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THE STRANGE STORY OF ALLAN QUATERMAIN'S WIFE

By H. Rider Haggard

AUTHOR OF "ALLAN QUATERMAIN," "SHE," "JESS," &c.

[CONCLUDED.]

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.—Details the start of the expedition. Quatermain describes his first elephant hunt.

CHAPTER IV.—Quatermain discovered a large body of Zulus, and was surprised by two of their scouts. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, he shot both of them and retreated. The Zulus had been following a party of Dutch Boers, consisting of seventeen or eighteen men, their women and children, and a large number of cattle, with which they were removing to the north. For safety's sake the cattle and some of the women and children were sent away, while Quatermain, the witch doctor and some of the Boers remained. The next morning, by a ruse, Quatermain and Indaba-zimbi were captured by the Zulus.

CHAPTER V.—Quatermain discovered that Indaba-zimbi had betrayed him into the hands of the Zulus, who at first offered him no harm. The camp of the Boers was attacked and destroyed. One little child only was saved alive and Quatermain preserved her by fighting a duel with and killing a Zulu warrior. The witch doctor had said that Quatermain was a spirit. The Zulus determined to kill him, but were prevented by Indaba, who pretended himself to kill Quatermain and then bring him to life again. This frightened the Zulus, and Indaba and Quatermain, with the child, made their escape.

CHAPTER VI.—Describes the manner of escape of Quatermain with the witch doctor and Tota, the child. Indaba said "Go north," prophesying that friends would be found there. Quatermain obeyed, though against his judgment. They crossed a broad desert, where there was no water, and at its end they became unconscious. When they recovered, they were being cared for by Stella Carson, whose life Quatermain saved when a child, and who was now a beautiful young woman. Since early childhood she had lived in the wilds of Africa with her father, never having seen but one other Englishman.

CHAPTER VII.—Stella was accompanied by a baboons when a child and rescued by Stella's father. Hendrika and Indaba quarreled, and Hendrika objected to Quatermain's being taken to Stella's home, but was overruled. The home of Mr. Carson, who was sick at this time, was a marvel of white marble buildings, built like Zulu huts, only much larger. No one knew who built them; Carson found them ready to his hand when he settled there.

CHAPTER VIII is devoted to a description of Mr. Carson's place. He had a thousand natives with him, planted coffee, oranges, etc., and had educated his daughter, though she had never left the vicinity. Old mines were near, and Stella showed them to Quatermain, when a rather alarming encounter with baboons, who swarmed round about, occurred. Hendrika quelled the disturbance, and Indaba warned Quatermain of her, saying, "She is jealous of Stella, 'the Star,' and may do her harm if she becomes too much attached to you."

CHAPTER IX.—Describes the lovemaking of Quatermain and Stella. Hendrika became wildly jealous of Quatermain, and threatened him with evil if he took Stella away. Carson sanctioned the marriage and declared his end to be near.

CHAPTER X.—Hendrika attempted to murder Quatermain in his sleep, but was foiled by Indaba. The marriage took place in full view of the natives, Mr. Carson officiating. Hendrika's deeds were told, and she was sent into the mountains, though Indaba and the natives urged that she be killed. She promised Quatermain that she had not yet done with him.

CHAPTER XI.—Stella and Tota were stolen by the baboons, under Hendrika's direction, and hidden in the mountains.

CHAPTER XII.—Aided by the magic of Indaba-zimbi, Stella was found. There was a battle with the baboons, who were routed.

CHAPTER XIII.—Describes the rescue of Stella and Tota, and Hendrika's remorseful suicide.

CHAPTER XIV.—Tells of Stella's death, and describes Quatermain's revisit fifteen years afterward.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIGHT was over. In all we had lost seven men killed, and several more were severely bitten, while but few had escaped without some tokens whereby he might remember what a baboon's teeth and claws are like. How many of the brutes we killed I never knew, because we did not count, but it was a vast number. I should think that the stock must have been low about Babyan's peak for many years afterwards. From that day to this, however, I have always avoided baboons, feeling more afraid of them than any beast that lives.

The path was clear, and we rushed forward up the water-course. But first we picked up little Tota. The child was not in a swoon, as I had thought, but paralyzed by terror, so that she could scarcely speak. Otherwise she was unhurt, though it took her many a week to recover her nerve. Had she been older, and had she not remembered Hendrika, I doubt if she would have recovered it. She knew me again, and flung her little arms about my neck, clinging to me so closely that I did not dare to give her to any one else to carry lest I should add to her terrors. So I went on with her in my arms. The fears that pierced my heart may well be imagined. Should I find Stella alive or dead? Should I find her at all? Well, we should soon know now. We stumbled on up the stony water-course; notwithstanding the weight of Tota, I led the way, for suspense lent me wings. Now we were through, and an extraordinary scene lay before us. We were in a great natural amphitheatre, only it was three times the size of any amphitheatre ever shaped by man, and the walls were formed of precipitous cliffs, ranging from one to two hundred feet in height. For the rest, the space thus inclosed was level, studded with park-like trees, brilliant with flowers, and having a stream running through the center of it that, as I afterwards discovered, welled up from the ground at the head of the open space.

We spread ourselves out in a line, searching everywhere, for Tota was too overcome to be able to tell us where Stella was hidden away. For nearly half an hour we searched and searched, scanning the walls of rock for any possible opening to a cave. In vain—we could find none. I applied to old Indaba-zimbi, but his foresight was at fault here. All he could say was that this was the place, and that the "Star" was hidden somewhere in a cave, but where the cave was he could not tell. At last we came to the top of the amphitheatre. There before us was a wall of rock, of which the lower parts were here and there clothed in grasses, lichens and creepers. I walked along it, calling at the top of my voice.

Presently my heart stood still, for I thought I heard a faint answer. I drew nearer to the place from which the sound seemed to come, and again called. Yes, there was an answer in my wife's voice. It seemed to come from the rock. I went up to it and searched among the creepers, but still could find no opening.

"Move the stone," cried Stella's voice, "the cave is shut with a stone."

I took a spear and prodded at the cliff whence the sound came. Suddenly the spear sank in through a mass of lichen. I swept the lichen aside, revealing a bowlder that had been rolled into the mouth of an opening in the rock, which it fitted so accurately that, covered as it was by the overhanging lichen, it might well have escaped the keenest eye. We dragged the bowlder out; it was two men's work to do it. Beyond was a narrow, water worn passage, which I followed with a beating heart. Presently the passage opened into a small cave, shaped like a pickle bottle, and coming to a neck at the top end. We passed through and found ourselves in a second, much larger cave, that I at once recognized as the one of which Indaba-zimbi had shown me a vision in the water. Light reached it from above—how I know not—and by it I could see a form half sitting, half lying on some skins at the top end of the cave. I shouted—she stirred—I shouted again, and Stella, bound with strips of hide, bruised, torn, but still Stella, and alive.

She saw me, she gave one cry, then as I caught her in my arms she fainted. It was happy indeed that she did not faint before, for had it not been for the sound of her voice I do not believe we should ever have found that cunningly hidden cave, unless, indeed, Indaba-zimbi's magic (on which be blessings) had come to our assistance.

We bore her to the open air, laid her beneath the shade of a tree, and cut the bonds loose from her ankles. As we went I glanced at the cave. It was exactly as I had seen it in the vision. There burnt the fire, there were the rude wooden vessels, one of them still half full of the water which I had seen the baboon bring. I felt awed as I looked, and marveled at the power wielded by a savage who could not even read and write.

Now I could see Stella clearly. Her face was scratched, and haggard with fear and weeping. Her clothes were almost torn off her, and her beautiful hair was loose and tangled. I sent for water, and we sprinkled her face. Then I forced a little of the brandy which we distilled from peaches at the kraals between her lips, and she opened her eyes, and throwing her arms about me clung to me as little Tota had done, sobbing, "Thank God! thank God!"

After a while she grew quieter, and I made her and Tota eat a little food from the store that we had brought with us. I too ate and was thankful, for with the exception of the mealie cobs I had tasted nothing for nearly four-and-twenty hours. Then she washed her face and hands, and tidied her rags of dress as well as she was able. As she did so, by degrees I drew her story from her.

It seemed that on the previous afternoon, being wearied with packing, she went out to visit her father's grave, taking Tota with her, and was followed there by the two dogs. She wished to lay some flowers on the grave and take farewell of the dust it covered; for as we had expected to trek early on the morrow she did not know if she would find a later opportunity. They passed up the garden, and, gathering some flowers from the orange trees and elsewhere, went on to the little graveyard. Here she laid them on the grave as we had found them, and then sitting down, fell into a deep and sad reverie, such as the occasion would naturally induce. While she sat thus, Tota, who was a lively child and active as a kitten, strayed away without Stella observing it. With her went the dogs, who had also grown tired of inaction; a while passed, and suddenly she heard the dogs barking furiously about 150 yards away. Then she heard Tota scream, and the dogs also yelling with fear and pain. She rose and ran as swiftly as she could towards the spot whence the sound came. Presently she was there. Before her in the glade, holding the screaming Tota in her arms, was a figure in which, notwithstanding the rough disguise of baboon skins and coloring matter, she had no difficulty in recognizing Hendrika, and all about her were numbers of baboons, rolling over and over in two hideous heaps, of which the centers were the two unfortunate dogs now in process of being rent to fragments.

"Hendrika," Stella cried, "what does this mean? What are you doing with Tota and those brutes?"

The woman heard her and looked up. Then she saw that she was mad; madness stared from her eyes. She dropped the child, which instantly flew to Stella for protection. Stella clasped it, only to be herself clasped by Hendrika. She struggled fiercely, but it was of no use—the babyan-frau had the strength of ten. She lifted her and Tota as though they were nothing, and ran off with them, following the bed of the stream in order to avoid leaving a spoor. Only the baboons who came with her, minus the one the dogs had killed, would not take to the water, but kept pace with them on the bank.

Stella said that the night which followed was more like a hideous nightmare than a reality. She was never able to tell me all that occurred in it. She had a vague recollection of being borne over rocks and along kloofs, while around her echoed the horrible grunts and clicks of the baboons. She spoke to Hendrika in English and Kaffir, imploring her to let them go; but the woman, if I may call her so, seemed in her madness to have entirely forgotten these tongues. When Stella spoke she would kiss her and stroke her hair, but she did not seem to understand what it was she said. On the other hand, she could and did talk to the baboons, that seemed to obey her implicitly. Moreover, she would not allow them to touch either Stella or the child in her arms. Once one of them tried to do so, and she seized a dead stick and struck it so heavily on the head that it fell senseless. Thrice Stella made an attempt to escape, for sometimes even Hendrika's giant strength waned and she had to set them down. But on each occasion she caught them, and it was in these struggles that Stella's clothes were so torn.

At length before daylight they reached the cliff, and with the first break of light the ascent began. Hendrika dragged them up the first stages, but when they came to the precipitous place she tied the strips of hide, of which she had a supply wound round her waist, beneath Stella's arms. Steep as the place was the baboons ascended it easily enough, springing from a knob of rock to the trunk of the tree that grew on the edge of the crevasse. Hendrika followed them, holding the end of the hide rein in her teeth, one of the baboons hanging down from the tree to assist her ascent. It was while she was ascending that Stella bethought her of letting fall her handkerchief in the faint hope that some searcher might see it.

By this time Hendrika was on a tree, and grunting out orders to the baboons which clustered about Stella below. Suddenly these seized her and little Tota, who was in her arms, and lifted her from the ground. Then Hendrika above, aided by other baboons, put out all her great strength and pulled the two of them up the rock. Twice Stella swung heavily against the cliff. After the second blow she felt her senses going, and was consumed with terror lest she should drop Tota. But she managed to cling to her, and together they reached the cliff.

"From that time," Stella went on, "I remember no more till I woke to find myself in a gloomy cave resting on a bed of skins. My legs were bound, and Hendrika sat near me watching me, while round the edge of the cave peered the heads of those horrible baboons. Tota was still in my arms, and half dead from terror; her moans were pitiful to hear. I spoke to Hendrika, imploring her to release us; but either she had lost all understanding of human speech, or she pretended to have done so. All she would do was to caress me, and even kiss my hands and dress with extravagant signs of affection. As she did so, Tota shrunk away closer to me. This Hendrika saw and glared so savagely at the child that I feared lest she was going to kill her. I therefore drew her attention by making signs that I wanted water, and this she gave me in a wooden bowl. As you saw, the cave was evidently Hendrika's dwelling place. There are stores of fruit in it and some strips of dried flesh. She gave me some of the fruit and Tota a little, and I made Tota eat some. You can never know what I went through, Allan. I saw now that Hendrika was quite mad, and but little removed from the brutes to which she is akin, and over which she has such unholy power. The only trace of humanity left about her was her affection for me. Evidently her idea was to keep me here with her, to keep me away from you, and to carry out this idea she was capable of the exercise of every artifice and cunning. In that way she was sane enough, but in every other way she was mad. Moreover, she had not forgotten her horrible jealousy. Already I saw her glaring at Tota, and I knew that the child's murder was only a matter of time. Probably within a few hours she would be killed before my eyes. Of escape, even if I had the strength, there was absolutely no chance, and little enough of our ever being found. No, we should be kept there guarded by a mad thing, half ape, half woman, till we perished miserably. Then I thought of you, dear, and of all that you must be suffering, and my heart nearly broke. I could only pray to God that I might either be rescued or die swiftly.

"As I prayed, I dropped into a kind of doze from utter weariness, and then I had the strangest dream. I dreamed that Indaba-zimbi stood over me nodding his white lock, and spoke to me in Kaffir, telling me not to be frightened, for you would soon be with me, and that meanwhile I must humor Hendrika, pretending to be pleased to have her near me. The dream was so vivid that I actually seemed to see and hear him, as I see and hear him now."

Here I looked up and glanced at old Indaba-zimbi, who was sitting near. But it was not till afterwards that I told Stella of how her vision was brought about.

"At any rate," she went on, "when I awoke I determined to act on my dream. I took Hendrika's hand and pressed it. She actually laughed in a wild kind of way with happiness, and laid her head upon my knee. Then I made signs that I wanted food, and she threw wood on the fire, which I forgot to tell you was burning in the cave, and began to make some of the broth that she used to cook very well, and she did not seem to have forgotten all about it. At any rate the broth was not bad, though neither Tota nor I could drink much of it. Fright and weariness had taken away our appetites.

"After the meal was done—and I prolonged it as much as possible—I saw that Hendrika was beginning to get jealous of Tota again. She glared at her and then at the big knife which was tied round her own body. I knew the knife again; it was the one with which she had tried to murder you, dear. At last she went so far as to draw the knife. I was paralyzed with fear, then suddenly I remembered that when she was our servant, and used to get out of temper and sulk, I could always calm her by singing to her. So I began to sing hymns. Instantly she forgot her jealousy and put the knife back into its sheath. She knew the sound of the singing, and sat listening to it with a rapt face; the baboons, too, crowded in at the entrance of the cave to listen. I must have sung for an hour or more, all the hymns that I could remember. It was so very strange and dreadful sitting there singing to mad Hendrika and those hideous man-like apes that shut their eyes and nodded their great heads as I sang. It was like a horrible nightmare; but I believe that the baboons are almost as human as the Bushmen.

"Well, this went on for a long time till my voice was getting exhausted. Then suddenly I heard the baboons outside raise a loud noise, as they do when angry. Then, dear, I heard the boom of your elephant gun, and I think it was the sweetest sound that ever came to my ears. Hendrika heard it, too. She sprang up, stood for a moment, then, to my horror, swept Tota into her arms and rushed down the cave. Of course, I could not stir to follow her, for my feet were tied. Next instant I heard the sound of a rock being moved, and presently the lessening of the light in the cave told me that I was shut in. Now the sound even of the elephant gun only reached me very faintly, and presently I could hear nothing more, straining my ears as I would.

"At last I heard a faint shouting that reached me through the wall of rock. I answered as loud as I could. You know the rest; and, oh, my dear husband, thank God! thank God!" and she fell weeping into my arms.

CHAPTER XIV.

BOTH Stella and Tota were so weary to be moved, so we camped that night in the baboon's home, but were troubled by no baboons. Stella would not sleep in the cave; she said the place terrified her, so I made her up a kind of a bed under a thorn tree. As this rock-bound valley was one of the hottest places I ever was in, I thought that this would not matter; but when at sunrise on the following morning I saw a veil of miasmatic mist hanging over the surface of the ground, I changed my opinion. However, neither Stella nor Tota seemed the worse, so as soon as was practicable we started homewards. I had already on the previous day sent some of the men back to the kraals to fetch a ladder, and when we reached the cliff we found them waiting for us beneath. With the help of the ladder the descent was easy. Stella simply got out of her rough litter at the top of the cliff, for we found it necessary to carry her, climbed down the ladder, and got into it again at the bottom.

Well, we reached the kraals safely enough, seeing nothing more of Hendrika, and, were this a story, doubtless I should end it here with—"and lived happy ever after." But alas! it is not so. How am I to write it?

My dearest wife's vital energy seemed completely to fail her now that the danger was past, and within twelve hours of our return I saw that her state was such as to necessitate the abandonment of any idea of leaving Babyan Kraals at present. The bodily exertion, the anguish of mind, and the terror that she had endured during that dreadful night, combined with her delicate state of health, had completely broken her down. To make matters worse also, she was taken with an attack of fever, contracted no doubt in the unhealthy atmosphere of that accursed valley. In time she shook off the fever, but it left her physically weak, and quite unfit to face the trial before her.

I think she knew she was going to die; she always spoke of my future, never of our future. It is impossible for me to tell how sweet she was; how gentle, how patient and resigned. Nor, indeed, do I wish to tell it, it is too sad. But this I will say: I believe that, if ever a woman drew near to perfection while yet living on the earth, Stella Quatermain did so.

The fatal hour drew on. My boy Harry was born, and his mother lived to kiss and bless him. Then she sank. We did what we could, but we had little skill, and might not hold her back from death. All through one weary night I watched her with a breaking heart.

The dawn came, the sun rose in the east. His rays falling on the peak behind were reflected in glory upon the bosom of the western sky. Stella awoke from her swoon and saw the light. She whispered to me to open the door of the hut. I did so, and she fixed her dying eyes on the splendor of the morning sky. She looked on me and smiled as an angel might smile. Then with a last effort she lifted her hand, and, pointing to the radiant heavens, whispered:

"There, Allan, there!"

It was done, and I was broken hearted, and broken hearted I must wander till the end. Those who have endured my loss will know my sorrow; it cannot be written. In such peace and at such an hour may I also die!

Yes, it is a sad story, but wander where we will about the world we can never go beyond the sound of the passing bell. For me, as for my father before me, and for the millions who have been and who shall be, there is but one word of comfort. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away." Let us, then, bow our heads in hope, and add with a humble heart, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

I buried her by her father's side, and the weeping of the people who had loved her went up to heaven. Even Indaba-zimbi wept.

On the second night from her burial I could not sleep. I rose, dressed myself, and went out into the night. The moon was shining brightly, and by its rays I shaped my course towards the graveyard. I drew near silently, and as I came I thought that I heard a sound of moaning on the further side of the wall. I looked over it. Crouched by Stella's grave, and tearing at its sods with her hands, as though she would unearth that which lay within, was Hendrika. Her face was wild and haggard; her form was so emaciated that, when the pelts she wore slipped aside, the shoulder blades seemed to project almost through her skin. Suddenly she looked up and saw me. Laughing a dreadful maniac laugh, she put her hand to her girdle and drew her great knife from it. I thought that she was about to attack me, and prepared to defend myself as I best could, for I was unarmed. But she made no effort to do so. Lifting the knife on high, for a moment she held it glittering in the moonlight, then plunged it into her own breast, and fell headlong to the ground.

I sprang over the wall and ran to her. She was not yet dead. Presently she opened her eyes, and I saw that the madness had gone out of them.

"Macumazahn," she said, speaking in English and in a thick difficult voice like one who half forgot and half remembered — "Macumazahn, I remember now. I have been mad. Is she really dead, Macumazahn?"

"Yes," I said, "she is dead, and you killed her."

"I killed her!" the dying woman faltered, "and I loved her. Yes, yes—I know now. I became a brute again and dragged her to the brutes, and now once more I am a woman, and she is dead, and I killed her—because I loved her so. I killed her who saved me from the brutes. I am not dead yet, Macumazahn. Take me and torture me to death, slowly, very slowly. It was jealousy of you that drove me mad, and I have killed her, and now she never can forgive me."

"Ask forgiveness from above," I said, for Hendrika had been a Christian, and the torment of her remorse touched me.

"I ask no forgiveness," she said. "May God torture me for ever, because I killed her; may I become a brute forever till she comes to find me and forgives me! I only want her forgiveness." And wailing in an anguish of the heart so strong that her bodily suffering seemed to be forgotten, Hendrika, the baboon woman, died.

I went back to the kraals, and, waking Indaba-zimbi, told him what had happened, asking him to send some one to watch the body, as I proposed to give it burial. But next morning it was gone, and I found that the natives, hearing of the event, had taken the corpse and thrown it to the vultures with every mark of hate. Such, then, was the end of Hendrika.

A week after Hendrika's death I left Babyan Kraals. The place was hateful to me now; it was a haunted place. I sent for old Indaba-zimbi and told him that I was going. He answered that it was well. "The place has served your turn," he said; "here you have won that joy which it was fated you should win, and have suffered those things that it was fated you should suffer. Yes, and though you know it not now, the joy and the suffering, like the sunshine and the storm, are the same thing, and will rest at last in the same heaven, the heaven from which they came. Now go, Macumazahn."

I asked him if he was coming with me.

"No," he answered, "our paths lie apart henceforth, Macumazahn. We met together for certain ends. Those ends are fulfilled. Now each one goes his own way. You have still many years before you, Macumazahn; my years are few. When we shake hands here it will be for the last time. Perhaps we may meet again, but it will not be in this world. Henceforth we have each of us a friend the less."

"Heavy words," I said.

"True words," he answered.

Well, I have little heart to write of the rest of it. I went, leaving Indaba-zimbi in charge of the place, and making him a present of such cattle and goods as I did not want.

Tota, I of course took with me. Fortunately by this time she had almost recovered the shock to her nerves. The baby Harry, as he was afterwards named, was a fine healthy child, and I was lucky in getting a respectable native woman, whose husband had been killed in the fight with the baboons, to accompany me as his nurse.

Slowly, and followed for a distance by all the people, I trekked away from Babyan Kraals. My route towards Natal was along the edge of the bad lands, and my first night's outspan was beneath that very tree where Stella, my lost wife, had found us as we lay dying of thirst.

I did not sleep much that night. And yet I was glad that I had not died in the desert about eleven months before. I felt then, as from year to year I have continued to feel while I wander through the lonely wilderness of life, that I have been preserved to an end. I had lost my darling's love, and for a little while we had been happy together. Our happiness was too perfect to endure. She is lost to me now, but she is lost to be found again.

Here on the following morning I bade farewell to Indaba-zimbi.

"Good-by, Macumazahn," he said, nodding his white lock at me. "Good-by for a while. I am not a Christian; your father could not make me that. But he was a wise man, and when he said that those who love each other shall meet again, he did not lie. And I too am a wise man in my way, Macumazahn; and I say it is true that we shall meet again. All my prophecies to you have come true, Macumazahn, and this one shall come true also. I tell you that you shall return to Babyan Kraals and shall not find me. I tell you that you shall journey to a further land than Babyan Kraals and shall find me. Farewell!" and he took a pinch of snuff, turned and went.

Of my journey down to Natal there is little to tell. I met with many adventures, but they were of an every day kind, and in the end arrived safely at Port Durban, which I now visited for the first time. Both Tota and my baby boy bore the journey well. And here I may as well chronicle the destiny of Tota. For a year she remained under my charge. Then she was adopted by a lady, the wife of an English colonel, who was stationed at the Cape. She was taken by her adopted parents to England, where she grew up a very charming and pretty girl, and ultimately married a clergyman in Norfolk. But I never saw her again, though we often wrote to each other.

Before I returned to the country of my birth, she too had been gathered to the land of shadows, leaving three children behind her. Ah me! all this took place so long ago, when I was young who now am old.

Perhaps it may interest the reader to know the fate of Mr. Carson's property, which should of course have gone to his grandson Harry. I wrote to England to claim the estate on his behalf, but the lawyer to whom the matter was submitted said that my marriage to Stella, not having been celebrated by an ordained priest, was not legal according to English law, and therefore Harry could not inherit. Foolishly enough I acquiesced in this, and the property passed to a cousin of my father-in-law's; but since I have come to live in England I have been informed that this opinion is open to great suspicion, and that there is every probability that the courts would have declared the marriage perfectly binding as having been solemnly entered into in accordance with the custom of the place where it was contracted. But I am now so rich that it is not worth while to move in the matter. The cousin is dead, his son is in