

Allan's Wife

By

H. Rider Haggard

DEDICATION

My Dear Macumazahn,

It was your native name which I borrowed at the christening of that Allen who has become as well known to me as any other friend I have. It is therefore fitting that I should dedicate to you this, his last tale--the story of his wife, and the history of some further adventures which befell him. They will remind you of many an African yarn--that with the baboons may recall an experience of your own which I did not share. And perhaps they will do more than this. Perhaps they will bring back to you some of the long past romance of days that are lost to us. The country of which Allan Quatermain tells his tale is now, for the most part, as well known and explored as are the fields of Norfolk. Where we shot and trekked and galloped, scarcely seeing the face of civilized man, there the gold-seeker builds his cities. The shadow of the flag of Britain has, for a while, ceased to fall on the Transvaal plains; the game has gone; the misty charm of the morning has become the glare of day. All is changed. The blue gums that we planted in the garden of the "Palatial" must be large trees by now, and the "Palatial" itself has passed from us. Jess sat in it waiting for her love after we were gone. There she nursed him back to life. But Jess is

dead, and strangers own it, or perhaps it is a ruin.

For us too, Macumazahn, as for the land we loved, the mystery and promise of the morning are outworn; the mid-day sun burns overhead, and at times the way is weary. Few of those we knew are left. Some are victims to battle and murder, their bones strew the veldt; death has taken some in a more gentle fashion; others are hidden from us, we know not where. We might well fear to return to that land lest we also should see ghosts. But though we walk apart to-day, the past yet looks upon us with its unalterable eyes. Still we can remember many a boyish enterprise and adventure, lightly undertaken, which now would strike us as hazardous indeed. Still we can recall the long familiar line of the Pretoria Horse, the face of war and panic, the weariness of midnight patrols; aye, and hear the roar of guns echoed from the Shameful Hill.

To you then, Macumazahn, in perpetual memory of those eventful years of youth which we passed together in the African towns and on the African veldt, I dedicate these pages, subscribing myself now as always,

Your sincere friend,

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To Arthur H. D. Cochrane, Esq.