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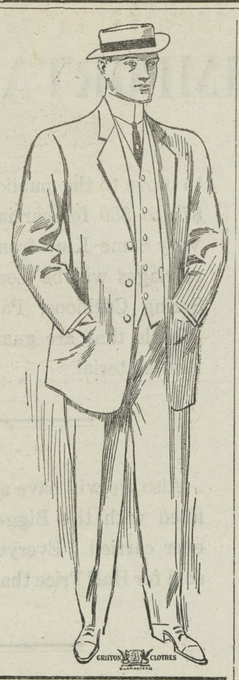

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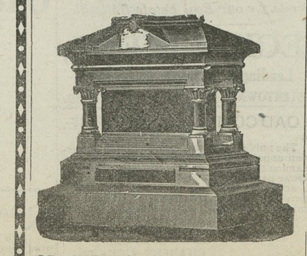

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Introductory Chapter.

BY RIDER HAGGARD.

The story of a trip, like a tour through the country, must naturally begin at the starting point.

Accepting an invitation at Annapolis from the captain and crew of the tug "Progress," of Baltimore, to visit Chestertown, the question naturally suggested itself, "When do you start?" Four o'clock to-morrow morning, April 29th. Then, we'll have to get aboard sometime to-night", we suggested. "So long as you do not fail to get aboard, you can suit yourself as to the time; should we be in bed; here is your cabin, roll in or tumble in whenever you get good and ready." Then, "you can count on me," as we parted about 2 P. M., April 28th. That evening there was a prize fight at the Colonial theatre, between two of Uncle Sam's brave boys in blue. It was a "second mourning" affair half white and half black. They were both game, and after a six-round bout which was heartily enjoyed by the large audience, it was decided a draw. The sports, and boxing experts declared they could not tell whether one of the contestants imagined he was pitching for a baseball game or taking part in a prize fight-he swung his arms so like the former. The sporting blood—and some of the other blood—turned out enmasse, the general feeling [as well as the general business was good. The Chesapeake House adjacent got its share of the latter. There the writer—"held court"—and there he met such sports as the Hon. Robert E. Martin, Hon. Dennis Claude, Hon. Edward Hutton, etc., etc. Also a large crowd of Uncle Sam's brave boys, including Dawson, Spangler, Kenneally, the Santee's prizefighter, etc., and several whose names we can't recall, as well as several whom we only know by appearance. Good fellowship ran high, and there was something else running too. This was kept up until 12 o'clock, when the "revellers" had to repair to their "virtuous couches" or—skidoo. The writer, who had been invited to a midnight supper repaired, with his friends, to a nearby life "saving station" and kept busy "saving life," until 2.30 A. M. We then remembered our promise—which has never yet been broken—of "Progress" (ing) to Chestertown, so after some hasty preparation we headed for our tug, with the appropriate and expressive name—Progress—and got aboard about 3 A. M. We were scarcely prepared for slumber after the hilarious prize-fighting sensations and enjoyable "life-saving" potations which were kept up until 2.30 A. M., when on schedule time (4 o'clock) "Progress," began progressing toward Chestertown, and that she 'tended to business—like the Irishman after he got to sleep—was unmistakeably demonstrated by her arrival here at 8 A. M, 60 miles in 4 hours! Score one for the "progressive and aggressive Progress." At 7 o'clock we were awakened for breakfast—of nicely cooked fresh fish—with happy laughter and the happy smiles of genuine welcome as sauce, and in this case what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. But as there is no rose without a thorn, our thorn now consisted in realizing that however enjoyable our experiences of the night before, they were innocently and tacitly the cause of our being able to enjoy the unrivalled beauties of Chester River, for only one hour, when, had we gone to bed in time could have enjoyed them from daylight, possibly three hours, but there was no help for it, no way to repair the loss, except to make another trip, which—*must be done.* The scene during and after breakfast was indeed something to enjoy and for natives something to be proud of. The lovely villas along the banks, with the lovely verdure and extensive cultivation exhibited a scene of natural beauty and artistic comfort that reminded, if it did not resemble, "The Garden of Eden"—and we recalled the able and amusing advocacy of The Sun (Balto.), regarding the location of the ancient and historic garden, which in its latest pronunciamento, posstively asserts was located 7 miles from Centreville. This is somewhat of a "sock-dolliger" to our credulity as Chestertown is 16 miles from Centreville and Kent Island about the same, either of which, might with great justice and logic put forth claims for the great honor, while Queenstown, which is exactly seven miles from Centreville, has no "delusions" on the subject.

But we do not intend to dispute the question with the Sun, while we may, later on, give our reasons for leaning to the belief that the Garden of Eden may have been located on Kent Island or along the Chop Tank or Chester rivers, or in some other section of the Eastern Shore, not yet visited. We must not be rash nor too hasty in a decision which may do great injustice to beauties yet unseen. That the Sun's contention as to the affinity and consanguinity existing between the Eastern Shore and the Garden of Eden, may be and can be established beyond a doubt, we will concede, yet as to the exact location, we prefer to investigate and discover for ourselves, especially as the luminous advocate of the Eastern Shore's claims in this regard is, to say the least, indefinite—seven miles from Centreville might mean any of the four cardinal and all the intervening points of the compass as well as that leading to Queenstown.

RIDER HAGGARD.

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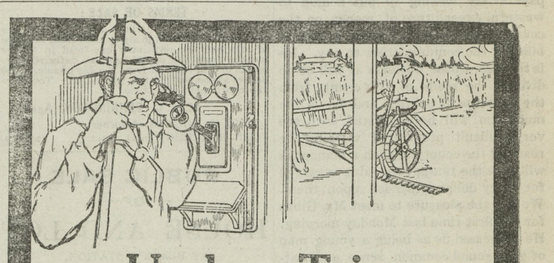

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