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By H. Rider Haggard

AUTHOR OF "ALLAN QUATERMAIN," "SHE," ETC., ETC.

[CONTINUED.]

SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY.

This story is supposed to be founded upon a manuscript found in the papers of Allan Quatermain, which were given to the author as literary executor. In it Quatermain tells the story of his marriage.

CHAPTER I.—Describes Allan's first meeting, when a child, with Stella Carson, at a Christmas gathering. Stella's dress caught fire and Allan extinguished the flames. Stella's mother was Spanish, and she eloped with a cousin, leaving Stella with her father, Squire Carson. He determined to leave England on account of the disgrace, and at about the same time Allan's mother died and Allan's father took him to South Africa, where Mr. Quatermain became a missionary among the Kaffirs. When Allan was 20 his father died.

CHAPTER II.—Allan sold the effects and decided to go on a journey of trade and adventure. Among his men was a Kaffir named Indaba-zimbi, a witch doctor. Between him and another witch doctor there had two years before been a lightning contest, which resulted in the death of his contestant.

CHAPTER III.

MAKE no apology to myself, or to anybody who may happen to read this narrative in future, for having set out the manner of my meeting with Indaba-zimbi; first, because it was curious, and secondly, because he takes some hand in the subsequent events. If that old man was a humbug, he was a very clever one. What amount of truth there was in his pretensions of supernatural powers it is not for me to determine, though I may have my own opinion on the subject. But there was no mistake as to the extraordinary influence he exercised over his fellow-natives.

When I was at length ready to start upon my expedition I went to old Indaba-zimbi to say good-by to him, and was rather surprised to find him engaged in rolling up medicine, assegais, and other sundries in his blankets.

"Good-by, Indaba-zimbi," I said, "I am going to trek north."

"Yes, Macumazahn," he answered, with his head on one side; "and so am I—I want to see that country. We will go together."

"Will we!" I said; "wait till you are asked, you old humbug."

"You had better ask me, then, Macumazahn, or I may not come back alive. Now that the old chief (my father) is gone to where the storms come from," and he nodded to the sky, "I feel myself getting into bad habits again. So last night I just throw up the bones and worked out about your journey, and I can tell you this, that if you don't take me you will die, and, what is more, you will lose one who is dearer to you than life."

Now I was no more superstitious than other people, but somehow old Indaba-zimbi impressed me. Also, I knew his extraordinary influence over every class of native, and bethought me that he might be useful in that way.

"All right," I said; "I appoint you witchfinder to the expedition without pay."

"First serve, then ask for wages," he answered. "I am glad to see that you have enough imagination not to be altogether a fool, like most white men, Macumazahn. Yes, yes, it is want of imagination that makes people fools; they won't believe what they can't understand. You can't understand my prophecies any more than the fool at the kraal could understand that I was his master with the lightning. Well, it is time to trek, but if I were you, Macumazahn, I should take one wagon, not two."

"Why?" I said.

"Because you will lose your wagons, and it is better to lose one than two."

"Oh, nonsense!" I said.

"All right, Macumazahn, live and learn." And without another word he walked to the foremost wagon, put his bundle into it, and climbed into the front seat.

So, having bid an affectionate adieu to my white friends, at length I started, and traveled slowly northwards. For the first three weeks nothing very particular befell me. Such Kaffirs as we came in contact with were friendly, and game literally swarmed.

The first real adventure that befell me on this particular journey was with elephants, which I will relate because of its curious termination. Just before we crossed the Orange river we came to a stretch of forest land some twenty miles broad. The night we entered this forest we camped in a lovely open glade. A few yards ahead tambouki grass was growing to the height of a man, or rather it had been; now, with the exception of a few stalks here and there, it was crushed quite flat. It was already dusk when we camped; but after the moon got up I walked from the fire to see how this had happened. One glance was enough for me; a great herd of elephants had evidently passed over the tall grass not many hours before. The sight of their spoor rejoiced me exceedingly, for though I had seen wild elephants, at that time I had never shot one. Moreover, the sight of elephant spoor to the African hunter is what "color in the pan" is to the prospector of gold. It is by ivory that he lives, and to shoot it or trade it is his chief aim in life. My resolution was soon taken. I would camp the wagons for a while in the forest, and start on horseback after the elephants.

I communicated my decision to Indaba-zimbi and the other Kaffirs. The latter were not loth, for your Kaffir loves hunting, which means plenty of meat and congenial occupation, but Indaba-zimbi would express no opinion. I saw him retire to a little fire that he had lit for himself, and go through some mysterious performances with bones and clay mixed with ashes, which were watched with the greatest interest by the other Kaffirs. At length he rose, and, coming forward, informed me that it was all right, and that I did well to go and hunt the elephants, as I should get plenty of ivory; but he advised me to go on foot. I said I should do nothing of the sort, but meant to ride. I am wiser now; that was the first and last time that I ever attempted to hunt elephants on horseback."

Accordingly, we started at dawn, Indaba-zimbi and three men; the rest I left with the wagons. I was on horseback and so was my driver, a good rider and a skillful shot for a Kaffir, but Indaba-zimbi and the others walked. It was a clear, cold night, and the dew lay on the grass like rime. We had not gone far when we came upon the spoor of the herd, which was as plain as a high road. Then we off saddled to let the horses rest and feed, and about 3 o'clock started on again. Another hour or so passed, and still there was no sign of elephants. Evidently the herd had traveled fast and far, and I began to think that we should have to give it up, when suddenly I caught sight of a brown mass moving through the thorn trees on the side of a slope about a quarter of a mile away. My heart seemed to jump into my mouth. There is the hunter who has not felt like this at the sight of his first elephant? I called a halt, and then, the wind being right, we set to work to stalk the bull.

Very quietly I rode down the hither side of the slope till we came to the bottom, which was densely covered with bush. Here I saw the elephants had been feeding, for broken branches and upturned trees lay all about. I did not take much notice, however, for all my thoughts were fixed upon the bull I was stalking, when suddenly my horse made a violent start that nearly threw me from the saddle, and there came a mighty rush and upheaval of something in front of me. I looked: there was the hinder part of a second bull elephant not four yards off. I could just catch sight of its outstretched ears projecting on either side. I had disturbed it sleeping, and it was running away. Obviously the best thing to do would have been to let it run, but I was young in those days and foolish, and in the excitement of the moment I lifted my "roer" or elephant gun and fired at the great brute over my horse's head. The recoil of the heavy gun nearly knocked me off the horse.

I recovered myself, however, and as I did so, saw the bull lurch forward, for the impact of a three ounce bullet in the flanks will quicken the movements even of an elephant. By this time I had realized the folly of the shot, and devoutly hoped that the bull would take no further notice of it. But he had a different view of the matter. Pulling himself up in a series of plunges, he spun around and came for me with outstretched ears and uplifted trunk, screaming terribly. I was quite defenseless, for my gun was empty, and my first thought was of escape. I dug my heels into the side of my horse. Now the trunk of the great bull swung aloft above my head. A thought flashed through my brain. Quick as light I rolled from the saddle. By the side of the horse lay a fallen tree, as thick through as a man's body. The tree was lifted a little off the ground by the broken boughs which took its weight, and with a single movement, so active is one in such necessities, I flung myself beneath it. As I did so, I heard the trunk of the elephant descend with a mighty thud on the back of my poor horse, and the next instant I was almost in darkness, for the horse, whose back was broken, fell over across the tree under which I lay ensconced. But he did not stop there long. In ten seconds more the bull had got his trunk round my dead nag's neck, and, with a mighty effort, hurled him clear of the tree. I wriggled backwards as far as I could towards the roots of the tree, for I knew what he was after.

Presently I saw the red tip of the bull's trunk stretching itself towards me. If he could manage to hook it round any part of me I was lost. But in the position I occupied, that was just what he could not do, although he knelt down to facilitate his operations. On came the snapping tip like a great open-mouthed snake; it closed upon my hat, which vanished. Again it was thrust down, and a scream of rage was bellowed through it within four inches of my head. Now it seemed to elongate itself. Oh, heavens! now it had me by the hair, which, luckily for myself, was not very long. Then it was my turn to scream, for next instant half a square inch of hair was dragged from my scalp by the roots. I was being plucked alive, as I have seen cruel Kaffir kitchen boys pluck a fowl. The elephant, however, disappointed with the moderate results, changed his tactics. He wound his trunk round the fallen tree and lifted it. It stirred, but fortunately the broken branches imbedded in the spongy soil, and some roots, which still held, prevented it from being turned over, though he lifted it so much that, had it occurred to him, he could now have easily fished me out with his trunk.

Again he hoisted with all his mighty strength, and I saw that the tree was coming, and roared aloud for help. Some shots were fired close by in answer, but if they hit the bull, their only effect was to stir his energies to more active life. In another few seconds my shelter would be torn away, and I should be done for. A cold perspiration burst over me as I realized that I was lost. Then of a sudden I remembered that I had a pistol in my belt, which I often used for dispatching wounded game. It was loaded and capped. By this time the tree was lifted so much that I could easily get my hand down to my middle and draw the pistol from its case. I drew and cocked it. See the tree was coming, and there, within three feet of my head, was the great brown trunk of the elephant. I placed the muzzle of the pistol within an inch of it and fired. The result was instantaneous. Down sunk the tree again, giving one of my legs a considerable squeeze, and the next instant I heard a crashing sound. The elephant had bolted.

By this time, what between fright and struggling, I was pretty well done. I cannot remember how I got from under the fallen tree, or indeed anything, until I found myself sitting on the ground drinking some peach brandy from a flask, and old Indaba-zimbi, opposite me nodding his white lock sagely, while he fired off moral reflections on the narrowness of my escape, and my invalidism in not having taken his advice to go on foot. That reminded me of my horse—I got up and went to look at it. It was quite dead; the blow of the elephant's trunk had fallen on the saddle, breaking the framework and rendering it useless. I reflected that in another two seconds it would have fallen on me. I called to Indaba-zimbi and asked which way the elephants had gone.

"There!" he said, pointing down the gully, "and we had better go after them, Macumazahn. We have had the bad luck, now for the good."

There was philosophy in this, though, to tell the truth, I did not feel particularly keen on elephants at the moment. I seemed to have had enough of them. However, it would never do to show the white feather before the boys, so I assented with much outward readiness, and we started, I on the second horse, and the others on foot. When we had traveled for the best part of an hour down the valley, all of a sudden we came upon the whole herd, which numbered a little more than eighty. Just in front of them the bush was so thick that they seemed to hesitate about entering it, and the sides of the valley were so rocky and steep at this point that they could not climb them.

They saw us at the same moment as we saw them, and inwardly I was filled with fears lest they should take it into their heads to charge back up the gully. But they did not: trumpeting aloud, they rushed at the thick bush which went down before them like corn before a sickle. I do not think that in all my experiences I ever heard anything to equal the sound they made as they crashed through and over the shrubs and trees. Before them was a dense forest belt from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in width. As they rushed on it fell, so that behind them was nothing but a level roadway strewn with fallen trunks, crushed branches, and here and there a tree, too strong even for them, left standing amid the wreck. On they went, and, notwithstanding the nature of the ground over which they had to travel, they kept their distance ahead of us. This sort of thing continued for a mile or more, and then I saw that in front of the elephants the valley opened into a space covered with reeds and grass—it might have been five or six acres in extent—beyond which the valley ran on again.

The herd reached the edge of this expanse, and for a moment pulled up, hesitating—evidently they mistrusted it. My men yelled aloud, as only Kaffirs can, and that settled them. Headed by the wounded bull, whose martial ardor, like my own, was somewhat cooled, they spread out and dashed into the treacherous swamp, for such it was, though just then there was no water to be seen. For a few yards all went well with them, though they clearly found it heavy going; then suddenly the great bull sunk up to his belly in the stiff peaty soil, and remained fixed. The others, mad with fear, took no heed of his struggles and trumpetings, but plunged on to meet the same fate. In five minutes the whole herd of them were hopelessly bogged, the more they struggled to escape, the deeper they sunk. There was one exception, indeed, a cow with a calf managed to win back to firm shore, and, lifting her trunk, prepared to charge us as we came up. But at that moment Indaba-zimbi, who had taken no part in the slaughter, ran out and bogged with the others.

Such a scene I never saw before or since. The swamp was spotted all over with the large forms of the elephants, and the air rang with their screams of rage and terror as they waved their trunks wildly to and fro. Now and again a monster would make a great effort and drag his mass from its peaty bed, only to stick fast again at the next stroke. It was a most pitiable sight, though one that gladdened the hearts of my men. Even the best natives have little compassion for the sufferings of animals.

Well, the rest was easy. The marsh that would not bear the elephants carried our weight well enough. Before midnight all were dead, for we shot them by moonlight. I would gladly have spared the young ones and some of the cows, but to do so would only have meant leaving them to perish of hunger; it was kinder to kill them at once. The wounded bull I slew with my own hand, and I cannot say that I felt much compunction in doing so. He knew me again, and made a desperate effort to get at me, but I am glad to say that the peat held him fast.

The pan presented a curious sight when the sun rose next morning. Owing to the support given by the soil, none of the dead elephants had fallen; there they all stood as though they were asleep.

I sent back for the wagons, and when they arrived on the morrow, formed a camp, about a mile away from the pan. Then began the work of cutting out the elephants' tusks; it took over a week, and for obvious reasons was a disgusting task. Indeed, had it not been for the help of some wandering bushmen, who took their pay in elephant meat, I do not think we could ever have managed it.

At last it was done. The ivory was far too cumbersome for us to carry, so we buried it, having first got rid of our bushmen allies. My boys wanted me to go back to the cape with it and sell it, but I was too much bent on my journey to do this. The tusks lay buried for five years. Then I came and dug them up; they were but little harmed. Ultimately I sold the ivory for something over twelve hundred pounds—not bad pay for one day's shooting.

This is how I began my career as an elephant hunter. I have shot many hundreds of them since, but have never again attempted to do so on horseback.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

First Issue of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The crowning glory of The National Era was that most famous of novels, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, which began in the issue of June 1, 1851, and ended April 1, 1852. Before it was half finished it had created such a sensation that the Jewells, of Boston, had it stereotyped, and immediately after it was completed in the paper it was published in book form. In its earlier stages of publication in the newspaper it seemed to fall flat. The circulation of The National Era was 13,000 when "Uncle Tom" was begun. On the 1st of August, 1852, shortly after the great romance was completed, the circulation had gone up to 19,000. On Dec. 30, 1852, it reached 27,000.—Washington Gazette.

Checks Under Their Plates.

Mr. Neville, the great baker of London, who died recently, like many other men who afterwards attained to wealth, made a false start in life, for his first venture ended in bankruptcy. He tried again, and soon became wealthy. He then invited each of the creditors he had been obliged to pay but partially to come to a dinner. Each guest found under his cover a check for the balance due, with interest up to date. Mr. Neville is said to have been offered and to have refused £800,000 for his business a short time before his death.—Exchange.

Innate Hoggishness.

"Now just stand beside me a minute and notice how much innate hoggishness there is in human nature," said a conductor at the Boston and Maine station last night to a Globe reporter. "The 5:45 train is just backing in. Watch."

The long row of empty cars slowly rolled into the station. The large platform and the little platform between the tracks were covered with men and women waiting to get seats as soon as the cars stopped. But as the speed of the cars slackened somewhat a movement began all along the crowd. Men jostled against each other in frantic attempts to board the moving cars, clutched at the rails and stumbled all over the steps, trying to clamber aboard; and when the cars came to a full stop nearly every one of them was almost filled with men comfortably reading their papers.

As for the women. Well, one or two brave but careless souls may have tried to step upon a car before it stopped, but for the rest there was nothing left to do but wait while the men, unencumbered with skirts and petticoats, jumped in and got good seats.

"Not only do the men steal all the seats," remarked the conductor, "but they never think of offering a woman a seat. Street-car etiquette sort of half compels a man not to allow a lady to stand, but in a steam car she gets a seat only when she is able to fight for it. Some one will get killled jumping on those cars some day, and then perhaps you will see a change in things. Women have no divine rights to seats I suppose, but they ought to be allowed a fair start in the race."—Boston Globe.

About Pianos.

"Very few know how to take care of a piano," said a musical man to a reporter who visited his warerooms.

"How do you do it here?" asked the scribe.

"It is a popular notion that pianos ought to be kept very dry. Nothing could be more fallacious. Pianos are not nearly so much affected by heat or cold as they are by dryness, and, reversely, by dampness. It is not generally known that the sounding board, the life of a piano, is forced into the case when it is made so tightly that it bulges up in the center, on the same principle as a violin. The wood is supposed to be as dry as possible, but, of course, it contains some moisture, and gathers more on damp days and in handling. Now, when a piano is put into an overheated, dry room all this moisture is dried out, and the board loses its shape and gets flabby and cracks. Even if it doesn't crack the tone loses its resonance and grows thin and tinny, the felt cloth and leather used in the action dry up, and the whole machine rattles."

"How do you prevent this?"

"Keep a growing plant in your room and so long as your plant thrives your piano ought to, or else there is something wrong with it. It should be noted how much more water will have to be poured into the flower pot in the room where the piano is than in any other room. In Germany it is the practice to keep a large vase or urn with a sopping wet sponge in it near or under the piano and keep it moistened. This is kept up

Mail and Express.

Eskimo Dogs.

During his wonderful sledge journey from Hudson bay to the Arctic ocean, Frederick Schwatka had abundant opportunity to learn the habits and the disposition of the Eskimo dog. He started out with sixty of them, using them to draw the sledges, and only nineteen were alive when he returned to Hudson bay. The others had died, mostly of starvation. He says:

"They were through all this horrible time perfect respecters of their human allies, and the little children used to go among them and play with them by pelting them over the back with their toy whips; and yet the same dogs were starving, and should one of them die his comrades would eat him. I notice this particularly, as some sensational writers have tried to make their readers believe that the Eskimo dogs are liable to become dangerous fellows, even to a powerfully built man, when simply hungry, and to be worse than wild beasts when ravenous. Any onslaught of Eskimo dogs is unknown among the northern natives where I traveled.

"It was pitiable in the extreme to see their sufferings as they so devotedly helped us along, many of them up till the very minute they had to be taken from the harness and abandoned on the road. As they dropped out along the way, we harnessed ourselves in their places to the sledge traces, and it was thus we were not compelled to leave important parts of our load.

Limbs of the Mind.

One is curiosity; that is a gift, a capacity of pleasure in knowing, which if you destroy you make yourselves cold and dull. Another is sympathy; the power of sharing in the feelings of living creatures, which if you destroy you make yourselves hard and cruel. Another of your limbs of mind is admiration: the power of enjoying beauty or ingenuity, which if you destroy you make yourselves base and irreverent. Another is wit, or the power of playing with the lights on the many sides of truth, which if you destroy you make yourselves gloomy, and less useful and cheering to others than you might be. So that in choosing your way of work it should be your aim, as far as possible, to bring out all these faculties, as far as they exist in you, not one merely, nor another, but all of them. And the way to bring them out is simply to concern yourselves attentively with the subject of each faculty. To cultivate sympathy you must be among living creatures, and thinking about them; and to cultivate admiration you must be among beautiful things, and looking at them.—J. Ruskin.

A Lucky Man.

His highness the gaekwar of Baroda, a Bombay paper remarks, is a man whom fortune has smiled upon from his youth. The romance of his life would read almost like a dream from the "Arabian Nights." Taken from the hills a poor little herd boy, adopted by a princess, he is clad in purple garments, decked with jewels, and has a scepter thrust into his hands. With loyal and peaceful subjects, a beautiful stretch of country for his state, magnificent palaces and well filled coffers from which he can afford to indulge his artistic tastes and his love for what is beautiful, he is a prince whom even princes might envy.—Montreal Star.

Circumstantial Evidence.

Clara—Yes, I knew you were there last night, though I did not see you.

Harriesse—Darling girl! It was a manifestation of that subtle influence which is felt by the souls of those that truly love.

Clara—No. I saw the reflection on the ceiling, caused by the light falling on your head.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

THE BIRDS ON THE HATS.

A RATHER BITTER ARRAIGNMENT OF A FAD AND ITS FRIENDS.

Butchering Hundreds of Thousands of Birds to Secure Their Plumage—Extracts from Different Sources to Show What the Practice Means.

One of your esteemed contemporaries had an article recently on "Bird Plumage on Women's Heads," which is so misleading and so favorable to the interests of the feather dealers that, if it had been dictated by one of those gentlemen, it could hardly have been more so.

Dead birds mean dollars to the feather dealer, and he would stifle the gush of song in the throat of the bobolink with as little compunction as he would crush a mosquito. It is not to be supposed that these men are going to volunteer any information that will injure their trades on the contrary, it is their part to suppress all unpleasant facts, and to soothe and put to sleep the conscientious scruples of women on the subject of dead bird millinery. With your kind permission I will mention a few facts for the benefit of your readers which will rather disprove some previous statements.

To affirm that the domestic canary is never used for millinery purposes is untrue. The writer saw a hat only a short time since with five canaries upon it, arranged in such fantastic attitudes as to suggest the idea that the wearer was a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. Either we must believe what the feather dealers tell us, and distrust the evidence of our own senses, or we must believe what the leading ornithologists of the country tell us, and for my part I prefer to believe the latter. In 1886 the rage for dead bird millinery had reached a climax, and the ornithologists published a report showing the appalling destruction of our song birds to satisfy the demands of a barbarous and demoralizing fashion. The report says: "From carefully gathered statistics it is proved that on the most moderate calculation 5,000,000 song birds are annually required to fill the demand for the ornamentation of the hats of American women. The slaughter is not confined to song birds; everything that wears feathers is a target for the bird butcher. In a single season 40,000 terns were killed at Cape Cod for exportation, and the swamps and marshes of Florida have been depopulated of their egrets and herons. In one month 1,000,000 bobolinks have been killed near Philadelphia, and from a single Long Island village 70,000 song birds were supplied in a short time to New York dealers for millinery purposes."

The above are only a few extracts from the report, but enough to show what the slaughter has been; and if song birds are not used so much now on hats as formerly, it is owing to the restraining influence of the Audubon society. This society is an outgrowth of the committee on bird protection of the American Ornithologists' union; and has members today in every state in the union and in Canada.

Probably if the wearers of the plumes of the Florida egrets knew at what cost these plumes are obtained, there would be often an, at this matter from ignorance and want of thought as from want of heart, it is only right they should know. A correspondent of The Audubon Magazine (see July number, 1887) writes from Pinecastle, Fla., as follows:

"Through my meanderings I watched closely for birds and deer. I saw but a few hundred birds, where formerly I had seen from 10,000 to 20,000. I met plenty of hunters with buggies and wagons loaded with bird plumes. The birds are killed at a season of the year when they are rearing their young. On passing the rookeries where the hunters had been a few days previous, the screams and calls of the starving young birds were pitiful to hear. Some were just fledged, while others were so young that they could make but little noise. But all must inevitably starve to death. I cannot describe the horror it gave me to hear the pitiful screams of the dying little birds."

I think your esteemed contemporary has got rather mixed up in his ornithology when he speaks of the cedar bird as the rice bird which does so much injury to the crops in the south, so that its destruction is rather a benefit than otherwise. But I quite understand his description of "bird effects." The way the birds are torn up, and the different parts distributed upon hats, would be quite in accordance with the fitness of things in the mind of a savage, but it is an insult to the taste and feeling of a civilized people. On one hat is a breast without head or body, on another a decapitated head with glass eyes stares out from between legs, or the bird is smashed flat, as if killed with a stone—more the position it would take in its dying agonies than any pose it could possibly assume in life. Still the outlook is not so discouraging as it might be, and people are beginning to realize the necessity of more rigid laws to protect birds other than those for food.

I read in The Savannah News of a recent date: "The crane is pursued vigorously by the hunter, who finds a ready market for the plumage, as the snow white feathers are popular with the women of fashion. Plumage dealers in New York have hunters regularly employed at a salary in the south, Florida, and along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the peninsula, and all through the almost impenetrable lagoons and bayous of the Everglades, who keep up the warfare upon the birds of plumage and song all through the winter. And this fact has led to the agitation of the question whether a rigid law should not be passed to punish by fines and penalties all who are convicted of shooting any birds excepting those which are edible."—Letter in New York Sun.

Regard for the Fitness of Things.

Rurralist (who has paid $1 to a street peddler for a ten-cent chain)—Police!

Peddler—What do you want now?

Rurralist—I want the kind of watch this chain deserves.—Jeweler's Weekly.

The Seven Bibles.

The seven bibles of the world are the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Tri Pitikes of the Buddhists, the Five Kings of the Chinese, the Three Vedas of the Hindoos, the Zendavesta and the Scripture of the Christians.

The Koran is the most recent of the five, dating from about the seventh century after Christ. It is a compound of quotations from both the Old and New Testaments and from the Talmud. The Tri Pitikes contain sublime morals and pure aspirations. Their author lived and died in the sixth century before Christ.

The sacred writings of the Chinese are called the Five Kings, the word "kings" meaning web of cloth. From this it is presumed that they were originally written on five rolls of cloth. They contain wise sayings from the sages on the duties of life, but they cannot be traced further back than the eleventh century before our era.

The Vedas are the most ancient books in the language of the Hindoos, but they do not, according to late commentators, antedate the twelfth century before the Christian era.

The Zendavesta of the Persians, next to our Bible, is reckoned among scholars as being the greatest and most learned of the sacred writings. Zoroaster, whose sayings it contains, lived and worked in the twelfth century before Christ; Moses lived and wrote the Pentateuch 1,500 years before the birth of Christ; therefore, that portion of our Bible is at least 300 years older than the most ancient of other sacred writings.

The Eddas, a semi-sacred work of the Scandinavians, was first given to the world in the fourteenth century.—Orange (N. J.) Journal.

The Angle Worm.

There is nothing especially interesting about the angle worm itself. It is the effect it has upon the lives of mankind, and boykind especially, that weaves a halo of interest about this otherwise uninteresting object. There may be different breeds of the angle worm, but those who need them in their business do not examine into the pedigree of those that come to hand first. Any smooth, flat, wiggly worm will do. Be it mongrel or thoroughbred.

Why the denizens of the two most unstable elements, air and water, should have an appetite for the humble worm, is one of the great mysteries of nature. It is lucky for the worm that it is neither a swimmer nor flyer, and it can also thank its stars, if it has any, that birds and fish cannot handle a spade. If the worm would give up its habit of going to meet the early bird it could pass its life in comparative safety in the depths of its sub-cellar.

The man who discovered that fish liked worms is responsible for considerable juvenile and masculine depravity. Fishing cannot be successfully carried on without the worm. Any old tin can will do to carry the worms in.

It is almost an infallible omen when a boy is seen with a spade and can that he will be missed at school on the morrow, or when a man is seen with the same implements Saturday evening, that he will be missed at church next Sunday. It is not right to dig for angle worms on Sunday.—Texas Siftings

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