JOHN R. PATERNOSTER, IX°
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Biography
Dr. ROBERT WILLIAM FELKIN
(1853-1926)
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Dr. Felkin returned to England whilst the house was being built, and he did not take up residence until 1918 or the beginning of 1919 when he set up as that community’s first Family Doctor. Of particular interest to the general reader of this Paper is the proud boast by the local newspaper that, whilst the Influenza epidemic of 1919/20 claimed millions of lives including some around Hawkes Bay, NOT ONE inhabitant of Havelock North died from that cause.

The Golden Dawn Temple, Whare Ra, in the purpose-built basement of the house, flourished for many years under Dr. Felkin's leadership, continuing after his death under his widow and then his daughter Ethelwyn. Only after Ethelwyn died in 1962 did it begin to falter, the eventual split occurring because a majority of the members wished to explore more fully the 'magical' aspects of the rite. They went elsewhere and the remainder decided to disband and sell the house (197.9). I understand that this remainder and their successors meet on four weekends a year near Jake Taupo. Further information was not disclosed. Those I spoke to evince no intention of becoming freemasons, so are unable to join our Society.

The house, Whare Ra, is now owned by Mr. & Mrs. McDonald who have two children. Of considerable architectural importance, it has been listed Class B by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Apart from visits arranged by the Trust, the family values its privacy. There is a specialist bookshop in Havelock North which might be able to help in locating sources of the medicines mentioned in the Paper.

Andrew Stephenson, IX°

Felkin R.W.

Robert William Felkin was a medical missionary and explorer, a ceremonial magician and member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a prolific author on Uganda and Central Africa, and early anthropologist, with an interest in ethnomedicine and tropical diseases. He was a founder in 1903 of the Stella Matutina, a splinter lodge of the Golden Dawn, and later founded the Whare Ra lodge in Havelock North, New Zealand in 1912.
in the white robes of the Order of the Temple, emblazoned with the Red Cross on his breast. [End of article]

The following information is extracted from the 'Golden Book' in High Council:-

- Admitted as a Zelator in the Metropolitan College on the 11th April 1907.
- Received Grade 9 on the 20th February 1915.
- A Founder of London College of Adepts, 30th November 1922.
- Appointed Inspector for Australia in 1916.
- Appointed Chief Adept for New Zealand on 14th April 1917.

What the author of this biography did NOT mention was Dr. Felkin's membership of the 'Golden Dawn'. He was admitted to the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh and, on his move to London, transferred to Isis-Urania, coming to prominence in the Order during the 'interregnum' of 1900 - 1903. He was the chief founder of Stella Matutina at the 'split'. There exists lengthy correspondence between the Dr. and Arthur Edward Waite which resulted in a 'concordat'. Each accepting - albeit with reluctance - the other's system,

Researches in and around Havelock North have resulted in a tale differing somewhat from the article in the Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune of 20th April 1991:-

The account starts in about 1900 AD when the Vicar of Havelock North church started a prayer & meditation group meeting on Saturday mornings. This group made rapid progress towards serious meditation and, in 1903, was visited by Annie Besant whilst making a promotional tour for the Theosophical Society. She was so impressed that she persuaded two Mirfield Fathers to pay a visit, which occurred in 1912. After their experience of the meditation one told the congregation "you are waiting for a guide to advance you further along the Spiritual Path. Your patience will be rewarded early next year." Meanwhile Dr. Felkin was being persuaded by Annie Besant -and an expenses-paid trip - to visit New Zealand and Havelock "North in particular.

In 1913 he arrived there with his wife and attended the Saturday morning meditation."It is alleged", I was informed, "for there is no documentary evidence for this, that after the meeting a Maori member of the congregation approached Dr. Felkin with a message - a Priest of our old religion wishes to meet you." Dr. Felkin was subsequently initiated into the first grade of that priesthood and, told that he was required to set up home there. A plot of land was given by the local landowner and the architect "was given precise instructions concerning its orientation. Apparently the 'earth currents' are particularly strong in that area.

Biography

Dr. ROBERT WILLIAM FELKIN
(1853-1926)

The following biography has been extracted from The Rose Petal, No.9, 1943, being the Magazine of New Jersey College, S.R.I.C.F. Authorship not stated.

Robert William Felkin was born at Beeston England in 1853 and his early education was at Wolverhampton Grammar School, from whence he started in life as a clerk in a railway office. He then spent some time in Saxony in the employ of a relative who conducted a factory.

Having come in contact in early childhood with the great African explorer, Livingstone, his ambitions were aroused and he eventually sought service with the Church Missionary Society, under whose auspices he commenced the study of medicine, and at the age of twenty-six became one of a party of four who set out on a mission to Uganda via the Nile River. At Cairo he was in touch with the late General Gordon, at that time Governor of the Sudan, of whom he always spoke with affection and reverence. The effect of the discomforts suffered by the members of this expedition, the first of its kind to Uganda, was never altogether effaced, but the general results were stupendous. It was the commencement of a new era in that vast country, where to-day ate over 2,000 schools and -more than 6,000 children in direct charge of church missionaries.

On his return to civilization Felkin published two volumes dealing with his adventures during this expedition and containing much interesting and valuable
information regarding the inhabitants and customs of this, at that time, quite unknown land. The late C.Clifton Bingham was fortunate to obtain the loan of these for perusal from the Parliament Library, but the book is otherwise unprocurable. [No copy in High Council Library – A.B.Stevenson]

He completed his medical course at Edinburgh, obtaining the degrees of M.D., F.R.S.E., L.R.C.P., etc., married, and for some time settled in that city. In the following years he published many medical works on tropical diseases, and others on African exploration. In I9$6 he moved to London and practised there till the death of his wife in 1903, when he again interested himself in Africa. With others he was associated in the formation of two Companies by whom concessions of great value in the Congo had been acquired. Failing to obtain a necessary backing of the English Government, the enterprise had to be abandoned. He resumed medical practice in London specialising in Tropical diseases and took as his second wife a daughter of Professor Davidson of Adelaide University, a graduate of Aberdeen.

In 1913, with his wife and daughter, he made a brief visit to New Zealand where Frater Bingham became personally acquainted with him by means of an introduction from a mutual friend, A Cadbury Jones of London. [Secretary General of S.R.I.A.] Dr. and Mrs.Felkin were in Hanover, Germany, when the First World War broke out and they had some difficulty in getting back to England He linked up with the National Guard in London, but the strain was too heavy and, deciding to take up residence in New Zealand, he settled with his wife and daughter in the little township of Havelock North situated on 'the hills some two miles from the flourishing town of Hastings in the North Island.

The Doctor was induced to go to New Zealand by a group known as the SHRINE OF WISDOM, who financed a group of buildings where their headquarters were situated. A practice was soon established and "The Old Doctor" as he was affectionately termed, became widely known for his friendly council and his sound medical advice. Frater Bingham was more or less in touch with him till his passing in the last days of 1926, an event which was somewhat hastened by privations experienced in his early African enterprise.

Dr Felkin was a devoted member of the Church of England leaning to the Anglo-Catholic party, accepted the doctrine of Transubstantiation and was also a member of several societies established in connection with his church. One of his addresses to a conference of the Church of England Men's Society in Wellington, -which was printed for wider circulation, entitled "The Sacramental System", indicated very clearly his religious views. He annually attended the General Synod, addressing it on one occasion on the subject of Spiritual Healing. The concluding paragraphs, which are quoted here, state his views on his adopted place of residence:

"New Zealand is in many ways unique, it is far from European disputes and misunderstandings. The people have not the terrible weight of poverty, crime, lawlessness and disease which weighs so heavily on the Northern countries. Here there is no State Church, no ancient feud, and no traditional or hereditary barriers. Here, if anywhere on God's earth, we have a fair field in which the Holy Spirit may work without hindrance. If only we will be ready to hear, slow to speak, and with hearts and minds open to the Voice of God, we may indeed have the joy and satisfaction of enabling this Country to set an example to the World of a small nation at peace; religious and prosperous. And from Ms Country a call may go forth to all the Older Nations to follow in our footsteps. If so the War clouds which already begin to cover the sky may soon be dispersed"

"The awful experiences of the last few years should indeed be to us sufficient wanting, for unless the crass Materialism of today is soon transmuted by tire Spirit, Sw World is doomed."

The address was given as far back as 1923 but seem quite applicable to the condition of the day. The Doctor left two sons and a daughter by his first wife. Of these the sons are in England and Miss Felkin resides with her step-mother in Havelock North.

In Freemasonry, Dr Felkin was one of those members whose associate with the Craft was a 'means to an end'. He took only a passing interest in the regular bodies of the Craft, but used them as stepping-stones for entrance into other societies and bodies having Masonry as a pre-requisite. His Lodge was Mary Chapel No.1, Edinburgh. After going to New Zealand, he attended the local Lodge at Hastings fairly frequently.

His original entrance into Masonry was probably for the purpose of becoming associated with the S.R.I.A. of -which he was very active over a limited period. Just where "he became a Royal Arch Mason I have not been able to ascertain but he became a Knight Templar in a Preceptory formed among a large section of brethren of his age during war work in London. He received the Eighteenth Degree of the Scottish Rite (Scottish Constitution) in Sphinx Rose Croix Chapter No.23, Dunedin, New Zealand, on 10th March 1922. This degree is the final one in the Scottish Rite which can be entered "by petition in that Country."

It is doubtful if the Doctor attended the Rose Croix Chapter again after his Perfection as the city was over two days journey from his residence in Hawkes Bay, where there was a Chapter under English Constitution. Incidentally the local brethren were somewhat exercised over the matter. At his death, the Doctor was laid to rest