

RIDER HAGGARD'S HOME.

HOW THE GREAT STORY TELLER BEGAN WRITING AND FAILED.

The Homes He Lives in and the Look of the Man—His Talk, His Manuscripts, and What He Has Been Paid for Them—The Ways and Work of a Famous Novelist.

Rider Haggard has youth, health, wealth, a happy home, fame, and working years before him, says a London letter to the *New York Sun*. At 32 he has the world at his feet. The public on both sides of the Atlantic are his staunch and loyal friends, and just so long as he can satisfy their capricious and insatiable appetite, just so far will fortune prove staunch to him. In personal appearance he is very pleasing; tall, slight, with broad shoulders, and the happy, all-conquering bearing of a practical athlete. He owns an additional charm in the expressive play of his features, the small head, well set on the straight throat; the large, full blue eyes, the finely developed forehead, and the close, prominent mouth, shaded but not obscured by the light brown moustache. His manner is at once frank, earnest and unaffected; he is visibly pleased with his success, but not over-elated by it, and not oblivious to its precarious nature.

The story of his short career is soon told. He was born at Bradenham Hall, Norfolk, in 1856, and when only a youth of 18 went out to Natal as private secretary to Sir Henry Butler. For two years he filled the office of master of the high court in the Transvaal, and during the Zulu war was elected lieutenant of the Pretoria horse. He it was who read aloud in the Volksraad the proclamation declaring the Transvaal British territory, and he it was who, jumping upon the table at the close of the proclamation, drowned all dissentient voices in his ringing shout, "Three cheers for the Queen." It is thus seen by what authority Mr. Haggard speaks on affairs at the Cape, and why he can afford to laugh at those captious critics who avow that his knowledge of Transvaal matters is derived solely from superficial reading. In 1879 he returned to England, and was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn Fields, occupying chambers in Elm Tree court, the Temple. The legend written above his letter box in those days of briefless fame, "Papers dropped through this hole will receive prompt attention," is still legible, and many are the MSS. passed through that open maw since the briefless barrister developed into the successful author, although Elm Tree court sees him but seldom now.

Mr. Haggard married Miss Marianne Louise Margitson, the only child and heiress of the late Major Margitson of Ditchingham House, Norfolk, and when in England divides his time between Ditchingham and his London home in Redcliffe square. Poverty and Mr. Haggard, therefore, have had little to say to one another. It is all the more to his credit that he has conquered the countless difficulties of literature without the incentive of money to work for. His town house is charmingly situated, and looking out upon a garden of several acres, the trees waving in a soft south wind, the sun shining and the sky "divinely blue," flecked with innumerable fleecy clouds, it is difficult to believe one's self in London, but rather in that fair southern county of Hampshire, where the New Forest stretches for many a mile, and the primeval trees rustle their dark boughs against a sky of illimitable azure.

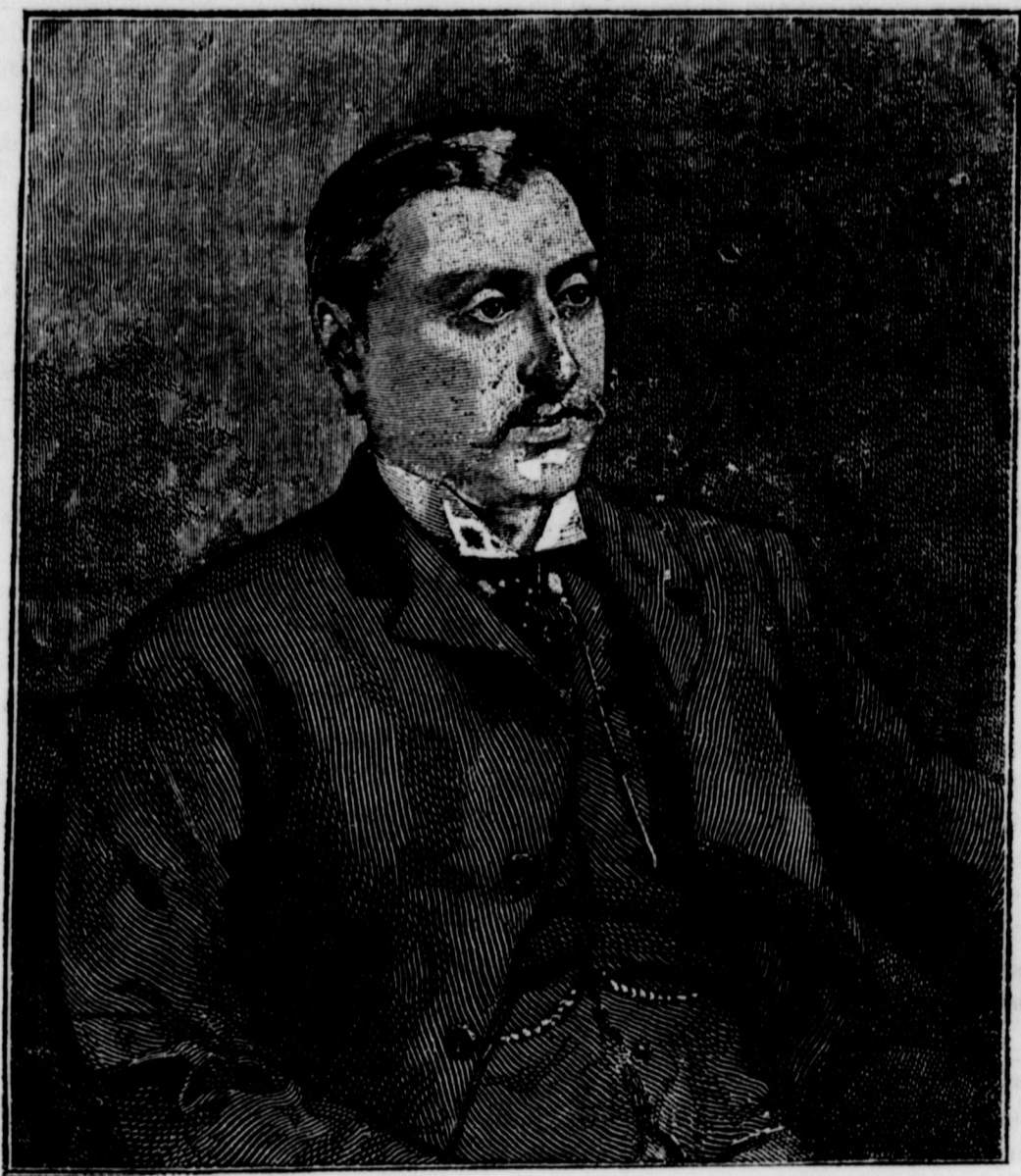
This study of Mr. Haggard's is in many ways characteristic of the man. It is severely simple and utterly devoid of all superfluous accessories, though furnished with refined and decided taste. It is situated at the back of the house, and its three long windows overlook the already mentioned garden. A large, solidly constructed writing table occupies the centre of the room, upon which is placed a raised desk covered at the moment by the proof sheets of Mr. Haggard's new book, *Cleopatra*. At one end of the room a low mantelpiece and open grate are flanked on either side by bookcases reaching half way up the wall; above the chimney shelf hangs one of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's exquisite pencil sketches of a female head, and above this again part of an Egyptian coffin lid bearing in bold relief a sculptured head, the face wearing that ineffably calm expression, becoming a smile as it reaches the lips, familiar to us in the countenance of the secret sphinx.

In the drawing room, carefully locked behind glass cabinet doors, is the famous "potsherd" of *She*, the ball, apparently, of a small water bottle of bulging shape and narrow neck, cleverly riveted together, and closely inscribed all over, inside and out, with cabalistic signs, easily translatable into every-day English. It is, in fact, the original "sherd" that so excited the "Lion" in the quiet college rooms, and that led to the marvellous adventures of Leo and the Baboon. As I held the curious modern relic in my hand and looked up into the smiling face above me, I could not resist the impulse that prompted me to say, "Ah, Mr. Haggard, surely you were the potter who turned out this ancient 'potsherd' from the wheel of your own fancy?" To which I received only the laughing ambiguous rejoinder, "and do you think you could have made so good a one?"

In the dining room hang a beautiful collection of drawings in black and white by

Maurice Griffenhagen. The artist has entered thoroughly into the spirit of the author and reproduced his ideas with speaking fidelity. These drawings form the illustrations of an edition of *She*, shortly to be published. Mr. Haggard is a most prolific and rapid writer. He makes no second copy, his manuscripts going to the printers as they come from his pen. He wrote *She* in the incredibly short time of six weeks, as the manuscript copy shows, beginning it early in February, 1886, and finishing it late in March of the same year; besides which he was at that time reporting for the *Times*. I turned over the leaves of this manuscript copy with much interest. It is written on lined foolscap paper, and bound in strong morocco of a sombre hue. The penmanship is somewhat large and irregular, in many places hurried, but there are very few corrections or erasures, the longest being in the "chant," which was rewritten from the original.

Mr. Haggard's progress has not been unmarked by trials and vicissitudes; his first book, *Cetewayo and his White Neighbor* published in 1882, was a complete pecuniary failure, the author losing \$250 (£50) by it, although on no book has he bestowed more time and care, searching through govern-



H. RIDER HAGGARD.

ment "blue books" for facts and data, and consulting all possible channels for authentic information. His next book and first novel, *Dawn* (1884), was launched with no little difficulty, though eventually he realized the munificent sum of \$50 (£10) upon it! Like its successor, *The Witch's Head*, it attracted very little attention, and has never become a public favorite. *King Solomon's Mines* was the next to appear, for the copyright of which Messrs. Cassel & Co. paid the author \$250 (£50). It made an immense hit, and after the *Saturday Review* boldly pronounced in its favor the sales increased daily, and Mr. Haggard's next venture was looked forward to with the deepest interest. *She* created an immense sensation; the sales amounted to over 30,000 copies in a few months. It was this book which thoroughly established Mr. Haggard's literary position, and by it he is said to have reaped a golden harvest, £10,000 being the modest sum mentioned. *Allan Quatermain*, *Mr. Meeson's Will* and *Maiwa's Revenge* followed in due course, and of the latter one entire edition was sold within a few days of its publication. In speaking of his new novel, *Cleopatra*, Mr. Haggard frankly admitted it to be the one on which he has expended the greatest amount of study and research.

"It has always been a favorite epoch with me," he said, "and the Egyptian Queen a favorite character; and as I do not believe in any fiction that has not the touch of reality and life about it, I went to Egypt to write up my localities, my skies, my coloring, and my vitality; just as I went to Iceland to work up the local tone and spirit for a future book." It was easy to see that Mr. Haggard is decidedly anxious as to the success of *Cleopatra*, and if competent judgment is to be believed in on *Cleopatra* hangs the future establishment of Mr. Rider Haggard as a novelist, who aspires to something greater than the ephemeral success bestowed by tales of adventure, highly spiced, for mature palates.

In speaking of America, Mr. Haggard disclaimed having any personal grudge against the publishers of pirated editions of his works. "I do not so much object to the sharp practice which steals a man's brains without leave, though it is not agreeable to be so treated, but what I do object to strongly is that my American public have thrust upon them, not pirated copies only, but mutilated ones as well. This is a direct injustice to the author, but it is a greater injustice to the public who pay me the compliment of desiring my books. Probably I am at this moment the best abused author in England; certain papers never lose an opportunity of flinging a stone at me, and one journal in particular takes vicious delight in vilifying me in the

most atrocious manner. I have again touched upon the old charge of plagiarism in the preface to *Cleopatra*, and I have quoted a sentence from Emerson to prove my point, and to say what I could never say half so well, that every man is but a reproduction of some other man, and that the inventor's brain can alone dare to imitate, because it alone can detect imitation from invention. Yes, I have been asked many times to visit America, and, although I have a very real admiration for that great country, and although the American people are my largest and most partial public, still I do not think it at all likely that I shall visit America—certainly not for the present." While talking Mr. Haggard has a habit of jumping up suddenly and walking about restlessly for a moment or two, though never interrupting the conversation by so doing.

Mr. Haggard's favorite books are Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, Lytton's *Coming Race*, and above all "that one immortal work, a work that utters all the world's yearning and disillusionment in one sorrow-laden and bitter cry, and whose stately music thrills like the voice of pines heard in the darkness of a midnight gale, the Book of Ecclesiastes."

MARRIAGE IS A FAILURE

WHEN IT DRIVES COMFORT OUT OF THE HOME

By Filling Every Room With Furniture That Can't Be Used and Fancy Work That Ought to Be Used to Start the Fires With—"Freckles" Visit to a Club.

Ever let the fancy room—
Pleasure never is at home.

Ask any man, whose leisure hours are devoted to his club, that much worn and now almost ludicrous question as to whether he considers marriage a failure, and he will invariably answer, Yes. It is a fact; and if the women most interested in these men really wish for a reformation of things, they must first show a marked improvement in their own ideas of home comforts.

If they require any real practical suggestions I would advise them to gain admittance and thoroughly satisfy their curiosity as to the mysterious attractions of a first class gentlemen's club house. I can't say much about our own Union club, but, judging from its patrons, I form the idea that it is probably equal to one of New York's most exclusive clubs, which I had the honor of being shown through. I confess that the grandeur and elegance of its surroundings did awe me a trifle, but what most impressed me was the "homey" comfort that prevailed everywhere. Of course, woman like, I bestowed the greater part of my attention on the parlor, where everything seemed to say, "Use me, that's what I'm for and there's no possibility of my breaking, tilting over or clinging to you." Never shall I forget the enjoyment and blessed satisfaction experienced in walking around this room without the awkward dodging between rickety tables with their burden of tipsy little easels, wretched attempts at decorative art, and fragile samples from the china stores, cross-legged chairs, corner seats and all the other numberless articles that go to fill the modern drawing-room and test the language of the most pious men. The chairs and lounges were most inviting and it was a novelty to sink into their luxurious depths without the annoyance of a voluminous but unbecoming background of a pongee knot (in the days of hair-oil it was called anti-macassar) and a prickly pine pillow. Evidently the citizens were not suspected of carrying ladders about with them, for I noticed no yellow aprons strung across the windows, but the curtains and portieres were indescribably lovely. In fact, looking around this superb room one could not but note the display of excellent yet unobtrusive taste.

The escort smiled broadly when I inquired for the absent mantle drapery of plush, with the seam down the centre and ornamented with golden rod, pansies, violets, etc., sprouting in perfect harmony from the left hand corner. And where was the inevitable milk stool? (I wonder what asylum protects the discoverer of that kick-me-over-but-dont-swear-exasperator!) "No, he said, "we get a surfeit of the fancy work craze at our homes, so we come here to rest our eyes as well as our bodies."

There certainly were many beautiful things on which one might rest the eyes for any length of time—the choice pictures, statuary, excellent bric-a-brac, etc., that cost but little more money—to say nothing of the time, energy and patience spent on the trifles that require the greater part of a woman's life to replenish and keep them in order.

Now I am not a crank, or "crankness," nor am I quite destitute of a due appreciation of pretty things, but I do agree with the men that a thing ceases to be pretty when it becomes obtrusive and interferences with comfort; and this fancy work craze is interfering with comfort seriously. It causes us to sit on spindle upright chairs, or, if we do happen to secure a more comfortable one, it's an utter impossibility to find a resting place for the head between the array of sachet-bags, etc. It not only closes all the doors and windows (presumably from the dust), but it also denies us the best companionship in the world—a grate fire. Therefore, I have no liking for the woman who invites me to spend an afternoon or evening in her stuffy, furnace-heated room that has its fireplace barricaded by a huge Japanese fan or a fantastic screen that might almost convince members of the W. C. T. U. that they were afflicted with the D. T's.

Another thing that fills me with concern is the increasing tendency to do things on the diminutive plan. Now, it may be the fact of my being a large woman that causes me, almost involuntarily, to seek out an accessible route to the roomiest and least encumbered chair in a room, and it may possibly be thirst that causes my spirit to groan over the Liliputian thing they call a cup. As for the cake or bread, of course the thinner the better, for, if I mistake not, it is now considered decidedly bad form to have an appetite; but one can thirst with impunity, and a good cup of tea is the sovereign remedy for all ills. And when it is being served I hope a cup—a pretty and dainty cup, but not one requiring all one's attention to keep its up side up; in fact, a cup that could be relied on even through the trying ordeal of a sneeze—may be selected and passed to FRECKLES.

"It Saves Me Writing."

"I want three Progress," said a gentleman, Wednesday, "I always send three away each week. It saves me writing letters."

JOHNNY MULCAHEY

Has Recovered and Is Living on the Fat of the Land.

I'm just done been sick for two weeks, and I kin come out now when its fine. Taint much good being sick as I was, except when your gettin' well, for our doctor told ma and pa to give me everything I wanted to eat for to build me up again. So I'm eatin' nuttin but boughten jellies and things. Bill says I'm awful thin, and look like a ghost what somebody blowed wind inter with a bellows, but I guess he wouldn't mind bein me for a little while if he got such things as I'm doin'.

I guess my parents thort they wasn't goin' ter have any young son any more, 'cause the doctor said I'd the scarlit fever of a maybe serious type, and my parents was in an awful way. I guess he just said that so's he would tuck on the bill. Afore I'se sick pa said what people orter put signs on their houses when they had scarlit fever, so's nobody'd catch it, but I guess I heard him and ma tellin' the woman across the street, what says I'm a nice young tellar 'cause I found her cat and she give me 25 cents, that I had a heavy cold what was settled on me.

Our doctor's a pretty nice old fellar and said he'd pull me through, 'cause I'd be a great loss to the community, but I guess that was afore I put the jelly in his beaver when he laid it alongside my bed. He said, What's this, what's this? when he put his hat on, and I guess he thort it was his brains bustin' out 'cause pa said he'd a awful lot of them.

I guess the doctor was mad 'cause I heard him sayin' what he wisht he'd found me out a little sooner, and pa says what he guesses that jelly will make his bill a good deal bigger.

Pa says what I'm recoverin' fast, and he's glad I got over it so easy, but I guess he didn't think I heard him say what he'd have to use harsher measures with me or I'd be doin' somethin' rash afore I was better yet. He says doctors is very smart men to make people well again, but they make people pay fur it if they do. Ma says business men is always grumblin' about payin' things and if pa's a doctor people would be pawpers after they got better.

JOHNNY MULCAHEY.

An Effective Climax.

"I am writing a poem for your paper," said a long-haired individual, as he entered the editor's sanctum; "but I find some difficulty in bringing it to an end. Can you help me out?"

"With pleasure," said the editor, rising. "Jim, just open the door."

When the dust had settled the editor was heard to remark: "I guess that help out will bring the poem to an end."

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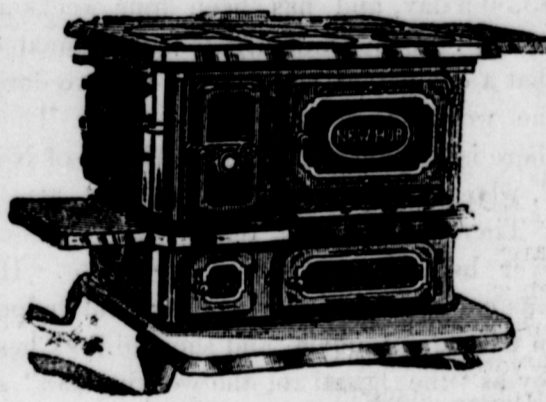
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