

A GRACEFUL COMPLIMENT.

MR. S. VANPOODLE—So you are reading my "Gryffyth ap Gryffths, or Scenes of High Life," Miss Maud?

Miss Maud (enthusiastically)—Oh, yes!

Mr. S. VanP.—If I am not indiscreet might I ask your opinion?

Miss Maud—I think it a perfect love of a novel; it is so *infatuating*.



A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

POLITELY DEDICATED TO THE EARLY PASSENGER ON THE CROWDED "CHICORA," WHO IS "EXPECTING A FEW FRIENDS."

ALLAN DOLLARMAIN.

BY A HAGGARD WRITER, AUTHOR OF "HE, SHE, IT," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

TIRED OF CIVILIZATION.

I HAD been living in England about six days, and had become dreadfully tired of civilized life. I made a stern resolve to return to the heart of Africa and pick up some more diamonds and adventure. That evening, who should drop in but Sir 'Arry Curty and Bullyboy! They said nothing, but sat down. We all looked, but said nothing. Being of a genial disposition I could not stand this much longer, so went to the cupboard and took down a bottle of Gooderham & Worts' five hundred years old whiskey. I always like to have a little about, in case the roast beef, or climate, or anything under the sun should disagree with me. Poured out three glasses. Added a drop of water to each, and passed them to my dear friends. We sat and looked at the fire, and sighed and sipped. Presently the potent fluid did its work. We all smiled. The glasses were empty. "Don't mind repeating," said Sir 'Arry, becoming more genial. We repeated, and then, seeing the time had come, I spoke. "I have an idea," "What?" said Sir 'Arry, "What?" said Bullyboy. "Tired of civilization, I'm going back to Africa." "Just what we were saying as we came up here; we'll go with you. How are you going and when?" "I'll take the Richelieu and Ontario Co.'s

steamer Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock, and we'll be at Zamee, 300 miles north of Zanzibar, next evening, taking all the scenery of the Thousand Islands by daylight." "That's the card for us," they shouted, striking their glasses together and executing a Zulu war dance round the table. "What are you going for?" they demanded. "Aha," said I, "that's a secret, but I don't mind telling you. The race of aboriginal Yankees is said to exist in the centre of Africa, and I want to see if I can't negotiate a Commercial Union treaty with them." "Well, it's a big order, but that's our 'lay' now. We'll go." We executed another war dance and fell peacefully asleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE DARK HAND AND THE MISSION HOUSE.

The second day from the event recorded in the last chapter we reached the island of Zamee. Next morning we bought a big canoe and started down the river for Mount Kenia. That night we lay at anchor, through fear of the Mos-ki-tos, whom we knew to be prowling round. I suddenly awakened, and all my hair stood on end. I'm not superstitious, but I distinctly saw a black hand getting into the canoe. It turned out to be a deck-hand of the Algerian, who had determined to join us, and had followed up from the coast.

Next day we reached McFlimsey's Mission House. It was a large stone house, built in the Queen Ann style, and was surrounded by a high wall to keep out the Mos-ki-tos. He had a pretty daughter and a French cook. The French cook gave us a good dinner, and I got up a flirtation, as soon as possible, with the pretty daughter. To please me she went off on a botanical expedition, to get a specimen of the Da-si, a plant almost unknown in England.

While we were sitting over supper something came through the window with a crash and landed in my teacup. It turned out to be the gory head of the servant who went with the pretty daughter. McFlimsey said, "How rude to throw things on our supper table." Mrs. McFlimsey said, "Yes, and it will stain my new table cloth." Then we knew the Mos-ki-tos were about and proceeded to storm the mission. We got a note from Sarah Jane, the pretty daughter, saying she was a prisoner, and that the Mos-ki-tos were in a kraal near the mission house, and that we had better attack them that night. She said they had stolen a cask of Pelee Island wine, and would soon be as drunk as lords.

About three o'clock in the morning, we made ourselves into balls, like the cork-screw man in Barnum's circus, and rolled ourselves right up under the walls of the kraal. We were 200 strong; they were about 1,000.

We surrounded the kraal and peppered away with our rifles. Slew about 500. The rest made a rush for a narrow passage guarded by the Phat boy. He was armed with a lacrosse club which he affectionately called Bul-boy, head smasher. As the Mos-ki-tos rushed up he laid them out, one after another, until there were only three left, who escaped. We had killed 997. It was a good morning's work. When we got back to the mission house McFlimsey said he didn't like war, not that he objected to killing Mos-ki-tos, but that he thought they would some day kill him. Besides he had made £50,000 out of the mission, chiefly by trading with the coast, and as that was enough for one missionary he would return to Glasgow.

(To be continued.)