

The Home Reading Circle

Ugh-lomi and Uya

A Story of the Stone Age

By H. G. WELLS.

AUTHOR OF 'THE TIME MACHINE'

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PART I.

This story is of a time beyond the memory of man, before the beginning of history, before the beginning of speech almost, when men still eked out their scarce words by gestures, and talked together as the animals do, by the passing of simple thoughts from mind to mind—being themselves indeed still of the brotherhood of the beasts.

Fifty thousand years ago it was, fifty thousand years—if the estimates of the geologists are correct.

And in those days the springtime was as joyful as it is now, amidst the woods and marsh and open grass along the river Wey, and sent the blood coursing in just the same fashion. The afternoon sky was blue with piled white clouds falling through it, and the southwest wind came like a soft caress. The new-come swallows drove to and fro. The reaches of the river were spanned with white ramunculus, the marshy places were starred with lads-smock and lit with marsh mallow wherever the regiments of the sedges lowered their hippopotami, shiny black, ward moving hippopotami, shiny black monsters, sporting clumsily, came floundering and blundering through it all, rejoicing dimly and possessed with one clear idea, to splash the river muddy.

Further up the river and well in sight of the hippopotami a number of little buff-colored animals dabbled in the water. There was no fear, no rivalry, and no enmity between them and the hippopotami. As the great bulks came crashing through the reeds and the water into the water into silvery splashes, these little creatures shouted and gesticulated with glee. It was the surest sign of high spring. "Booo!" they cried. "Haayah. Bo. Joo!" They were the children of the men folk, the smoke of whose enmity rose from the knoll at the river's bend. Wild-eyed youngsters they were, with matted hair and little broad-nosed, impish faces, covered (as some children are covered even nowadays) with a delicate down of hair. They were narrow in the loins and long in the arms. And their ears had no lobes, and had little pointed tips, a thing that still, in rare instances, survives.

Their elders were hidden from the wallowing hippopotami by the crest of the knoll. The human squatting-place was a trampled area among the dead brown fronds of Royal Fern, through which the crockers of this year's growth were unrolling to the light and warmth. The fire was a smouldering heap of char, light gray and black, replenished by the old women from time to time with brown leaves. Most of the men were asleep—they slept sitting with their foreheads on their knees. They had killed that morning a good quarry, enough for all, and some of the women were still gnawing the bones that lay scattered about. Others were making a heap of leaves and sticks to feed Brother Fire when the darkness came again, that he might grow strong and tall therewith, and guard them against the beasts.

None of these buff-skinned savages were clothed, but wore about their hips rude girdles of adder skin or crackling undressed hide, from which depended little bells, not made, but torn from the paws of beasts, and carrying the rude-dressed flints that were the men's chief weapons and tools. And one woman, the mate of Uya the Cunning Man, wore a wonderful necklace of perforated fossils—that others had worn before her. Besides some of their hips were bright and her smile pleasant to see. He had given her a piece of the liver, a man's piece, and a wonderful treat for a girl to get; but as she took it the other woman with the necklace had looked at her an evil glance, and Ugh-lomi had made a noise in his throat. At that Uya had looked at him long and steadily, and Ugh-lomi's face had fallen. An then Uya had looked at her. She was frightened and she had stolen away, while the feeding was still going on. Afterwards Uya had wandered about as if looking for her, and she had crept among the alders.

After a little she saw Uya coming down the knoll. He had seen the movement of her pale arm amidst the thicket—he was very keen-eyed.

Eudena set off through the alders and reeds as fast as she could go. She did not care where she went so long as she escaped Uya.

She was soon amidst the trees—she was very fleet of foot, and she ran on and on, until the forest was old and the trees great, and the vines about their stems where the light came were

thick as young trees, and the ropes of ivy stout and tight. Then at last she lay down amidst some ferns in a hollow place near a thicket, and listened with her heart beating in her ears.

She heard footsteps presently rustling among the dead leaves, far off, and they died away and everything was still again except the scandalizing of the midges—for the evening was drawing on—and the incessant whisper of the leaves. She laughed silently to think the cunning Uya should go by her.

She lay a long time there, glad of her escape, and then she sat up listening.

It was a rapid pattering growing louder and coming towards her, and in

At last the little stars began to hide, and then the larger ones. It was like all the animals vanishing before the Terror. The Sun was coming, lord of



FAR AWAY AMONG THE TREES RAN A MAN.

a little while she could hear grunting noises and the snapping of twigs. It was a drove of the lean, grizzly wild swine. She turned about her, for a boar is an ill fellow to pass too closely, on account of the sideway slash of his tusks, and she made off slantingly through the trees. But the patter came nearer, they were not feeding as they wandered, but going fast—or else they would not overtake her—and she caught the limb of a tree, swung on to it, and ran up the stem with something of the agility of a monkey.

Down below, the sharp bristling backs of the swine were already nuzzling when she looked down. And she knew the short-sharp grunts they made meant fear. What were they afraid of? A man? They were in a great hurry for just a man.

And then, so suddenly it made her grip on the branch tighten involuntarily, a fawn started in the brake and rushed after the swine.

Then, far away among the trees, clear for a moment, then hidden, then visible knee-deep in ferns, then gone again, ran a man. She knew it was young Ugh-lomi by the fair color of his hair, and there was red upon his face. Somehow his frantic flight and that scarlet mark made her feel sick. And then, nearer, running heavily and breathing hard, came another man also running. It was Uya, running with great strides and his eyes staring. He was not going after Ugh-lomi. His face was white. It was Uya's friend! He passed, and then something else, something large and with grizzled fur, swinging along with soft, swift strides, came rushing in pursuit of him.

Eudena suddenly became rigid, ceased to breathe, her clutch convulsed, and her eyes staring.

She had never seen him clearly before, she did not even see him clearly now, but she knew at once it was the Terror of the Woodshade. His name was a legend, the children would frighten themselves with his name, and run screaming to the squatting place. No man had ever killed any of his kind. Even the mighty mammoth feared his anger. It was the grizzly bear, the lord of the world as the world went then.

As he ran he made a continuous growling rumble: "Men in my very hair! Fighting and blood. Men in my mouth of my last! Men, men! Fighting and blood." For he was the lord of the wood and of the caves.

Long after he had passed she remained a girl of stone, staring down through the branches. All her power of action had gone from her. She gripped by instinct with hands and knees and feet. It was some time before she could think, and then only one thing was clear in her mind, that as long as the Terror was between her and the tribe it would be impossible to descend.

Presently when her fear was a little abated she clambered into a more comfortable position, where a great branch forked. The trees rose about her, so that she could see nothing of Brother Fire, who is black by day. Birds began to stir about her, and things that had gone into hiding for fear of her movements crept out.

After a time the blue overhead deepened, and the taller branches flamed out at the touch of the sunset. Eudena thought of going back to the squatting place; she let herself down some way, and then the fear of the Terror of the Woodshade came again. While she hesitated a rabbit squealed distinctly, and she dared not descend further.

The shadows now were gathering in the trees; they sat on the branches and watched her. Branches and leaves were turned to ominous, quiet black shapes, that would spring on her if she stirred. Then the white owl, sit-

Motherhood.

A mother who is in good physical condition transmits to her children the blessings of a good constitution.

The child fairly drinks in health from its mother's robust constitution before birth, and from a healthy mother's milk after.

Is not that an incentive to prepare for a healthy maternity?

Do you know the meaning of what is popularly called those "longings," or cravings, which beset so many women during pregnancy? There is something lacking in the mother's blood. Nature cries out and will be satisfied at all hazards.

One woman wants sour things, another wants sweets, another wants salt things, and so on.

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"I am so thankful that I used your medicine, for it gave me the robust health to transmit to my child. I cannot express my gratitude to you; I never expected such a blessing. Praise God for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and may other women suffering do as I did and find relief, and may many homes be brightened as mine has been."—Mrs. L. Z. WHITNEY, 5 George St., E. Somerville, Mass.

streaks of brown blood and dirt on her face, and his eyes were fierce, and the white stone of Uya, the white Fire Stone, that none but Uya dared to touch, was in his hand. In a stride he was beside her, and gripped her arm. He swung her about, and thrust her before him towards the woods. "Uya," he said, and waved his arms about. She heard a cry, looked back, and saw all the women standing up, and two wading out of the stream. Then came a nearer howling, and the old women with their heads watching the fire on the knoll, was waving her arms, and Wau, the man who had been chipping the flint, was getting to his feet. The little children too were hurrying and shouting.

"Come!" said Ugh-lomi, and dragged her by the arm.

She still did not understand.

"Uya," said Ugh-lomi, and she glanced back again at the screaming curve of figures, and dimly understood.

Wau and all the women and children were coming towards them, a scattered array of buff, shock-headed figures, howling, leaping and crying. Down among the ferns to the right came a man, heading them off from the wood. Ugh-lomi left her arm, and the two began running side by side, leaping the bracken and stepping clear and wide. Eudena, knowing her fleetness and the fleetness of Ugh-lomi, laughed aloud at the unequal chase. They were an exceptionally straight-limbed couple for those days.

They soon cleared the open, and drew near the wood of chestnut trees again. Suddenly Eudena cried and swayed aside, pointing, and looking up through the tree-stems. Ugh-lomi saw the feet and legs of men running towards him. Eudena was already turning off at a tangent. And as he too turned to follow her they heard the voice of Uya coming through the trees, and roaring at his rage at them.

Then terror came in their hearts, not the terror that numbs, but the terror that makes one silent and swift. They were cut off on two sides. They were

dered. Without an exception the programme was then carried out as printed, and though space forbids our giving a detailed account of every number, yet the fine work of many of these called forth loud applause.

The exercises throughout were intensely interesting and when, at 11 o'clock the pupils sang the closing song, the concluded an entertainment that not only afforded a pleasurable evening to those present, but emphasized the possibilities of the American free school.

Justus, Pa., April 4, 1897.—Terrible eruptions appeared on my hands, which became running sores. I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla, and used Hood's Pills and Hood's Olive Ointment, and now my hands are perfectly sound. Mrs. Prosper Antoine.

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Cerricura

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