

the district, and had moreover effected some miraculous cures in medicine. His wide and various reading had made him a perambulating encyclopedia of multifarious knowledge. Such a man, no matter how pernicious his personal example might be, could not fail to exert an influence either for good or evil; and there was one specific instance wherein Elder Redpath did not hesitate to aver that this Man of Belial had directly brought about the eternal perdition of an immortal soul.

The facts, as stated, were briefly these. A young colonist who had for some months regularly attended the preaching of the Word at Peartree Chapel, became impressed with an overwhelming conviction of his sinfulness and depravity. He sought counsel of the Elder, who strove valiantly for the erring one's salvation, and with apparent success. The young man, after undergoing a severe mental conflict, felt that the curse had been removed from him, and that he had found acceptance at the mercy-seat. He was strictly examined in the articles of his belief, and being found worthy, was admitted as a member of the fraternity. Thenceforward for more than a year, he was every Sunday to be seen in his place at chapel; and he as regularly partook, with his spiritual brethren and sisters, of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. At length he fell ill, of a painful and mortal disease. Doctor King was called in to attend upon him, but professional skill was unavailing; and when the young man found that his days were numbered, he began to be oppressed by great misgivings as to whether his hopes of salvation were built upon a solid foundation. The doctor called upon him daily, and put forth all the powers of his sophistry to still further pervert the wavering faith of his patient. For some time he only succeeded in torturing the unhappy man's mind by harassing doubts; but when the last moment came, the teachings of the doctor prevailed. The sick man died; and almost with his latest breath he cursed Elder Redpath and his creed, declaring that he contemplated the momentous change before him as "a leap in the dark." No sooner was the breath fairly out of his body than Doctor King rubbed his hands with fenish glee, and rode away from the house with a triumphant smile upon his face.

Young as I was, this fearful story, which I heard recounted by the Elder, sank deep into my mind, and inspired me with a vague terror of the heinous blasphemer. I often found myself thinking about him and his misdeeds. I used to try and picture that godless man as a pure and sinless little child. I wondered if he had ever been accustomed to say his prayers at bedtime, kneeling at his mother's feet. By some occult process of reasoning, I at length brought myself to the conclusion that he hadn't: that he had never been a child at all, but had always been the unsanctified scoffer that I daily heard him proclaimed. I sincerely hoped that I might never see him; and felt that, upon the whole, I would rather prefer to come in contact with the Author of Evil in person.

The reader now knows more of Doctor King than I myself knew for years afterwards. I have been thus particular in my account of him because he was destined to exert a great influence upon my after life, and this seemed the most fitting place to sketch his history. I shall now be able to get on with my narrative somewhat faster than I have hitherto done.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WEIRD SISTERS.

On a bright and lovely morning all in the month of May, When the air was filled with music, And all was blithe and gay, brother Norman and I obtained permission to indulge ourselves in a ramble over the fields. It was not customary for us to walk abroad except in our father's company, but on that particular morning he had been compelled to start at an early hour for the Ford, and was not expected back until noon. It was washing-day at home, and our mother, on household cares intent, was not unwilling to be rid of us for a while. In granting us permission, she specially enjoined upon us that we should not stray far from the house; and above all things that we should not go near the woods. We readily promised compliance; and no sooner was the morning meal dispatched than away we started.

It was the first real spring day of the season; and, as if to compensate for the rigours of the preceding winter, Nature had put on her most smiling aspect. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the sun shed its bright cheery warmth upon the landscape. The robins carolled joyously from every bush, and the chipmonks and red-squirrels chirruped merrily from every fence and tree. A strain of twittering melody was borne across to us from the neighbouring forest, which seemed to be literally alive with the jocund little warblers that sojourned there. The weather exercises a potent influence alike upon the young and upon those of mature age, and our spirits were correspondent to the jovial aspect of the day. We bounded sportively over the new green grass in the Crofts until we reached the side of the paddock most remote from the house, when we determined to extend our explorations a little farther. Climbing the fence, we found ourselves in a newly-ploughed field, where we sank ankle-deep at every step. We wandered about over the freshly-upturned soil, anon picking up fragments of flint arrowheads, and other relics of prehistoric Indian warfare. In a few instances we found the heads entire, and in an excellent state of preservation; and in one place, where the ploughshare had cut a deeper furrow than usual, we chanced upon a well-shaped little stone hatchet. The haft had long since decayed and crumbled to dust, but the weapon itself was without a flaw. We regarded this last as a most precious acquisition. These relics of the aborigines were not strange to us, as our father had frequently brought in similar specimens, and we had quite a miniature museum of such curiosities in our play-room, to which this would form a most attractive addition, by reason of its being so well preserved. We stowed away our treasure-trove in the pockets of our pinafores, and on we went from field to field, getting our clothes bedaubed with loamy mud, and our hands and faces shockingly dirty. It must be confessed that we were somewhat unmindful of our promise not to go far, for we wandered hither and thither at our own sweet wills, scaling fence after fence, until we were a considerable distance from home. At length we emerged upon the road to the Landing, about half a mile west of the gate leading down from that road to our house. We had by this time been away several hours, and certain inward monitors began to suggest to us that it was not far from dinner-time, and that it was expedient for us to return. We accordingly concluded to go round by the gate, and thence home. We further concluded to lose no time on our homeward progress, as we knew that mother would be anxious about us, and would probably admonish us for our disobedience to her command.

We began to ascend the hill leading to the gate, feeling a little tired, and more than a little doubtful as to the warmth of our reception upon our arrival. We had not gone far ere we became aware that we were not the only wayfarers on the road, for two outlandish-looking women were coming down the hill in our direction, and must soon meet us. As they approached nearer we perceived that they were squaws. The discovery was somewhat disturbing to my equanimity, as I had heard tales about children who had been kidnapped by these people, and carried away into remote captivity where the little pale-faces were never seen or heard of again by those to whom they belonged. My disturbance was not lessened when I perceived that the women were crossing over from their side of the road to that on which we were, as though they meant to address us.

I proposed to my brother that we should give these creatures a wide berth by climbing back over the fence, and finding our way home as we had come, across the fields. Norman, however, was a brave little fellow, and declared that he was not to be frightened in broad daylight by a couple of vagabond squaws. There was no time for further discussion, for in another moment they met us face to face.

(Continued next week.)

It is now stated that Mr. Rider Haggard's new book will deal with some portion of the story of Antony and Cleopatra.

An official report states that 449 persons were killed by railroad accidents in England during the first six months of 1886 and 1,686 wounded.