by Ayuda, who addressed himself to Utau.

"No, not my lord and guest," she said, "nor the subject to whom

which ye had the ring of steel about them, 'tis not so badful,

but 'tis right to be a pretty even—the loops and the laces!"

"Uh, have it all," said the Englishman.

"Ayuda, you are a good Englishman," said Toku.

"And thou Utau," she went on, "surely I should have passed

thee by had not the light fallen on the white across thy hand. Wall?"

"Not so, not so, my lord, the tapers have burnt down, and all

glory and all splendor now gone, the shadows are it is

time for me, Utau, my servant—end I, dreading not that I

would be discovered, thought thee already far away."

"Stay here with me," seconded the wretched woman; "stay me, and

let there be no more trouble."

"Stay, why? it is not well to go so swift from the hot lips of love

down to the cold mouth of the grave," and she made a motion to the

man, who instantly stepped up and caught the girl by either arm,

and each hand upon the breast, and hurried him to the

ground, and then stood over him with his face set, and his fat

body.

Ayuda laughed. "It was well shown, my guest: this

was a strong arm for one who so late was sick. But now out of thy

service, I am told, and now out of thy life, and I would fain

not have the girl; the night air grows chill, and I would fain

not be mine own place. Tawdy she when such doot favour shall be

frowned on me also."

I was struck by the tone, and pulled him from the prostate mate-

ri, but half-frightened, called the presence. Then we all met

for the last lesson on the plateau, where a great pile of white bones

was all that remained of the fire that had lit the dancing;

the last curtains had vanished.

In due course we left Ayuda's boudoir—all too soon it seemed

to me, having a sad premonition of what was to come lying heavy on my

heart.

Ayuda snatched herself from her cushion, and having dismissed

Jeb and Bihai, by whom she could make out the best service, re-

all were off, who was her fewest personal attendant. We

then remained standing, the unfortunate Utau a little to the left

of Ayuda began, "how came it that thou who didst hear my words bidding this evil-doer"—and she pointed to Utau—"to go from hence—thou at whose prayer I did weakly spare her life?" "I can tell thee, I say, that there was a master in what I did," he said, "but I will not tell thee who he was." "I will not speak the truth, for I am not inclined to hear lies upon this matter!"

"It was thy aristocrat, oh Queen," I answered. "I knew enough of it."

"I do believe then, oh Bihai," she answered, quickly, "and well it is for thee that I do—else does all the world run square by her."

"I don't see any particular grail about it," broke in Lee. "She is now somebody else's wife, and it appears that she has married me according to the custom of this archaic place, as who it is the world is fit to see."

"I do not care to be a party to this," he said, "but I do not dare to say that she is in her present position by virtue of a candle."

"I am sure not, working himself up into a fury, "that if that

had been the case, she would have done violence to turn her again I will see her no more."

"And I will see her no more," he said, firmly.

Ayuda listened in icy silence, and made no remark. When he

had finished, however, she addressed Utau.

"Hast thou ought to say, woman? These silly oxen, these leather,

these bones, these stones, these tapers, these quivers, these bows, ev-

erything the world over! Yet me, for I take would understand.

And thus I think saw the most tremendous exhibition of moral courage and impudent cheek that it is possible to conceive. For the poor Queen, who had just had time to get herself together, and out of the terrible Queen, knowing, too, from bitter experience how great was her power, yet gathered herself together, and out of the very depths of her deepest sorrow, and churning back the parched skin off her head, "because my love is stronger than thy grave," did it because my life is shorter than thy days, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

dead man, when thy day heart chose would be but a living

Queen? And a woman's eyes are quick to see, even through thy veil, oh Queen!

"Listen: I know it, thou dost live this man thyself, and thou must therefore destroy me who stand across thy path. Ayuda, I will not let thee go."

"But this I know. There is a light shining in thy breast, and by that light, as by a lamp, I see the truth and the honest that I shall not share until much before me like a novel. When first I knew thy self," he said, "I did not know it to Lee." I knew also that much should the world be given new light, and that the world is a candle.

"I am sure you look, being ready to pay the price, and, behold, death is here! And now, even as I know that, do I, standing on the steps of death, know that she shall not return the price of a man to me among the stars, when she shall be ready for me. Never again

shall she be lost to me in the eyes and call thee wife. There, too, art deceived, I say," said her voice ringing like the cry of an inspired

spirit.

Then came an uttering cry of mingled rage and terror, and Ayuda had risen, and was standing with her cut-throat hand pointing at Utau, who had suddenly stopped speaking. "I gained at the joint meeting, and as I did not gain all for them, I did not gain all for myself, for the Queen of the world had been before when she had broken our law her wild chase. Her eyes grew large, her nostrils dilated, and her lips blanched.

Ayuda said nothing, she did not move, she only stood there, her eyes fixed, apparently to look fixedly at her victim. Even as she did so Utau put her hands to her head, uttered one piercing scream, turned round twice, and then fell backwards with a loud groan upon the floor. But Lee did not appear to notice the sudden collapse, and clapped his hands by the sides of his head, in a gesture of electric agony or overwhelming despair.

For a moment Lee did not quite realize what had happened. But when he did, he sprang forward, and with a nervous kick he cast

both hands behind the captive, and, turning, fiercely sprang at Ayuda.

But the old man had been watching, and seeing him coming, snatched out his hand again, and he came staggering back towards me, and, as he did so, I saw that he had received a violent blow in the chest.

He fell, and Lee, who had originally rushed to the rescue, was now

overwhelmed by the sudden onset of a violent blow in the chest.

And, what is more, never so though all the mask had been taken

out of him.

repulsively verified, and bitterly he cursed his own weakness. Ayeysa he dared not curse—who dared speak evil of such a woman, whose consciousness for aught we knew was watching us at this very moment?

"What am I to do, old fellow?" he groaned, resting his hand against my shoulder in the extremity of his grief. "I let her be killed—not that I could help that, but for the few minutes I was kissing her unresistingly, I was—but a dazed brute, but kissing her unresistingly, I was—but a dazed brute, but I cannot resist thinking that I shall do it again to-morrow; I know that I am in the power of the devil always; if I never saw her again I should never think of anybody else for all my life; I must follow her as I still follows a magnet; I would not go away now if I could; I could not leave her, my legs would not carry me, but my mind is still clear enough, and in my mind I hate her—but, least, I think so, it is all as horrible; and that—that body! What can I make of it? It was awful! I was sold into bondage, old fellow, and the will take my soul as the price of herself!"

Then, for the first time, I told him that I was in a but very little better position, and I am bound to say that, notwithstanding his own infatuation, he had the deepest compassion with me. Perhaps he did not think it was worth being jealous, realizing that he had no cause so far as the girl's conduct was concerned. I went on to suggest that we should try to run away, but we soon realized the project as futile, and to be perfectly honest, I do not believe that either of us would really have left Ayeysa even if some superior power had suddenly offered to convey us from these gloomy caves and set us down in Cambridge. We could no more have left her than a moth can leave the light that destroys it. We were like confirmed opium-eaters: in our moments of reason, we knew the deadly nature of our pursuit, but we certainly were not prepared to abdicate its terrible delights.

No man who ever had seen Sis unvelled, and heard the music of her voice, and drunk in the bitter wisdom of her words, would willingly give up the right for a whole sea of plump joy. How much more than this was likely to be so, as, in Leo's case, to put myself in the place of the other—this comparative declared her love and absolute devotion, and gave what appeared to be proofs of his having lasted for some two thousand years?

No doubt she was a wicked person, and no doubt she had murdered Ustine when she stood in her path, but then she was very faithful, and by a law of nature men are apt to think lightly of a woman's crimes, especially if that woman be beautiful, and the crime be committed for the love of him.

And then for the rest, when had such a chance ever come to a man before as that which now lay in Leo's hand? True, in uniting himself to this dead woman, he would place his life in the hand of a mysterious creature of evil tendencies, but then that could be easily enough to happen to any man, and moreover, the other half of his brain, however ordinary, might bring him such awful forebodings for archfiel the only word that can describe it—such direful dreams, such wildness, and cossawnd over the scenes of nature, and the plore and power that they must win, or lastly the royal crown of unending youth, if indeed she could give that. No, on the whole, it is not wonderful, though Leo was plunged in bitter shame and grief, such as any gentleman would have felt under the circumstances, he was not ready to entertain the idea of running away from his extraordinary fortune.

My own opinion is that he would have been mad if he had done so. But then I confess that my statement on the matter must be accepted with qualifications. I am in love with the devil myself to this day, and I would rather have been the object of her desire than any other woman in the world, and I would rather be in the world for a whole lifetime. And let me add that if anybody who doubts this statement, and thinks she foolish for making it, could have seen Ayeysa draw her veil and flash out beauty in her gaze, his view would exactly coincide with my own. Of course, I am speaking of any woman. We never had the advantage of a lady's opinion of Ayeysa, but I think it quite possible that she would have regarded the Queen with dislike, would have expressed her disapprobation in some more or less pointed manner, and ultimately have got herself blasted.

For two hours or more Leo and I sat with shaken nerves and frightened eyes, and talked over the almost miraculous events that were passing. It seemed like a dream—a fairy-tale, I need not tell you, of the olden time. Who could have believed that the writing on the potsherds was not only true, but that we should live to verify its truth, and that we two soanders should find her who was sought, patiently awaiting our coming in the tomb of Kör? Who would have thought that it is the person of Leo this supposition woman should, as she believed, discover the being whom she awaited from century to century, and whose former earthly habitation she had till this very night preserved? But so it was. In the face of all we had seen it was difficult for us as ordinary reasoning men longer to doubt its truth, and therefore at last, with bravable hearts and a deep sense of the importance of human knowledge, and the insolence of its assumption that deems that which it has no experience of to be of little value, we decided to turn our backs upon the world, leaving our names in the hands of that watching Providence which thus chooses to allow us to draw the veil of human ignorance, and reveal to us for good or evil some glimpse of the possibilities of life.

XXII.

JOB HAS A PRESENTIMENT

It was nine o'clock on the following morning when Job, who still looked scared and frightened, came in to call me, and at the same time breathe his gratitude at finding us alive in our beds, which it appeared was more than he had expected. When I told him that it was more than he had expected, he was even more grateful at our survival, and said, "Thank Ustine, thank Ustine, she is the favorite of his, or of her, for the sake of this. She called him 'pig' in Boston Arabic, and he called her 'husby' in good English, but these amanities were forgotten in the face of the catastrophes that had overwhelmed her at the hands of her Queen."

"I don't want to say anything at mayn't be agreeable, sir," said Job, when he had finished exclaiming at my tale, "but it's my opinion that that there Sis is the old gentelman himself, or perhaps

"After some months of consideration of this statement I am bound to confess that I am not in agreement with it. It is perfectly possible that she is a kindly soul, but I sincerely suspect that were we endowed with the same supernatural powers, and if we had the same omniscient interest at stake, we should be enabled to do likewise under parallel circumstances. Also, it is most remarkable that she has not yet been converted to the Christian religion, and that she has made the slightest circumference perceptible by death. Putting aside this question of her character, her evil-doing removes itself into the expression of views and the acts of a man who is not to be fairly taken in a pool of an evil nature, but when we come to consider the great antiquity of the individual it becomes evident that it is not anything more than the natural opinion which arises from age and long experience that she is a woman of evil. As far as the period of sleeplessness was of the question, the older we grow the more cynical and skeptical we become, and the more inclined we are to believe that we are not prepared to stop at nothing. This is really the spirit of her evil doings, and it should be remembered on the other hand that whenever may be thought of these heretical views, she is a woman of a degree very uncommon in either tenacity or consistency."—L. H. H.

his wife, if he has got one, which I suppose he has, for he couldn't be so wicked all by himself. The Witch of Ender was a fool to her, sir; bless her, she would make no more of raising every gentleman in the Bible out of these here beastly tombs than I should of growing every old dame in the country. It's a country of devils, this is, and that's the reason why I am here. I'll never get out of it, it will be more than I expect to do. I don't see any way out of it. That witch isn't likely to let a fine young man like Mr. Leo go."

"Come," I said, "at any rate she saved his life!"

"Yes, and she'll take his soul to pay for it. She'll make him a witch like herself. I say it's wicked to have anything to do with those sort of people. Last night, sir, I lay awake and read in my little Bible that my poor old mother gave me about what is going to happen to sorcerers and them sort till my hair stood on end. Lord, how the old lady would stare if she saw where her Job had got to!"

"Yes, it's a queer country, and a queer people, too, Job." I answered, with a sigh, for, though I am not superstitious like Job, I admit to a natural shrinking (which will not bear investigation) from the things that are above Nature.

"You're a wise man, sir," said Job, "and if you won't think me very foolish, I should like to say something to you now that Mr. Leo is out of the way"—(Job had got up early and gone for a stroll)—"and that is that I know it is the last country as ever I shall see in this world. I had a dream last night, and I dreamed that I saw my old father with a kind of night-shirt on him, something like these folks wear when they want to be in particular full-dress, and a bit of that feathered gross in his hand, which he may have gathered on the way, for I saw lots of it yesterday about three hundred yards from the mouth of this beastly cave."

"Job," he said to me, solens like, and yet with a kind of satisfaction shining through him, more like a Methodist parson when he has sold a neighbour a marked house for a song, "I can't think about your old father, Job; but I never did expect to have to come and hunt you out in this 'ere place, Job. Such ads as I have had to move you up; it wasn't friendly to give your poor old father such a run, let alone that a wondrous lot of bad characters hall fues this place like."

"Regular cutlions," I suggested.

"Yes, sir—of course, sir, that's just what he said they was—'caution, downright scoundrels,' sir—and I'm sure I don't doubt it, seeing what I know of them and their hot-potting ways," went on Job, merrily. "Anyhow, he was sure that time was up, and went away saying that we should see more than we cared for of each other soon, and I suppose he was alluding to the fact that father and I never could hit off together for longer nor three days, and I daresay that things will be similar when we meet again."

"Surely," I said, "you don't think that you are going to die because you dreamed you saw your old father? If one dies because of dreams of one's father, what happens to a man who dreams of his mother-in-law?"

"Ah, sir, you're laughing at me," said Job; "but, you see, you didn't know my old father. If it had been anybody else—my Aunt Mary, for instance, who never made much of a job—I should not have thought so much of it; but my father was that idle, which he shouldn't have been with seventeen children, that he would never have put himself out to come here just to see the place. No, sir; I know that he meant business. Well, sir, I can't help it; I suppose every man must go some time or other, though it is a hard thing to die a pig-like death like the wretched ones I've seen. I used to be a good man, and do my duty honest, and if it wasn't for the specimen kind of way in which father carried on last night—a sort of stiffness at me as it were, as though he hadn't no opinion of my references and testimonials—I should feel easy enough in my mind. Any way, sir, I've been a good servant to you and Mr. Leo, bless him! Why it seems but the other day that I used to lead him about the streets with a penny whip; and if ever you get ent of this place—which, as father didn't abide to you, perhaps you may—I hope you will think kindly of my whitened bones, and never have anything more to do with Greek writing or Bowers-gots, sir, if I may make no bold to say so."

"Come come, Job, sit down, seriously, "this is all nonsense, you know. You aren't be silly enough to go getting such ideas into your head. We've lived through some queer things, and I hope that we may go on doing so."

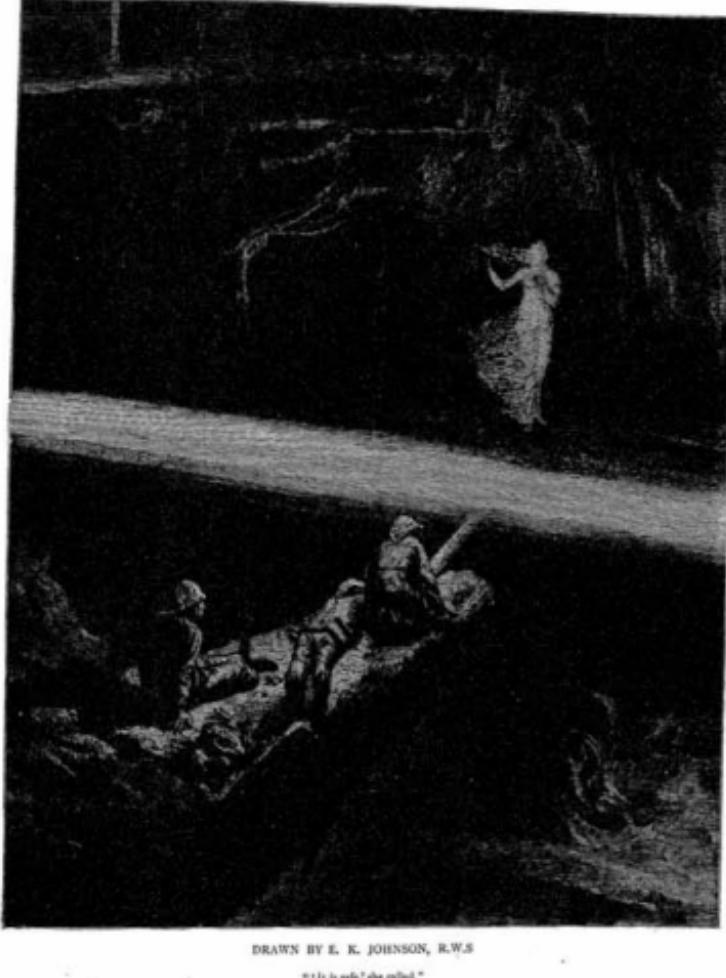
"No, sir," answered Job, in a tone of conviction that jarred on me unceasantly, "it isn't nonsense. I'm a doomed man, and I feel it, and a most uncomfortable feeling it is, sir, for one can't help wondering how it's going to come about. If you are eating your dinner you think of poison and it goes against your stomach, and if you are walking along these dark rabbit-holes you think of knives, and Lord, don't you just shiver about the back! I ain't particular, sir, provided it's sharp, like that poor girl, who, now that she's gone, I am sorry to have spoke hard on, though I don't approve of her morals in getting married, which I consider too quick to be done. Still, sir," and poor Job turned a shade paler as he said it, "I do hope it's not the hot-pot game."

"No, sir," I said, "I hope not, especially."

"Very well, sir," said Job, "it isn't my place as differ from you, sir, but if you happen to be going anywhere, sir, I should be obliged if you could manage to take me with you, seeing that I shall be glad to have a friendly face to look at when the time comes, just to help one through, as it were. And now, sir, I'll be getting the breakfast," and he went, leaving me in a very uncomfortable state of mind. I was deeply attached to old Job, who was one of the best and honestest men I have ever had to do with in any class of life, and really more of a friend than a servant, and the mere idea of anything happening to him brought a lump into my throat. Beneath all his talkers talk I could see that he himself was not convinced that something was going to happen, and though in most cases these convictions took out all the fun and mirthfulness, this particular one seemed to be amply accounted for by the gloomy and unconscionable surroundings in which his victim was placed—still it did more or less carry a chill to my heart, as anything that is obviously a genuine object of belief is apt to do, however absurd the belief may be. Presently the breakfast arrived, and with it Leo, who had been taking a walk outside the cave—as clear his mind, he said—and very glad I was to see both, for they gave me a respite from my gloomy thoughts. After breakfast we went for another walk, and watched some of the Amahagger sowing a plot of ground with the grain from which they make their beer. This they did in a scriptural fashion—a man with a bag made of goat-skin fastened round his waist walking up and down the plot and scattering seed as he went. It was a positive relief to see out of these dreadful people do anything so honest and pleasant as to have a walk, perhaps because it seemed to link them, as it were, with the rest of humanity.

As we were returning Billali met us, and informed us that it was Sis's pleasure that we should wait upon her, and accordingly we entered her presence, not without trepidation; for Ayeysa was certainly an exception to the rule. Familiarity with her might and did breed passion and wonder and horror, but it certainly did not breed contempt.

(To be continued)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"It is only she called."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Head*, &c.

CHAPTER XXII. (continued)

We were as usual shown in by the mares, and after three had passed Ayrosa unavailed, and once more had Leo embrace her, without understanding his heart-sorrows of the previous night, he did with more alacrity and fervour than in strictest courtesy repeat.

She held her white hand on his hand, and looked him fondly in the eyes. "Dear thou wondrest, my Kalikatos," she said, "when thou call me all thine own, and when we shall of a truth be one?"

He could not help smiling, and then, with a slight smile, he said:

"As yet I may not even wish that, for them and I are

different, and the very brightness of thy face makes me chary

and prudently desirous of thy company."

This made not even her to look

upon me for too long a time lest thine eyes should sehe, and thy

comes strain, and therefore (with a little coquettish nod) shall I

say to myself again. (This by the way she did not do.)

No; I hold that she did not do so, for the next day, in the

evening, as her brother the man goes abroad, shall we start hence,

and by tomorrow's dark, if all goes well, and the road is not lost to

me, which I pray it may not be, shall we stand in the place of

Life, and there shall bathe in the fire, and come forth glorified

as no man ever was before thee, and then, Kalikatos, shall thou call

me wife, and I will call thee husband."

Leo muttered something in answer to this astonishing statement, I don't know what, and she laughed a little at his confusion, and went away.

"I thank thee, too, oh Holly; on thee also will I confide this hour,

and then of a truth shall thou be an evergreen tree, and this will I

do—well, because thou hast pleased me, Holly, for there is nothing

so hard to find in philosophy as full of nonsense as those of the

old days, yet have thou not forgotten how to turn a pretty phrase

about a lady's eyes."

"Hudson, old fellow!" whispered Leo, with a return of his old

cheerfulness, "haven't you been paying compliments? I should

wonder if you have."

"I thank thee, oh Ayrosa," I replied, with as much dignity as I

could command, "but if there be such a place as thou dost desire,

and if in this strange place there can be found a lion, and a bear,

and a bull off hand, when he comes to play with them, the hand, yet

never I have seen. For Ayrosa the world has not proved

so soft a nest that I would lie in it for ever. A stony-hearted

mother is our earth, and stones are the bread she gives her children,

for their daily food. Stones to eat and bitter water for their drink,

and stripes for tender nurture. Who would audience them?—

Who would audience them?—Who would audience them?"

hours and hours and of his neighbour's company that he cannot

imagine, and wherein that company consists?" Hard is it to do

homely talk, when such a shock back from the world does

not feel, and from that unknown which the winding-sheet doth

conceal from our view. But harder still, to my fancy, would it be

to live on, green in the head and fair, but dead and rotten at the

core, and feel that other men wear of needlework gauze over

it. "Hathinks that, Holly," she said, "yea deth long life and strength

and beauty beyond measure were power and all things that are due

to man."

"And what of Queen?" I answered, "are chose things that are due

to man?" Are they not trifles? It is not amiss to let an endless

ladder by which we heighten ourselves till the last unassimilable rung

is mounted? For bright leads on to bright, and there is no resting-

place upon them, and sang shift gives upon sang, and there is no

limit to the number. And when we have got to the top, then what?

Are we to satisfy or gladden, or to buy an hour's ease

of mind? And is there any end to wisdom that we may hope to

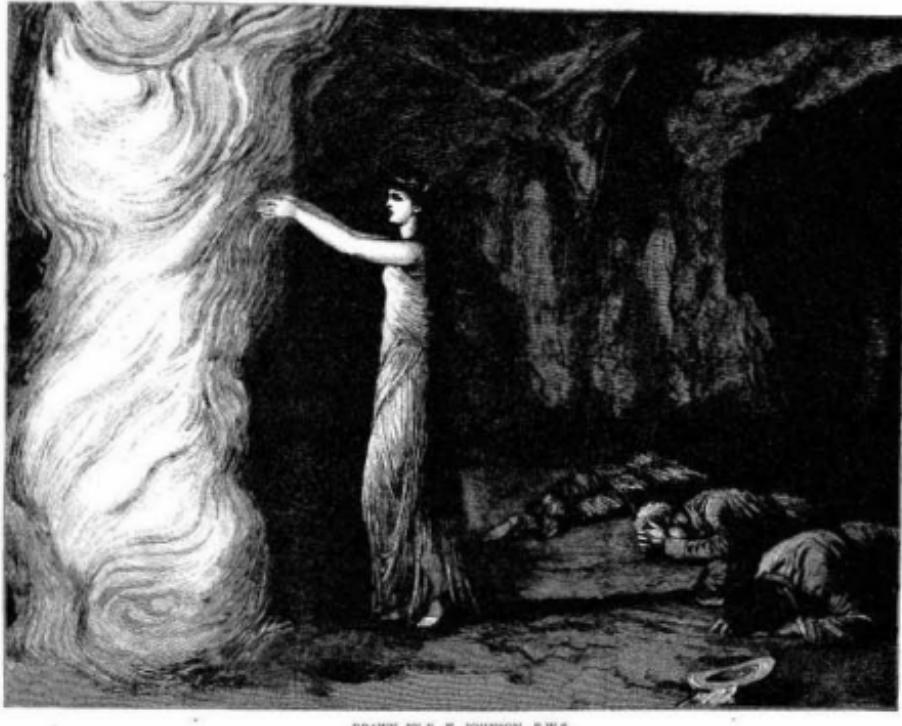
reach? Rather, the more we learn shall we not thereby be able

only to better compare out our ignorance? Did we love less when

we had more knowledge, and the more we learn, and of the world the more, and of the Hand the hang there in the

business? Would not our wisdom to but as a gnawing bittes

calling our consciousness dry by day to a knowledge of the empty



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"Ayesha turned towards it, and stretched her arms to greet it."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Head*," &c.

CHAPTER XXIV. (continued)

I STRUGGLED TO my knees, and if ever I felt sick in my life I felt sick then, and I am not ashamed to say that I hesitated and hung back.

"Only then art not afraid," called this strange creature in a half of the girl, from where she stood poised like a bird, on

the highest point of the rocking stone.

"The world over ; it is better to fall down a precipice and die than be laughed at by such a woman ; so I clasped my teeth, and in another instant I was on that horrible, narrow, bending place, with horrendous spaces beneath and around me. I have always been a good boy, and I have never done a wrong in my life, of which such a penitence is capable. Oh, the sickening sensations of that yielding board rearing on the two moving supports ! I grew dizzy, and thought that I must fall ; my voice crept ; it seemed to me that I must die ; but I did not cry out, for I had no voice left, nor canst thou express in words. All I know is that I liveth, but scarcely enough. I thanked Providence for preserving me so far.

Then came "Levi" again, and, though he looked rather queer, he said, "Job, you are safe, and I will bring you back to your home ; and I heard her murmur, "Bravely done, my love-husband done ! The old Greek spirit lives in there yet !"

And now only poor Job remained on the further side of the gulf.

He sat up to the neck, and griffed out, "I can't do it, sir. I don't want to do it."

"You must," I said, "you must, Job, it's as easy as catching flies." I suppose that I said this to satisfy my conscience, because the expression conveys a wonderful idea of facility. As a matter of fact

I have no more difficulty swimming in the whale-skin than catching flies—either in water or air, whether they have all their faculties unbroken, indeed, it is catching marlins.

"I can't, sir—I can't, indeed."

"Let the man come, or let him swim and perish there. See, the light of the sun, and the shadow of the moon, will be given," said Ayesha.

I looked, and she was right. The sun was passing below the level of the hole or cliff in the precipice through which the ray came.

"If you stop there, Job, you will die alone," I told her ; "the light is going out."

"Indeed, sir, a man, Job," said Levi ; "it's quite easy."

Thus assured, the miserable Job, with, I think, the most acrid

tear that I ever heard, precipitated himself face downwards on the plank—he did not dare, small though he was, to try to walk it, and commenced to drive himself across in little jerks, his poor legs hanging down on either side into the wretchedness beneath.

His voice jerked at the end, however, for the ground, which was very balanced, and a few inches of rock, suddenly in a most sickening manner, and, to make matters worse, just as he was half-way across the flying ray of light suddenly went out, just as though a lamp had been extinguished in a curtained room, leaving the darkness with the weird glow of a star in his eye.

"Come on, Job, for God's sake," I shouted in an agony of fear, while the stars, gathering nations with every swing, rocked so violently that it was difficult to hang on to it. It was a truly awful position.

"Lord have mercy on us !" bellowed poor Job—down the darkness.

"Oh, the plank's slipping ! " and I had a violent struggle, and thought that he was gone.

"I don't know what to do," he answered faintly, clutching at me, "the stars, my stars, and I bawled, "How I did hate, until out all the strength that it has pleased Providence to give me in such abundance—and to my joy in another minute Job was grasping on the rock beside me. But the plank ! I felt it slip, and heard it snap again—a prodding knothole of rock, and it was gone.

"Great Heaven ! " I exclaimed. "How are we going to get back ?"

"I don't know," answered Levi, out of the gloom. "Sufficient

to say the day is still there, and I am thankful enough to be here to live."

Ayesha merely called to me to take her hand and creep after her.

XIV.

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

I told as I was bid, and in fear and trembling leit myself down over the edge of the stone. I sprawled my legs out, but could touch nothing.

"Now let thyself go, and trust to me," assured Ayesha.

"Now let thyself go, and trust to me," assured Ayesha.

Now, if the position is considered, it will be easily understood that this was a greater demand upon my confidence than was justified by any knowledge of Ayesha's character. But all I had to do

was to trust to the very act of commanding me to hurriedly descend. So it is we sometimes have to lay our faith upon strange altars, and as it was now.

"Let yourself go !" she cried, and, having no choice, I did. I let myself slide a pace or two down the sloping surface of the rock, and then pass into the air, and the thoughts flashed through my brain that I was lost. But no. In another instant my feet struck upon a rocky floor, and I felt that I was standing on something solid, and, looking up, I saw the stars of the sky, and I knew that I was safe.

As I stood there thinking my stars for these small emblems, there was a snap and a scuffle, and down came Levi along-side.

"Hullo, old fellow !" he called out, "see you there ? This is getting interesting, is it not ?"

Just then, with a terrific yell, Job sprang right on the top of us, knocking us both down. By the time that we had struggled to our feet again Ayesha was starting among us, and holding us tight the instant which naturally unfastened, as did the space between us.

I got out my box of Bryant and May's wax matches, and they struck so merrily, there, in that aspid place, as did a London drayman's whip.

In a couple of minutes both the lamps were alight, and a curious scene they revealed. We were huddled up in a rocky chamber, some twelve feet square, and strung enough up to look at ; that is, the stars, of course, and the lamps were held in our hands, folded and waiting for the lamps to burn up. The chamber appeared to be partly natural, and partly hewn out of the top of the crag. The roof of the natural part was formed of the swinging mass, and the rest of the rock was hewn out of the earth with pick and shovel, and was down the last rock. For the rest, the place was warm and dry—a perfect haven of rest compared to the giddy pinecone abodes, and the quivering spurs that shot out to meet it in the air.

There, said Ayesha, "safely have we come, though once I feared that the rocking stone would fall with ye, and precipitate ye into the bottomless abyss beneath, for I do believe that the click girth down to the very womb of the world. The rock whence we hewed our home is the rock of the world, and the rock that now that he," and pointing towards Job, who was sitting on the floor, "when they rightly call the 'Fig' for as a pig is he stupid, both let fall the lamp, and with a yell he sprang across the gulf, and to the next wall I make a place. But now rest a while, and look at this place. What think ye that it is ?"

"We know not," I answered.

"Wouldst thou believe that once a man did choose this very nest for her? and did her husband endure for many years; having only one day in every ten to seek food and water and oil that the people brought, more than he could carry, and had as often offering in the mouth of the tunnel through which we passed?"

He smiled up wonderingly, and she continued,

"Yet so it was. There was a man—Nest, he named himself who, though he lived in the latter days, had of the wisdom of the sons of Kile. A hermit was he, and a philosopher, one skilled in the secrets of Nature, and he it was who first taught me the art of goldsmithing, and, taught thereof, should live while Nature lives. But like unto thee, oh Holly, this man, Nest, would not have his knowledge to anyone. 'There is no man,' said he, 'that I dare tell of my art; and, also that he who has learned it, will surely die.' He said, 'I will not tell of my art, and that I have learned it, because the secret of it is not for me to tell; for the secret of the master after him must be covered over by the master of the Amazons of the day as hast, and I am a hermit.' And when first I came to this country—knowest thou how I came, Kalikles?"

"Another time will I tell thee, if it is a ruse to tease me—I heard of this philosopher, and wished for him when he came to the land of Nest. I sought him, but he was not to be found, and I had to travel far to reach the city. Then did I beg him with my beauty and my will, and flattered him with my tongue, so that he led me down and showed me the Fire, and told me the secret of the Fire, but he would not suffer me to step thence, and, saving from his old, and stay me not, I journeyed on, and reached the nest, and there I found him. And I entreated him to leave from him all that he knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much, for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much, for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much, for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much, for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such that he could not be moved.

"Then he lay, and his white beard lay on his breast, and I gazed upon him. And I said to the old man: 'I am a guardian of the world; and I am destined to a spot where I shall bring new life to the world. In the land now covered into dust, and the wind hath borne his ashes here.'

Here I put out my hand and felt in the dust, and presently my fingers touched something. It was a single human bone, very yellow, but moulded.

"Then, she said, "it is thy without a doubt, Behold what seasoneth of Nest and the wisdom of Nest—only little needs. And that man had all life at his command, and for his command he could have none of it. Well, he died, and died needly, and we dwelt in darkness; but I still had ye, ye children, growing up, and maturing, and such I have had. And I have perchance won so glorious a crown of life, I stepped into the flames, and behold! life such as ye can never know shall yet still it also flew into me, and I came forth undying, so lovely beyond imagining. Then did I stretch out mine arms to the sun, and, saving from my heart, that I had been held back, as I spoke, that I died by my beauty, did not turn from me, and these three arms about the neck of Amazons. And then a great love filled me, and made me sad, and I missed the jewels that this dove had, and stabbeth them, so that there at my feet, in that place of dust, I lay down to sleep with mine eyes and will, therefore in my sadness slew I with the poison."

"And when thou slept, oh! I wots, because I was undying and thou didst sleep. I wot where the place of life was, and I have dwelt in darkness; but I still had ye, ye children, growing up, and thy Egyptian—she carried me by her gods. My Osiris did the same me and by Isis, by Nephthys and by Hora, by Sekhet, the lion-headed, and, falling down evil on me, evil and evoking death."

"All I can say here is that thy face was never lowering than when I last saw it, when I last saw it. And I do not know if I could have part. I did not try; it was meant to me; so between we bore the blame. And afterwards I sent her—the Egyptian—through the ravens, and it seemed that she loved to bear a son and to write the child that should leave her, the red raven and the black."

"Such is the tale, my love. I look upon the ear of the head that shall receive a crown upon it. All things on the earth, it is composed of evil and of good—more of evil than good, perchance; and writ in letters of blood. It is terrible; enough, head I hidden from her, and she has not yet seen me; and I have not yet seen her. We go down into the presence of Death, for Life and Death are very near together, and—who knows? that might happen which should separate us for another space of walking. I am but a woman, said we peasants, and I cannot see the future. But this I know, that I am not to be born in the lips of the woman—Nest—than my life is but precious, and I am to die."

"Therefore, before we go, tell me, oh! Kalikles, that of thy life thou dost forgive me, and shut me from the heart. Nest, Nest!—needs not have I done—perchance it was error, but two thoughts go to the heart of gold, both lost in darkness, and both destroyed; we are indeed apportioned to each other, and smote and smote. He could when power comes to this side, but these also strength in a way separate in the hands of strong men. Yes, I am indeed apportioned to the other; but when the hand of the just is hard, then do I let it loose; and when the hand of the weak is soft, then do I let it loose. At our last I left thy arms, and tell me that they then do longer go with all thine heart, and with all these hearts thus dust woship us."

"She paused, and the strange tenderness in her voice seemed to have come on like a memory. I knew that the sound of it moved me more than ever. I was too much affected to speak. Nest, too, was strangely troubled. Highborn he had been very evidently. And when we stood outside the hermit's cell, which was almost perfect from the seal of our dismal dash. Dark shadows were all to us elsewhere, and make us what we might be. Therefore, Kalikles, take me by the hand, and let thy will, with no small fear though I were some peasant girl, and not the daughter of a king, or a queen, or a prince, or a king, or a queen, or a prince, sit—let me sit."

"At our last I left thy arms, and he stepped swiftly to her, and the steps of creation.

"It will be observed that Nest's name is the name of Nest, and that it is derived from the nest which she built for her mate. She was indeed a true woman, as we perceive in Amazons. The wailing on the hills, when her mate died, was indeed a mournful sound. Her mate, however, had a spear-pointed in the breast, which seems reasonable enough. It was indeed a fatal death. Another thing that we can observe is that Nest's mate was indeed a hermit. And he was indeed a hermit, the body of the man who had been laid across the dash and gulf, and who had indeed been buried in the ground, and who had indeed perished in those gulf and mireous, as we may call them, swamps of the earth."

well, and then took her by the hand, and, gazing into her deep eyes, said aloud.

"Ayehs, I have thee with all my heart, and so far as brightness

is concerned, I have over the death of Nestane. For the rest, it is

nothing else that I have to tell, and that I have to leave to thee.

"Now," answered Ayehs, with great frankness, "now when my

husband speaks so openly, and give with so free a hand, as to be beyond words, and to be beyond the bounds of my knowledge to conceive. Behold!"—and she took his hand and placed it upon her shapely head, and then bent herself slightly down till one knee, for an instant touched the ground, and then raised it again, and said that he who had learned the secret of Nest's cell, should live while Nature lives. But like unto thee, oh Holly, this man, Nest, would not have his knowledge to anyone. "There is no man," said he, "that I dare tell of my art, and that I have no life to die." He said, "I am a hermit, by the way of his birth, when it was wrought, it was wrought out, by the great love which I have, and by the Spirit—the Eternal Thing that doth begat all life, from whence it is, to whom it dasheth again."

"I have given in this fest most holy home of completed

Worship, I swear that I will endow Nest and cherish God."

I swear that I will endow Nest, and the priests of the Fire, but

he would not suffer me to step thence, and, saving from his old,

and stay me not, I journeyed on, and reached the nest, and there

that he knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was

much, for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very anxious, and by purity and

wholeness, and the contemplation of his innocent soul, had such

that he could not be moved. And when I had told him all that he

knew of the wonderful Spirit of the World, and that was much,

for the man was wise, and very

arrows through the rosy air ; and now the edge of the pillar itself appeared. Ayesha turned towards it, and stretched out her arms to meet it. On it came very slowly, and lapped her round with flame. I saw the fire run up her form. I saw her lift it with both her hands as though it were water, and pour it over her head. I even saw her open her mouth, and draw it down into her lungs, and a wondrous wonderful sight it was.

Then she paused, and stretched out her arms, and stood there quite still, with a heavenly smile upon her face, as though she were the very Spirit of the Flame.

The mysterious fire played up and down her dark and rolling locks, twining and twisting itself through and around them like threads of golden lace ; it gleamed upon her ivory breast and shoulder, from which the hair had slipped aside ; it slid along her pillars throat and delicate features, and seemed to find a home in the glorious eyes that shone and shone more brightly even than the spiritual essence.

Oh, how beautiful she looked there in the flame ! No angel out of heaven could have worn a greater loveliness. Even now my heart faulks before the recollection of it, as she stood and smiled at our awed faces, and I would give half my remaining time upon this earth to see her once like that again.

But suddenly—more suddenly than I can describe—a kind of change comes over her face, a change which I could not define or exactly say, but which the eye could see. The fire quivered, and in its play there came a dry, hard look ; the rounded face seemed to grow plashed, as though some great anxiety were leaving its impress upon it. The glorious eyes, too, lost their light, and, as I thought, the form in perfect shape and vivacity.

I rubbed my eyes, thinking that I was the victim of some hallucination, or that the refraction from the intense light produced an optical delusion ; and, as I did so, the flaming pillar slowly twisted and shuddered off whithersoever it passes on in the bowels of the great earth, leaving Ayesha standing where it had been.

As soon as it was gone, she stepped forward to Leo's side—it seemed to me that there was no spring in her step—and stretched out her hand to lay it on his shoulder. I gazed at her arm. Where was its wonderful roundness and beauty ? It was getting thin and angular. And her face—by heaven !—her face was *grinning*, old *ugly* !—*ugly* ! I suppose that Leo saw it also ; certainly he recollects it step or two.

"What is *ugly*, Kallikrates ?" she said, and her voice—what was the matter with those deep and thrilling notes ? They were quite high and cracked.

"What, what is *ugly*—what is *ugly* ?" she said, confusedly. "I feel dazed. Surely the quality of the fire hath not altered. Can the principle of Life alter ? Tell me, Kallikrates, is thereught wrong with my eyes ? I see not clear," and she put her hand to her head and touched her hair—and oh, *Horror of Horrors* ! it all fell off upon the floor, leaving her utterly bald.

"Oh, *doit* !—*doit* !—*doit* !" shrieked Job, in a shrill falsetto of terror, his eyes nearly dropping out of his head, and foam upon his lips. "Look !—look !—look ! she's shrivelling up ! she's tensing into a monkey ! and down he fell upon the floor, howling and gurgling in a fit.

True enough—I faint even as I write it in the living presence of the gods—she was shrinking like a wasp travelling to its golden skele that had encircled her waistless form, slipped over her hips and fell upon the ground ; smaller and smaller she grew ; her skin changed colour, and in place of the perfect whiteness of its lustre it turned dirty brown and yellow, like an old piece of withered parchment. She felt at her bald head : the delicate hand was nothing but a claw now, a human talon like that of a badly-preserved Egyptian mummy, and then she seemed to realise what kind of change was passing over her, and she shrieked—ah, she shrieked !—she rolled upon the floor and shrieked !

Smaller she grew, and smaller yet, till she was no larger than a she baboon. Now the skin was pucker'd into a million wrinkles, and on the shapeless face was the stamp of unsatiable age. I never saw anything like it ; it was only the last day before the delightful age that was given us that frailty commences, no longer nor than that of a two-months' child, though that skull remained the same size, or nearly so, and let all men pray to God they never may, if they wish to keep their reason.

At last she lay still, or only feebly moving. She who, but two minutes before, had gazed upon us the lowliest, noblest, most splendid woman the world had ever seen, she lay still before us, near the masses of her own dark hair, so large that a big monkey, and hideous—oh, too hideous for words. And yet, think of this—at that very moment I thought of it—it was the same woman !

She was dying : we saw it, and thanked God—for while she lived she could feed us with words, but when she died—she raised her heavy hands and blindly ward around her, swaying her head slowly from side to side, as a tortoise does. She could not see, for her whitish eyes were covered with a horny film. Oh, the horrible patches of the sight ! But she could still speak.

"Kallikrates," she said, in husky, trembling notes. "Forget me not, Kallikrates. Have pity on my shame ; I shall come again, and shall once more be beautiful, I swear it—it is true ! *doit*—*doit*—" and she fell upon her face, and was still.

On the very spot where twenty enterances before she had slain the oil Kallikrates, she herself fell down and died.

Overcome with the extremity of horror, we, too, fell on the sandy floor of that dread place, and swooned away.

(To be continued.)



DRAWN BY E. K. JOHNSON, R.W.S.

"Next instant I felt Leo seize me by the right wrist with both hands."

"SHE:" A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD,

Author of "*King Solomon's Mines*," "*Dawn*," "*The White Man's Home*," etc.

CHAPTER XXVI. (continued)

I know not how long we lay thus. Many hours, I suppose, when at last I opened my eyes, the other two were still unstirred, now at 3 a.m. The rays light still leamed like a celestial down, so thin or whirling was the Spirit of Life still nolled upon their

heads, and thick, for as I awoke the great pillar was passing away.

Then, as I lay there, a little tremulous, I rose, covered with

creptid pell-mell, that I had been ill-spared. "Ah,

that! When in a bidden dream—it was an awful and unparallelled

misadventure to bring this shocking change about!"

And so the living Fire still blazed on, perhaps, from

the tiny seed forms on the rim of Death having been overcome.

"Eh?" it was that the dense mass charged with its marvellous

power still bore no more, so that were the process repeated—it

it could not in what lapses of time—the two imperceptible moments

and as though the hours in which they acted—it is all

over!—a whole length of her ten thousand years took effect

then—but I was not the slightest doubt myself but that the

whole mass lying before me was the body of a woman

as old as if at every exceedingly measure life could be preserved in

one of us at length died as the age of twenty-two centuries,

But who can tell what had happened? There was the fact. Once since that awful hour I had reflected that it remained no longer necessary for me to see the fires of Providence in the matter. Ayeha lay back in her living tomb waiting from age to age for the coming of her lover without but a small change in the order of the World. But Ayeha strong and happy in her love, clothed in innocent youth and godlike beauty, and with the countenance of a woman who had never known sin, and even perchance had changed the destiny of Mankind. That she opposed herself against the sternal Law, and strong though she was, by it was always back to nothingness, swept back with shame and hideous mockery.

For those minutes I lay faintly musing these terrors were in my

mind, while my physical strength came back to me, which is something that did that buoyant atmosphere. Then I beheld me of the other, and staggered to my feet to see if I could avenge them. But first I took up Ayeha's kirtle and the gay scarf with which she had been

arrayed, so that I might not look upon her, covered up that

divine robe of the glorious dead, that shocking epitome of human

beauty and human life. I did this hurriedly, fearing lest Leo

would recover, and see again.

Then I saw the pale, the pallid masses of dark hair that lay

upon the sand. I stooped down by Leo, who was lying upon his

face, and turned him over. As I did so his arm fell back in

a way that I did not like, and which sent a chill through me, and I "spiced sharply at him. One look was enough. Our old and faithful servant was dead. His nerves, already shattered by all he had seen and undergone, had utterly broken down beneath this last dire sight, and he had died of terror, or in a fit brought on by terror. One had only to look at his face

to see that he was dead. He was dead, and would remain dead. We must leave him.

It was another blow; but perhaps it may help people to understand how overwhelmingly awful was the experience through which we had passed—we did not feel it much at the time. It seemed quite natural that we should be left alone with our dead.

He lay there, silent, when he did with a groan and trembling of the

limbs about two minutes afterwards, and I told him that Job was dead, he merely said, "Oh!" And, mind you, this was from no heartlessness, for he had been a good man, and to others he would have given of his ease with the deepest regret and affection. It was only that his nerves would bear no more. A harp can only give out a certain quantity of sound, however hardly it is stricken.

Well, I set myself to recovering Leo, who, to my infinite relief, I found was not dead, but only fainting, and the one I was

most anxious to save. I did this with the greatest care and another

awful thing. When we restored that awful place his curling hair

baldness of the middest gold, now it was turning grey, and by the

time we gained the outer air it was snow white. Beside, he

looked twenty years older.

She: A History of Adventure

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "Dawn," "The Witch's Head," &c.

XXVIII.

OVER THE MOUNTAIN

THE next thing I recollect is a feeling of the most dreadful stiffness, and a sort of vague idea passing through my half-awakened brain that I was a carpet that had just been beaten. I opened my eyes, and the first thing they fell on was the venerable countenance of our old friend, Billal, who was seated by the side of the improvised bed upon which I was sleeping, and thoughtfully stroking his long beard. The sight of him at once brought back to my mind a recollection of all that we had recently passed through, which was accentuated by the vision of poor Leo lying opposite to me, his face knocked almost to a jelly, and his beautiful crowd of curls turned from yellow to white; and I shut my eyes again and groaned.

"Thou hast slept long, my Baboon," said old Billal.

"How long, my father?" I asked.

"A round of the sun and a round of the moon, a day and a night hast thou slept, and the Lion also. See, he sleepeth yet."

"Blessed is sleep," I answered, "for it swalloweth up recollection."

"Tell me," he said, "what hath befallen ye, and what is this strange story of the death of Her who dieth not. Bethink thee, my son : if this be true, then is thy danger and the danger of the Lion very great—nay, almost is the pot red wherewith ye shall be potted, and the stomachs of those who shall eat ye are already hungry for the feast. Knowest thou not that these Amahagger, my children, these dwellers in the caves, hate ye? They hate ye as strangers, they hate ye more because of their brethren whom *She* put to the torture for ye. Assuredly, if once they learn that there is sought to fear from Her, from the terrible One—who must be obeyed, they will slay ye by the pot. But let me hear thy tale, my poor Baboon."

Thus adjured, I set to work and told him—not everything, indeed, for I did not think it desirable to do so, but sufficient for my purpose, which was to make him understand that *She* was really no more, having fallen into some fire, and, as I put it—for the real thing would have been incomprehensible to him—been burnt up. I also told him some of the horrors we had undergone in effecting our escape, and these produced a great impression on him. But I clearly saw that he did not believe it was the report of Ayeshka's death. He believed indeed that what we thought she was dead, but his explanation was that it had suited her to disappear for a while. Once, he said, in his father's time, she had done so for ten years, and there was a tradition in the country that many centuries back no one had seen her for a whole generation, when she suddenly reappeared, and destroyed a woman who had assumed the position of Queen. I said nothing to this, but only shook my head, sadly. Alas! I knew too well that Ayeshka would appear no more, at any rate that Billal would never see her.

"And now," concluded Billal, "what wouldst thou do, my Baboon?"

"Nay," I said, "I know not, my father. Can we not escape from this country?"

He shook his head.

"It is very difficult. By Kôr ye cannot pass, for ye would be seen, and as soon as those fierce ones find that ye were alone, well," and he smiled significantly, and made a movement as though he were placing a hat on his head. "But there is a way over the cliff whereto I once spoke to ye, where they drive the cattle out to pasture. Then beyond the pastures are three days' journey through the marshes, and after that I know not, but I have heard that seven days' journey from thence is a mighty river, which floweth to the black water. If ye could come thither, perchance ye might escape, but how can ye come thither?"

"Billal," I said, "once, thou knowest, I did save thy life. Now pay back the debt, my father, and save my mine and my friend, the Lion's. It shall be a pleasant thing for thee to think of when these hours comes, and something to set in the scale against the evil doing of thy days, if perchance thou hast done any evil. Also, if thou be right, and if *She* doth but hide herself, surely when she comes again she shall reward thee."

"My son the Baboon," answered the old man, "think not that I have an ungrateful heart. Well do I remember how then didst rescue me when those dogs stood by to eat me down. Measure for measure will I give thee, and if thou canst be saved, surely I will save thee. Listen: by dawn-to-morrow be prepared, for littens shall be born to bear ye away across the mountains, and through the marshes beyond. This will I do, saying that it is the word of *She* that it be done, and he who obeyeth not the word of *She* is he for the hyenas. Then when ye have crossed the marshes, ye must strike with your own hand, so that perchance if good fortune go with ye, ye may live to come to that black water whereto ye told me. And now, see, the Lion wakes, and ye must eat the food I have made ready for ye."

Lee's condition when once he was fairly aroused proved not to be so bad as might have been expected from his appearance, and we both of us managed to eat a hearty meal, which indeed we needed sadly enough. After this we limped on till the spring and bathed, and then came back and slept again till evening, when we once more ate enough for five. Billal was away all that day, no doubt making arrangements about littens and bears, for we were awakened in the middle of the night by the arrival of a considerable number of men in the little camp.

At dawn the old man himself appeared, and told us that he had by using *She*'s dreaded name, though with some difficulty, succeeded in getting the necessary men and two guides to conduct us across the swamps, and that he urged us to start at once, at the same time announcing his intention of accompanying us, so as to protect us against treachery. I was much touched by this act of kindness on the part of that wily old barbarian towards two utterly defenceless strangers. A three—or in his case, for he would not be less than six days' journey through those deadly swamps was no light undertaking for a man of his age, but he consented to it cheerfully in order to promote our safety. It shows that even among those dreadful Amahagger—who are certainly with their ghooul and their devilish and vicious rites by far the most terrible savages that I ever heard of—there are people with kindly hearts. Of course self-interest may have had something to do with it. He may have thought that *She* would suddenly reappear and demand an account of us at his hands, but still, allowing for all deductions, it was a great deal more than we could expect under the circumstances, and I can only say that I shall for as long as I live cherish a most affectionate remembrance of my nominal parent, old Billal.

Accordingly, after swallowing some food, we started in the littens, failing, as far as our bodies went, wonderfully like our old selves after our long rest and sleep. I must leave the condition of our minds to the imagination.

Then came a terrible pull up the cliff. Sometimes the ascent was natural, more often it was a zig-zag roadway cut, no doubt, in the

first instance by the old inhabitants of Kôr. The Amahagger say they drive their spear cattle up it once a year to pasture outside; all I know is that those cattle must be uncommonly active on their feet. Of course the littens were useless here, so we had to walk.

By mid-day, however, we reached the great flat top of that mighty wall of rock, and grand enough the view was from it, with the plain of Kôr, in the centre of which we could clearly make out the pillars ruins of the Temple of Truth, to the one side, and the boundless and melancholy marsh on the other. This wall of rock, which had no doubt once formed the lip of the crater, was about a mile and a half thick, and still covered with clinkers. Nothing grew there, and the only thing to relieve one's eyes were occasional pools of rain-water (for the rain had lately fallen) wherever there was a little hollow. Over the flat crest of this mighty rampart we went, and then came the descent, which if not so difficult a master as the getting up, was still sufficiently break-neck, and took us till sunset. That night, however, we camped in safety upon the mighty slopes that rolled away to the marsh beneath.

On the following morning, about eleven o'clock, began our dreary journey across those awful seas of swamps which I have already described.

For three whole days, through stench and mire, and the all-prevailing flavour of fever, did our bearers struggle along, till at length we came to open rolling ground quite uncultivated, and mostly treeless, but covered with grass of some sorts, which lies beyond that more desolate, and without guides utterly impracticable, district. And here on the following morning we bade farewell, not without some regret, to old Billal, who stroked his white beard, and solemnly blessed us.

"Farewell, my son the Baboon," he said, "and farewell to thee too, oh, Lion. I can do no more to help ye. But if ever ye come to your own country, be advised, and venture no more into lands that ye know not, lest ye come back no more, but leave your white bones to mark the limits of your journeys. Farewell once more: often shall I think of ye, yet will thou forget me, my Baboon, for though thy face is ugly thy heart is true." And here he turned and went, and with him went the tall and sullen-looking bearers, and that was the last that we saw of the Amahagger. We watched them winding away with the empty littens from the marsh, gathered round them and hid them, and then, left utterly desolate in the vast wilderness, we turned and girded around us, and at each other.

Three weeks or so before four men had entered the marshes of Kôr, and now two of us were dead, and the other two had gone through adventures and experiences so strange and terrible that Death himself hath not a more fearful countenance. Three weeks—only over three weeks! Truly time should be measured by events, and not by the lapse of hours. It seemed like thirty years since we saw the last of our whaleboat.

"We must strike out for the Zambezi, Leo," I said, "but God knows if we shall ever get there."

Leo nodded. He had become very silent of late, and we started with nothing but the clothes we stood in, a compass, our revolvers and express rifles, and about two hundred rounds of ammunition, and so ended the history of our visit to the ruins of mighty Kôr.

As for the adventures that subsequently befel us, strange and varied as they were, I have, after deliberation, determined not to record them here. In these pages I have only tried to give a short and clear account of an occurrence which I believe to be unique, and this I have done, not with a view to immediate publication, but merely to put on paper while they are yet fresh in our memories the details of our journey and its result, which will, I believe, prove interesting to the world if ever we determine to make them public. This, as at present advised, we do not intend should be done during our joint lives.

For the rest, it is of no public interest, resembling as it does the experience of more than one Central African traveller. Suffice it so say, that we did, after incredible hardships and privations, reach the Zambezi, which proved to be about a hundred and seventy miles south of where Billal left us. There we were for six months imprisoned by a savage tribe, who believed us to be supernatural beings, chiefly on account of Leo's youthful face and snow-white hair. From these people we ultimately escaped, and, crossing the Zambezi, wandered off southwards, where, when on the point of starvation, we were sufficiently fortunate to fall in with a half-caste Portuguese elephant-hunter who had followed a troop of elephants farther inland than he had ever been before. This man treated us most hospitably, and ultimately through his assistance we, after innumerable sufferings and adventures, reached Delagoa Bay more than eighteen months from the day when we emerged from the marshes of Kôr, and the very next day managed to catch one of the Donald Cervi boats that ran round the Cape to England. Our journey home was a prosperous one, and we set our foot on the quay at Southampton exactly two years from the date of our departure upon our wild and seemingly ridiculous quest, and I now write these last words with Leo leaning over my shoulder in my old room in my college, the very same into which some two-and-twenty years ago my poor friend Vincent came stumbling on the memorable night of his death bearing the iron chest with him.

Is Leo really a reincarnation of the ancient Kallikrates of whom the writer speaks? Is not Ayeshka deceived by some extraordinary racial resemblance? The reader must form his own opinion on this as on many other matters. I have mine, which is that she made no such mistake.

And that is the end of this history so far as it concerns science and the outside world. What its end will be as regards Leo and myself is more than I can guess at. But we feel that it is not reached yet. A story that began two thousand years ago may stretch a long way into the dim and distant future.

Often I sit alone at night, staring with the eyes of the wild into the blackness of saborn time, and wondering in what shape and form the drama will be finally developed, and where the scene of its last act will be held. And when that final development ultimately occurs, as I have no doubt it must and will occur, in obedience to a fate that never swerves and a purpose that cannot be altered, what will be the part played therein by that Egyptian Amenartas, the Princess of the race of the Pharaoh Hâkôr, for the love of whom the ancient Kallikrates broke his vows to Isis, and, pursued by the inexorable vengeance of the outraged Goddess, fled down the coast of Libya to meet his doom at Kôr.

THE END.

* Curiously enough, Leo's hair has lately been in some small extent regrown; that is to say, it is now a yellowish grey, and I am not without hopes that it will in time come quite right.