

My Fellow Laborer.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

CHAPTER I.—(CONTINUED.)

A year after my marriage my wife unhappily became the victim of a bad accident in a cab, as a result of which our child John was a cripple from his birth. To this unfortunate babe, Miss Deneily, or Fanny, as we called her, took a violent affection, which, as the child's intelligence expanded, was amply returned. Indeed, he cared more for her than for his mother and myself put together, and I think that the cause of their mutual attachment was to be found in Fanny's remarkable strength of body and character. The poor, weak, deformed boy rested on solid depths of nature, as some by faith are able to rest on Providence, with a sense of absolute security. However much pain he was in he would become quiet when she came and took him in her strong arms and nursed him. Oddly enough, too, it was almost the same thing with my wife.

She had never got over the effects of her accident, and the shock of the birth of our crippled boy. Indeed, as the years went on, she seemed to grow weaker and weaker, and to rely more and more absolutely on Fanny.

The germ, small as a mustard seed, which has now, after so many years of experimental labor and patient thought, grown up into the great tree of my discovery, lay in my mind in the form of a dormant speculation from the very commencement of my medical career. After my marriage it began to grow and take root there, but for some years I went on with my everyday practice, which was that of a consulting doctor in the city, and said nothing about it. The fact was that the whole seemed too wild, and I was afraid of being set down as one of those enthusiasts who spend all their lives in chasing a shadow.

At last, however, my secret grew too heavy for me to bear, and one night, after dinner, acting on some sudden impulse, I began to unfold it to my wife and Fanny. At first my wife was much interested, and said that it all sounded like one of Poe's tales, but presently, when I got more to the intricate parts of my theory, for it was nothing but a theory then, she fell into a brown study, and after a while broke into the conversation. I thought she was following my line of argument, and about to question it, and was rather disgusted when she said:

"Excuse me, Geoffrey, but did you remember to send that check for the coals?"

I suppose I looked put out, at any rate I stopped abruptly.

"Don't be vexed with me for interrupting, dear," she went on, "but I want to know about the coals, and haven't been able to get a word in edgeways for the last twenty minutes."

"Quite so," I replied, with dignity. "Pray don't apologize; no doubt the coals are more important than my discovery."

"Nonsense, dear," she answered, with a smile; "of course, if there was anything in what you say, it would be very important. But if your story is true, you are as bad as that man Darwin, who believes that we are all descended from monkeys, and what we are told in the Bible about Eve being made out of Adam's rib falls to the ground. So you see it must be nonsense, and the coals are the most important after all."

Now my dear wife was one of the sweetest as she certainly was one of the best, women in the world, but on one point she was always prepared to lose her temper, and that point was Adam's ribs. So, being aware of this, I held my tongue, and after talking a little more about the coals, she said that she did not feel well, and was going to bed.

CHAPTER II.

ALL THE time that I had been holding forth, until my eloquence was quenched by the coal question, Fanny was sitting opposite me, watching my face with all her eyes. Evidently she was interested in what I had to say, though she sat so silent. She was now seventeen or eighteen years of age, and a very fine young woman indeed, but a remarkably silent one.

When my wife had bidden us good-night and gone, I filled my pipe and lighted it, for I was ruffled, and smoking has a soothing effect upon my nerves.

"Geoffrey," said Fanny, when I had finished, for she always called me Geoffrey, "is this idea of yours a new one? I mean, has it ever entered anybody's brain before?"

"So far as I am aware," I answered, "it is the one exception that was wanted to prove Solomon's rule—it is absolutely and completely new." (This has subsequently turned out to be the fact.)

"If I understand you rightly, your idea, if it can be established, will furnish a rational explanation of the phenomenon of life."

"Quite so," I answered, for her interpretation was in every way accurate, almost pedantically so.

"And," she went on, "the certainty of the practical immortality of the soul, or rather of the 'ego' or individual identity, will follow as a necessary consequence, will it not?"

"Yes. Individual immortality of everything that has life is the keystone

of the arch. If that is wanting there is nothing is my discovery."

"And this immortality will be quite independent of any known system of religion?"

"Certainly, as most people understand religion, namely as typified by the tenets of a particular sect, but not by any means independent of natural religion, and on the other hand altogether dependent on the existence of a supreme, and in the end, all-triumphant power of good, which, if my theory can be upheld, will then be proved beyond the possibility of a doubt."

Fanny thought for a moment or two, and then spoke again.

"Do you know, Geoffrey, if you carry this through, you will go down to posterity as one of the greatest men in the whole world, perhaps as the very greatest!"

I knew from the tone of her voice that she meant what she said, and also that if all this could be proved, her prophecy would probably be fulfilled.

"Yes," I said, "but I suppose that to work the whole thing out, and prove it, would take a life-time. To begin with, the premises would have to be established and an enormous amount of special knowledge acquired, from the groundwork of which, and from the records of thousands of noted cases of mental phenomena, that it would take years to collect, one would have to work slowly up toward the light. A man would be obliged to give his entire time to the subject, and in my case even that would not suffice, for I am no mathematician, and unless I am mistaken, the issue will depend almost entirely upon the mathematical power of the investigator. He could not even employ anybody to do part of the work for him, for the calculator must himself be imbued with the spirit that directs the calculations, and be prepared to bend them this way or that, to omit this factor and to pick up the other as circumstances require. Now, as you, know I am little short of a fool at mathematics, and therefore on this point alone I am out of the race, and I fear that the Secret of Life will never be discovered by me, though perhaps I shall be able to put some one else on the track of it."

"Yes," said the girl, quietly, "that is true enough, but you forget one thing. If you are not a mathematician, I am, and I can enter into your ideas, Geoffrey, for I believe that we have grown very much alike during the last four or five years—I mean in mind."

I started, for both her statements were perfectly accurate. The girl had remarkable mathematical faculty, almost approaching to genius. I had procured for her the best instruction that I could, but she had now arrived at that point when instructors were of no further use to her. In those days, of course, there were not the facilities for female education that there are now, and though it is not so very long ago, learning in woman was not thought so very highly of. Men rather said, with Martial: "Sit non doctissima conjunx," and so her gift had hitherto not proved of any great service to her. Also she was right in saying that we had grown alike in mind and ways of thought. She had come into the house quite young, but young as she was, she had always been a great companion to me. Not that she was much of a talker, but she understood how to listen and to show that she was giving her attention to what was being said, a thing that in my opinion a very few women can do. And I suppose that in this way, she, in the course of time, became thoroughly imbued with my ideas, and, in short, that her mind, as I thought, took its color from my own. At any rate, it did so superficially, and I know that she would understand the drift of my thoughts long before anybody else did, and would even sometimes find words to clothe them before I could myself.

"Why should we not work on the Secret of Life together, Geoffrey?" she said, fixing her dark eyes on my face.

"My dear," I answered, "you know not what you do! Are you prepared to give up your youth, and perhaps all you life, to a search and a study which may and probably will after all prove chimerical? Remember that such a thing is not to be lightly taken up, or, if once taken up, lightly abandoned. If I make up my mind to understand it, I shall practically be obliged to give up my practice as a doctor to do it; and the same, remember, applies to you, for I should prove a hard task-master. You would have to abandon all the every-day aims and pleasures of your sex and youth, to scorn delights and live laborious days, on the chance of benefiting humanity and for the certainty of encountering opposition and ridicule."

"Yes," she said, "but I am willing to do that. I want to become somebody and to do something with my life, not just to go out like one little candle in a lighted ballroom and never be missed."

"Very well, Fanny, so be it. I only hope you have not undertaken a task beyond your strength. If you have not, you are a very remarkable woman, that is all."

At that moment our conversation was disturbed by the sound of a person falling heavily on the floor of the room above us, which was occupied by my wife.

Without another word we both turned and ran up-stairs. I knocked at the door, but getting no answer, entered, accompanied by Fanny, to find my dear wife lying in her dressing gown in a dead faint before the toilet table. We lifted her up to the bed, and with great difficulty brought her round, but this fainting fit was the commencement of her last illness. Her constitution appeared to have entirely broken up, and all we could do was to prolong her life by a few months.

It was a most heart-breaking business, and one on which even at this distance of time I do not care to dwell. I was deeply attached to my wife; indeed, she was my first and only love in the sense in which the word is generally used; but my love and care availed but little against the forward march of the Destroyer. For three months we fought against him, but he came on as surely and relentlessly as the tide, and at last the end was upon us. Before her death her mind cleared, as the sun often does in sinking, and she spoke to me so sweetly, and yet so hopefully, that her tender words almost broke my heart. And yet it was a happy death. I have seen many people die, but I never remember one who was so completely borne up across the dark gulf upon the wings of child-like faith. All her fears and griefs were for me, for herself she had none. When at last she had kissed her boy and bade him farewell—thank Heaven he was not old enough to understand what it meant—and said her last word to me, she sent for Fanny and kissed her too.

"Good-bye, my love," she said; "you must look after Geoffrey and the boy when I am gone," and then, as though a sudden idea struck her, she took the girl's hand and placed it in mine. "You will just suit each other," she said, with a faint smile, and those were the last words she spoke.

Fanny colored and said nothing. I remember thinking afterward that most women would have cried.

And then the end came and left me broken-hearted.

It was the night after the funeral, and I was walking up and down my little study, struggling against a distress that only seemed to further overwhelm me the more I tried to bear up against it, and thinking with that helplessness and bitterness that does come upon us at such times, wrapping us, as it were, in a mist of regret, of the many little things I might have done to make my dear wife happier while she lived, and of the irreparable void her loss had left in my life. It was well for her, I was sure of that, for what can be better than to sleep? But in those days that certainty of a future individual existence, which I have now been able through my discoveries to reach to, was not present with me. It only loomed as a possibility at the end of an untraveled vista. She was gone, and no echo came from where she was. How could I know that I had not lost her forever? Or, even if she lived in some dim heaven, that I too should make my way thither, and find her unchanged; for remember that change is death! It has all passed now. I am as sure as I write these words that at no distant date I shall stand face to face with her again, as I am that the earth travels round the sun. The science that has unalterably demonstrated that the earth's course has also vindicated that inborn instinct of humanity so much attacked of late days, and demonstrated its truth to me beyond the possibility of doubt. But I did not know it then.

"I shall never see her again, never!" I cried in my agony, "and I have nothing left to live for!"

"Perhaps you will not," said a quiet voice at my elbow, "but you have your child and your work left to live for. And if there is anything in your discovery, you will see her through all the ages."

It was Fanny, who had come into the room without my noticing it, and somehow her presence and her words brought comfort to me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Strong Pull.
The shell-less limpet pulls 1,984 times its own weight when in the air, and about double when measured in the water. Fleas pull 1,493 times their own dead weight. The Mediterranean cockle, Venus verrucosa, can exert a pulling power equal to 2,071 times the weight of its own body. So great is the power possessed by the oyster that to open it a force equal 1,319.5 times the weight of its shell-less body is required. If the human being possessed strength as great in proportion as that of these shell-fish, the average man would be able to lift the enormous weight of 2,976,000 pounds, pulling in the same degree as a limpet. And if the man pulled in the same proportionate degree as the cockle he would sustain a weight of no less than 3,106,500 pounds.

Australia's Population.
The New South Wales government statist estimates that the population of the seven Australasian colonies at the end of 1896 was 4,323,171, showing an increase of 513,366 over the census of 1891. There is an increase for New South Wales of 14½ per cent, for Victoria of 3 per cent, for Queensland of 20 per cent, for South Australia of 12 per cent, for Western Australia of 17 per cent, for Tasmania of 13 per cent, and for New Zealand of 14 per cent. During 1896 the population of New South Wales increased by 19,770. That Victoria decreased by 6,683. The Victoria statist reports that the population of Melbourne has decreased by 42,486 since the census of 1891.

Singular Article of Export.
A curious article of export from the Chinese port of Pakhoi, according to the British consul there, is dried lizards. "The European, scampering over the Pakhoi plain, on a little native pony, finds his equestrian pastime sadly marred by the necessity for a bright lookout for the holes dug by the natives, sometimes on the very paths, to catch lizards. The numerical importance of these little saurians in the list of exports may well cause surprise. The greater quantity exported comes from the neighborhood of Wuchow, in Kwangsi. They are used for making medicine called 'Lizard wine'; it is said to be a tonic!"

WITH HIS COAT OFF.

SECRETARY WILSON NOT DETERRED BY HOT WEATHER.

Working Away in the Interests of the Farmers—Some Interesting Results Which He Has Obtained—Prosperity Is Now with Us Sure.

(Washington Letter.)
"The man with his coat off" is not disturbed by hot weather. The broiling days in Washington have not checked the activity of that rugged old worker, the head of the Department of Agriculture, and he is pushing along with his new plans for increasing the earnings of the farmers, and at the same time decreasing their hours of labor.

Secretary Wilson has had numerous inquiries as to the result of his trial shipments of butter to England. He has received reports from the second shipment, and is of the opinion that he is working upon the right line and one which will develop a largely increased industry for the farmers of this country. Speaking to your correspondent about this, he said:

"Our shipment of butter consisted of various styles of packages, small, half-pound prints, square boxes, large tubs and other packages, and generally arrived in good order. The department has received letters from a number of Englishmen, commission merchants and others who used this butter and who generally speak of it in high terms as regards its quality and flavor, in comparison with the best grade of English butter. The only criticism seems to be that the butter generally is not dry enough to suit them, but this is a point which can be easily remedied. There is no doubt in the world but that as soon as we 'get onto them' we can do business with them, and at profit. We have just been having some tests here in New York of an interesting nature. We have had experts examining samples of butter shipped from England, Ireland, Denmark and Australia, and competing with our own butters shipped from the western and northwestern states. We met them half way. In only one case, that of a sample from England, did the foreign butter come up to the standard of the best American butter. This is very encouraging to our butter makers and shows that we make as good butter as is produced. 'It is perfectly logical,' continued the secretary, 'that if we send our grain to Denmark to be fed to foreign cattle to produce butter that we can feed it to our own cattle and send abroad the butter instead.'"

"Another question which I am going to soon take up," said Mr. Wilson, "is that of the foreign cheese market. Nothing has been done in this line as yet, and I am not ready to offer any American cheese abroad. We are not now in a condition to sell our cheese abroad for the reason that the market is full of the adulterated article, and owing to the laxity of the internal revenue regulations it is almost impossible to discover it. As long as this 'filled' cheese is sold as pure cheese it is impossible to establish a reputation for good cheese. Filled cheese," explained the secretary, "is made in this way: Milk is run through a separator and all the fat taken out, at a value of perhaps 15 or 20 cents per pound. For this is substituted cheap cotton-seed oil, lard, etc., at a cost of only a few cents a pound. Cheese made in this manner has poor keeping qualities, will not ripen, and is of a low grade generally. The revenue laws are constantly being violated and circumvented with regard to the sale of this substitute for cheese, which is placed upon the market in large quantities as the genuine article. I have been getting after Secretary Gage and

Uncle Horace Bois of Iowa has just made public his views on the 16 to 1 fallacy. He declares: "For one, I do not believe it possible to succeed upon a platform that demands the unqualified free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 with gold. We have fought that battle, and it is lost. We can never fight it over under circumstances more favorable to ourselves. If we hope to succeed, we must abandon this extreme demand."

The frank statement of Uncle Hod shows that he has come to a realization of the fact that a majority of the American people are intelligent enough to understand that a free coinage law at the 16 to 1 ratio would simply drive us on a plane with Mexico and China.

The value of the coin of ultimate redemption depends entirely upon the market value of the bullion of which it is composed. A silver dollar, under these circumstances, cannot be worth any more than the silver it sells for. The stamp of the government creates no value. It is nothing but a certification of weight and fineness.

Mr. Boies evidently realizes these things. From his letter, we infer that he would be in favor of dropping to the silver standard and to a 48 cent dollar, if he thought the people could be induced to adopt it. But he sees they will not and hence he wants the scheme modified.

He will find no tenable ground outside of that taken by the Republican national convention in the platform at St. Louis last year.—Toledo Blade.

The Revival of Trade.

One of the most encouraging signs of a return of prosperity is shown in the statement made by Strawbridge & Clothier, of this city, of their retail sales during the month of June. The sales of the firm, which is one of the oldest in the city, were larger than in any corresponding June since they have been engaged in business. The inference to be drawn from this gratifying statement is clear, and its significance is not to be underestimated. It surely portends a revival of trade which, now only beginning, gives a promise of exceptional prosperity to come. And this is only one instance. The price of iron has advanced; there is a better demand for coal; prices are firm and steady everywhere, and not one report of a depressing nature is received from any section of the country. Unless all signs fall, the opening of the '11 season will find the promised prosperity upon us.—Philadelphia North American.

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remove these obstacles against American products. If they do not see it in that light, why, then, there are other methods."

"The subject of growing tea in the United States is a subject which has recently come, especially to my attention. Considerable experimenting in the past has been done in the tea line in this country, and the trouble has always been the difficulty of procuring labor to pick the tea leaves, but I am prepared to say that there is no reason why the southern states of this country should not raise and market every pound of tea used in the United States, and a far better article, too, than the great bulk of tea sold here now. This is an excellent subject for consideration and experiment, and will be heard from later."

Crop and Business Prospects Good.

A week of exceptionally favorable weather for the growing crops and a complete absence of developments of a nature calculated to unsettle confidence have brought about a further improvement in the business situation. This improvement is not to be measured by the volume of clearing house exchanges although the increase of 7.7 per cent over the same week last year is a sure indication of progress, because many merchants and manufacturers are holding back awaiting a clearer manifestation of the improvement that is already sufficiently obvious to many. But the increase in railroad earnings during June of more than 3 per cent as compared with the same period last year, and the steady purchases of securities by American investors which have advanced the average price of stocks 1 per cent in the week and 5½ per cent since the upward movement began early in May, are corroborative and additional evidences of the progress toward better conditions that is steadily becoming more apparent.

The important positive influence undoubtedly is the improving condition of the growing crops. The weather has been most satisfactory all over the country, being warm where warmth was most needed, and rainy where additional moisture was required. The result is that complaints of damage, which usually figure so largely at this season, are almost entirely absent. As to wheat, the winter wheat harvest is nearing completion, and is admitted that the previous calculations of the crop were entirely too low. The crop may run up to 300,000,000 bushels, or 60,000,000 bushels more than the government estimate indicated as probable, while spring wheat is progressing so finely and has been so extensively sown that an immense harvest is reasonably certain here. Our total wheat crop may run up to 550,000,000 bu, or 125,000,000 bushels more than last year. This remarkable prospect has not in the least lowered prices, which on the contrary have risen 1½ cents a bushel on the confirmation of reports of damage to the European crops. It is a significant circumstance that the September option is 7 cents a bushel below the July price, indicating a belief that the known necessities of Europe will compel purchases before the foreign crops can be harvested.

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