

# On the Veldt

By FRANK H. SWEET

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It was the dry season on the veldt, and the grass was burned down and half covered with yellow dust. Not a kraal was to be seen or a habitation, not a tree or shrub so far as the eye could reach—only the ocher brown earth stretching away and at last ending in the same level sky lines to the north and south and east and west, and crossing the sun blistered waste one little animate dot, the canvas covered wagon of a Boer family trekking with the sheep and cattle in search of a water course that had not dried up.

For three days had the dot been moving across the waterless waste, and for three days had the sun left the thirsty sky line in the east only to glare down pitilessly until it dropped behind the equally thirsty sky line in the west, and now the tongues of the cattle were hanging from their mouths and the sheep bleated piteously, and the small quantity of water brought along for the trekkers' own use was exhausted.

By the end of the second day they had expected to find water, but the stream counted on had proved but a dusty, sun dried depression, and for twenty-four hours they had followed its course, hoping to find some sink hole from which the water had not dried. Now they were pondering the necessity of seeking the next water course yet another twenty-four hours away. If that were dry also, what then?

Other families had trekked over this veldt before them, and more would follow, for this was the annual custom. When the dry season came and burned every vestige of green from the home grazing land, the Boers would load their families into the great wagons, drawn by many spans of oxen, and driving the sheep and cattle before them, seek the water courses that had not dried up. And there they would



"WELL," HE SAID HARSHLY, "WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

remain as long as the drought lasted, until weeks of steady and violent rains should come and transform the dry, barren veldt into a tropical garden. Then they would trek back home.

Long before the sun rose for a new day of burning heat and thirst the dot of wagons and animals was ready for departure. But even as it began to crawl away from the river bed that was dry toward the one that might contain water, several of the mounted Boers who were circling about the cattle described something less than a third of a mile away.

In the dim light they at first thought it a wild animal, and examined their rifles; then, as the object drew near, they made it out to be a man, and that he was on foot instead of horseback. But it was not until he had approached to within a few rods that they discovered he was very young, scarcely more than a boy, and that he was an outlander.

Now there is nothing more obnoxious to a Boer than an outlander or witlander—allien. He feels that their coming into the country threatens his institutions, and that the very object of their coming is wrong. The treasures of the earth belong to the earth, and should not be wrested away. The bustle and desire for change, for wealth, for investigating, even the progressive ideas of these outsiders are causes for suspicion and dislike. So when a cherry "Hello" came from the wayfarer their answer was but a gruff and unintelligible grunt.

All this time the train was moving forward, but slowly, for oxen are plodding travelers. The boy was obliged to pause for the animals to pass, and he watched the long, straggling line with the interest of a newcomer. After the cattle and sheep and their guard came the creaking, unwieldy wagons, with their intrenched oxen. Beside the first of these wagons rode a large, broad faced man whose white hair and air of authority proclaimed him the head of the family. As he came opposite the boy stopped forward.

"Hello," he called again cheerfully. The man looked down at him, his face hardening, but he stopped.

"Well," he said harshly, "what do

you want? Isn't it a little strange for a boy to be crossing the veldt without a horse?"

"Oh, I don't know," the boy answered carelessly. "I walked up from the coast three months ago. You see, I didn't have money enough for a horse and a good outfit, and I needed the outfit most. Besides, I was raised on a farm and am used to walking. A man I met carried my outfit to the mines, and I pegged on behind."

"And now you are going back home empty handed?" the Boer asked, sarcastically.

"No, indeed," quickly. "I didn't come here for fun. I'm going to college some time, and that takes money; and I've got half a dozen brothers and sisters who are planning for different things. It was easiest for me to leave, so all of them put in their savings toward my expenses. Of course I don't expect to get rich," frankly, "but I shall work hard to take back enough to get us all a good start."

The Boer grunted.

"Why are you going back, then, without your outfit?" he demanded.

"Got to have something to eat," the boy answered easily. "I went to the mines first, but the only opening was to work for somebody else or to buy a claim at a fabulous price, so I shouldered my outfit and struck off prospecting. I kept it up three weeks, and now," his eyes flashing eagerly into the grim ones above him, "I believe I've found a spot that will turn me in a lot of money. But I'm out of provisions and must go back after a supply. I don't suppose you have any you would sell?"

"No," shortly, "but where's your outfit?"

"Oh, I've concealed that in the sand. I guess it'll be all right. Anyway, there was nothing else to do. But I didn't stop you to talk about myself," coloring a little. "I wanted to say that your cattle are awful thirsty. At home we would drop everything to furnish such cattle with water quick."

The Boer's face relaxed somewhat.

"Even if there was no water between four days' journey?" he asked contemptuously. "You outlanders, who would do all things, can make rivers as you need them, I suppose?"

"There is the water course only one day's journey behind you," the boy retorted, "and your cattle show they were not attended to there. No matter the hurry a man may be in, it is a crime to neglect beasts as you have yours."

"The water course behind was dry, as this is, and as the next one may be," the Boer said. "My teams have not had water in three days, and God knows what may happen if the next river bed is like this one and the last."

The boy's face paled suddenly.

"The river dry," he gasped. "Why, I counted on getting water there. I've only just enough with me to last one day." Then he forgot himself in concern for the cattle.

"You must turn back toward the place I've found," he cried authoritatively; "it's only five or six miles away. There's a hole in the river bed that has water, and it's thirty yards or more across and several feet deep. It will be enough to supply your herds for some weeks. And beyond it are three or four miles of good grazing where the soil has not yet become dry. If you keep on this course the cattle will all perish."

The Boer had straightened up, preparatory to riding on, but at this he turned sharply.

"Water," he cried, "and plenty of it." He raised his hand to his mouth and called to the men in front. One of them rode back. To him he gave a quick, peremptory order. Then he turned back to the boy.

"Do you understand what you have done?" he demanded. "This place you have discovered will need water to work it, and if we use that, as we doubtless shall, you will lose all the benefit of your discovery for this season."

The boy threw back his head as though to ward off the insinuation.

"The cattle need the water more than the land," he returned. "If the water is gone when I return with the provisions, I can go and prospect somewhere else, and perhaps come back after the rains set in. The folks at home would not want me to put my money at the expense of suffering."

The Boer leaned down and held out his hand.

"It is well," he said simply. "You will go back to the basin with us. We do not sell provisions, but we have plenty which we will give you. And it may be," with a friendly twinkle banishing the last trace of hardness from his eyes, "that we will be able to advance the success of your object here."

"Chamois" Skins.

Charles C. Drueding has written an article in the Journal of Pharmacy on chamois skins. The commercial article of that name, he says, is really oil tanned sheep or lamb skin lining. The supply of skins from the chamois animal is very limited. Enough could not be obtained in a year to supply the United States for more than a single day. He made special inquiry on a visit to Switzerland about the annual crop of the chamois skins and ascertained that from 5,000 to 6,000 skins would be a fair average yearly crop. This skin is heavier than the skin of the sheep or lamb, also much coarser. For strength and durability the chamois skin is preferable, but for ordinary use and appearance the oil tanned sheepskin lining would in most instances be preferred.

Got Near It.

Druggist—Try it again, little one. What was it your mamma told you to get? Little Girl (with another severe mental effort)—I think it was "I died of possum." I want 10 cents' worth.—Youth.

## BOLIVIAN PETTICOATS.

They Are Numerous and of All the Colors of the Rainbow.

The prized possession of the Bolivian Indian woman and her chief pride also, whether she is pure Indian or cholita, is her petticoat. Her dowry is in this garment. Like the Dutchwoman of tradition, she carries her wealth about with her. These petticoats are of all colors of the rainbow and divers other hues not found therein. I first noticed them at Nazarene and remarked the love of color, which must be inborn, for the garments were of yellow, purple, violet, fiery red, crimson, scarlet, subdued orange, glaring saffron, blue and green. They were short, reaching barely below the knee, and no difference was observed between childhood, maidenhood, maternity middle life and wrinkled old age. Glancing from my window in Tupiza, I thought it was a parade of perambulating balloons.

These women have a habit which the bashful traveler does not at first understand. When he sees one of them calmly removing a petticoat he is apt to turn away, but he need not do so. It may be that the advancing heat of the day has caused the wearer to discard the outer skirt, but more likely it is the vanity of her sex and the desire to make her sisters envious by showing what is beneath, for each new venture disclosed is more brilliant than the one which overlapped it. I sat in the plaza at Tupiza and watched two Indian women try to make each other envious. The first one removed the outer petticoat, which was of purple. This divestment disclosed another garment of blazing red, and after that came a brilliant yellow. The other woman started with a green petticoat and gradually got down to a mixture of blue and yellow. By that time I had begun to fear for the consequences and made a pretense of turning my back by strolling to the hotel.—National Geographical Magazine.

## THE TACON THEATER.

Havana's Famous Playhouse Has an Interesting History.

The history of the Tacon theater of Havana is very interesting. In the year 1835 Francisco Marty, who was then the leader of a band of pirates which infested the island of Cuba and who had a price of \$10,000 on his head, was captured and ordered to be put to death. Seeing there was no hope for him, he asked leave to see General Tacon, who was then governor general of Havana, and told him if his life was spared he would denounce his entire band and assist him in ridding the island of the number of pirates which infested it at that period. Accordingly General Tacon gave him a two weeks' parole, and inside of a week Marty had denounced his fellow pirates and turned them over to the government. For this service he was pardoned.

In 1836 Marty asked for the concession to build a national theater on the site of Parque Central. It was granted to him. General Tacon went further and allowed him the privilege of the use of forty convicts who were then confined in Morro castle to assist him in the work, each convict receiving the sum of 20 cents a day. In 1838 the theater was finished, and Marty, as a proof of the gratitude he felt toward General Tacon for sparing his life, named it El Teatro Tacon. During the insurrection in Cuba many exciting incidents took place here. In one instance a regiment of Cuban insurgents barricaded themselves in the theater and held it against the Spaniards for three days. Finally they were starved out, and as they were making their escape all were shot.

The theater is built of white stone, with decorations of marble, and faces Central park, being in the center of the fashionable district of Havana. It is one of the largest theaters in the world, seating over 3,000 persons.—Cuban Review.

## The Range of Apples.

"Pineapple" and "love apple" (tomato) are instances of the manner in which the apple has been habitually taken as the typical fruit, the name of which is naturally borrowed in naming all sorts of fruits and vegetables that only remotely resemble it. Dr. Murray's dictionary gives an imposing list of them.—Jew's apple, devil's apple, kangaroo apple, and so on. A writer of the seventeenth century speaks of "the fruit or apples of palm trees," and a fourteenth century man says that "all manere aples that ben cloyed in an hardre skinne, rynde, other shale, ben callyd Noces" (nuts). In the year 1000, apparently, "earth apples" meant not potatoes, but cucumbers. And even Eve's "apple" is believed to have been a citron.

## The Metaphor of the Spider.

Better than most metaphors that have been drawn from the spider's way of life is the delightfully human one of Alphonse Karr's in his "Voyage autour de mon Jardin." The spider, he says, is more truthful than man. When man says, "If my wife does not love me I shall die," he does not die. But when the spider says so he knows he is speaking the truth, for if his wife does not love him she kills him.—London Saturday Review.

## Great Expectations.

Mrs. Mark—Gracious! I never saw so many soiled faces in my life. Why don't you use some soap and water? Tommy Tuff—We are waitin' fer de angel, mum, Mrs. Mark—What angel? Tommy Tuff—Why, de lady dat come fru here last week and give one of de kids a nickel to wash his face.—Chicago News.

Some people will never learn anything for this reason: Because they understand everything too soon.—Pope.

## NEW YORK CHURCHES.

Trinity and the Land It Occupies Valued at \$12,500,000.

Trinity church is valued at \$12,500,000. This estimate includes the land occupied by the churchyard. It is in the most valuable part of New York, if not in the world.

St. Paul's church is valued at \$5,500,000.

Grace church, at what was once described as the head of Broadway, is valued at \$550,000.

The First Presbyterian church, on Fifth avenue, between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, is valued at \$750,000. St. Mark's church, on Second avenue, an old landmark in that neighborhood, is valued at \$275,000.

The Marble Collegiate church, Fifth avenue and Twenty-ninth street, is valued at \$1,000,000.

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle (the Paulist church), at Fifty-ninth street and Columbus avenue, is valued at \$500,000.

The West Presbyterian church, on West Forty-second street, is valued at \$450,000. St. Thomas' at \$1,700,000 and the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church, 9 and 11 West Fifty-ninth street, at \$1,000,000.

The valuation of the Temple Emanuel is \$1,530,000, of St. Patrick's cathedral \$1,000,000, of the B'nai B'rith synagogue \$300,000, of the Temple Beth-El at the corner of Fifth avenue and Seventy-sixth street, \$1,300,000, of the Broadway Tabernacle, Broadway and Fifty-sixth street, \$700,000 and of the Christian Scientist church, Central Park West and Sixty-eighth street, \$300,000.—New York Sun.

## PRACTICAL PICTURES.

Old Parlor Ornaments and a Very Substantial Dinner.

There is a practical minded millionaire who has invented a substitute for valuable pictures which it is hoped will not command lesser prices. He has had a large number of bank notes framed, and these are hung upon the wall where the pictures should be.

In the drawing room is one frame that contains a bank note for \$100,000, and he says: "There is the money in case I find a picture which is sufficient valuable to pay that price for it. Meanwhile the note tells its own tale and saves me from explaining to my visitors that this picture cost so much, as most other rich men do."

The chief pleasure of these collectors appears to arise not from the beauty of the work, but from the cost of it; then why not have checks or bank notes for a large sum hung on the walls, as I do? Besides, I find that it is much more interesting to my visitors, for most of them look long and carefully at the bank notes who would but glance at the work of art."

This eccentric man gave a dinner on the same principle. In the soup plates there was no soup, but so elegantly were served five-pound notes, for game checks and for sweets shares in a thriving company, and there was not a guest who did not enjoy this entertainment more than any he or she had ever before been present at.—London Truth.

## Dean Swift on Spelling.

Dean Swift roundly denounced the poets of his day who had introduced the barbarous custom of abbreviating words to fit them to the measure of their verses. Swift instances "dread'd" and "disturb'd" as mortal offenses. The custom so introduced had begun to dominate prose. Another cause—borned, Swift suggested, from the clipping process—which he held had contributed to the maiming of the language, "is a foolish opinion advanced of late years that we ought to spell exactly as we speak, which, besides the obvious incongruity of utterly destroying our etymology, would be a thing we should never see the end of."

## Risks in Railway Journeys.

The idea that the man who goes on a railway journey takes his life in his hand and is rather more likely than not to meet with an untimely death at the first curve the train negotiates is scarcely borne out by the fact that the chances against any one passenger meeting his death on the railway are 38,000,000 to 1. This immunity from disaster reflects considerable credit upon the companies, but still more upon engine drivers and signalmen, whose skill and care are the main factors in the safety of the passenger.—London Court Journal.

## Reason.

Reason, reason as much as you like, but beware of thinking that it answers to everything, suffices for everything, satisfies everything. This mother loses her child. Will reason comfort her? Does cool reason counsel the inspired poet, the heroic warrior, the lover? Reason guides but a small part of many, and that is the least interesting. The rest obey feeling, true or false, and passion, good or bad.

## Taking Him Down.

"Crittick was pleased to say that my play had few equals as a bit of realism," remarked young De Ritter.

"He said even more than that," said Pepprey.

"Indeed?"

"Yes," he added, "and positively no inferiors."—Exchange.

## Carelessness Somewhere.

Gladys—Mamma can't see anybody today. She's upstairs with the new baby. You see, they sent her a girl when she'd ordered a boy, and she's so disappointed she's sick.—Puck.

The men who go through life with chips on their shoulders always avoid meeting the right man.—New York News.

## A FOOL AND HIS MONEY.

The Credulity of Men and the Gospel of the Parasites.

The credulity of more or less thrifty people, who, in their mania for money, are ready to believe that they can amass fortunes overnight, makes them the easy prey of a swarm of parasites who infest the financial districts. The gospel of the parasites who build air castles for their victims and real castles for themselves is terse:

"A fool is born every minute."

"A fool and his money are soon parted."

Posing as bankers and brokers, the financial parasites scour the country for the fools and then exercise their nimble wits in devising schemes to accomplish the partition. How many millions of dollars are parted from the fools every year may be conjectured from the millions of dollars spent by the pseudo-financiers in advertising. The bulk of the financial advertising in the leading newspapers of the country is intended for the fools. Another index of the richness of the harvest of parting money from the fools is the occasional exposure of some particularly glaring and bungled imposture, when the calculable "swag" runs into the hundreds of thousands, if not into millions. But these frauds are seldom exposed, for the victims are usually as anxious as the victimizers to escape the limelight of publicity. Most men prefer to lose their money rather than hear their neighbors quote from the parasites' gospel, "A fool and his money are soon parted."—Success.

## SHAKESPEARE'S NAME.

The Great Poet Himself Spelled It In Different Ways.

Our great poet Shakespeare spelled his surname in two ways—viz. "Shakspeare" and "Shakespeare" in writing the three signatures to his will, now at Somerset House. Besides these three there are two other authentic signatures, of which the first, in the conveyance of his Blackfriars property, is written "Shakspeare," and the second, in the mortgage deed relating to the same property, has been interpreted both as "Shakspeare" and "Shakespeare." "Shakspeare" is the spelling of the alleged autograph in the British museum copy of Florio's "Montaigne," but the authenticity of the signature is considered doubtful. The name of the poet's father occurs sixty-six times in the council books of Stratford and is spelled in sixteen ways, the commonest form being "Shaxpers." Almost all references to the poet in the seventeenth century give the form "Shakspeare," which is used also on the grant of arms in 1596, in the license to the players of 1603 and in the text of all the legal documents relating to the poet's property. That the poet sanctioned this spelling is clear from its adoption in the "Venus and Adonis" of 1593 and the "Lucrece" of 1594, which were produced under his supervision.—London Standard.

## THE SPANISH WOMAN.

She Is Beautiful, Proud, Simple and Radiantly Feminine.

What women are more adorable, so proud, so simple, so radiantly feminine? As a type, the Spanish woman of the south is unique. She is small and slender, exquisitely proportioned, with tiny but beautifully shaped hands and feet. Her head, poised proudly on a torso of classical symmetry, is small, and her hair is black and crisp, of the bluish tint peculiar to the raven. Her face is oval, such as Ruskin admired, finely chiseled, frank and childlike; her lips full, red and pouting; her nose slightly aquiline with nervous, quivering nostrils. Her eyes, almond shaped, dark, lustrous, pensive and passionate, now flash open like globes of fire, now dreamily close as if in sadness. In her white lace shawl and the flowers of Spain in her hair she is quite irresistible, yet no prouder creature exists, nor less coquettish a nature. Her love consumes her, and she would no more smoke a cigarette than she would play hockey or golf. She is simple as a bird, wary and capacious as a child; sincere, for she does not know what it is to be insincere. When she loves she will die for you, but when she hates she will slay you with a glance as keen as any dagger.—New York Mail.

## Discourtesy.

If we inquire closely into the complaints of modern deterioration of manners in the lower classes we should find that the real sting does not lie in actual rudeness, but in the shock of receiving courtesy when respect was demanded. The complainants feel in their modest degree very much like Henry LIX, of Hochneunschloesser-Fichtenwald, when the American student on being presented said genially, "Pleased to make your acquaintance."—Miss M. Loane in Contemporary Review.

## Her Supposition.

"I'm glad to say," remarked Mrs. Strongmide in an insinuating tone, "that my husband is not a sporty man."

"Oh," replied Mrs. Kadyppe, looking very sweet and innocent, "I'm surprised to hear you say that. I have always supposed that he must have married you on a bet."—Chicago Record.

## Effect of Familiarity.

"Breeves is pretty familiar with the law, I am told."

"Wonderfully so. I guess that is why he manages to get himself fined for contempt every session."

## Same People.

"Halloa, Bikkins! Who are you working for now?"

"Same people—a wife and five children."

## THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Wonderful Personal Charm of the Old Time Patriot.

In December, 1890, a few days after congress had for the first time met in our new metropolis, I was one morning sitting alone in the parlor when the servant opened the door and showed in a gentleman who wished to see my husband. The usual frankness and care with which I met strangers were somewhat checked by the dignified and reserved air of the present visitor, but the chilled feeling was only momentary, for, after taking the chair I offered him in a free and easy manner and carelessly throwing his arm on the table near which he sat, he turned toward me a countenance beaming with an expression of benevolence and with a manner and voice almost familiarly soft and gentle entered into conversation on the commonplace topics of the day, from which, before I was conscious of it, he had drawn me into observations of a more personal and interesting nature. I knew not how it was, but there was something in his manner, his countenance and voice that at once saluted my heart, and in answer to his casual inquiries concerning our situation in our new home, as he called it, I found myself frankly telling him what I liked or disliked in our present circumstances and abode. I knew not who he was, but the interest with which he listened to my artless details induced the idea he was some intimate acquaintance or friend of Mr. Smith's and put me perfectly at my ease—in truth, so kind and conciliatory were his looks and manners that I forgot he was not a friend of my own until on the opening of the door Mr. Smith entered and introduced the stranger to me as Mr. Jefferson.

I felt my cheeks burn and my heart throb, and not a word more could I speak while he remained. Nay, such was my embarrassment I could scarcely listen to the conversation carried on between him and my husband. For several years he had been to me an object of peculiar interest—in fact, my destiny—for on his success in the pending presidential election, or rather the success of the Democratic party (their interests were identical, my condition in life, my union with the man I loved, depended)—"Washington in Jefferson's Time," by Margaret Bayard Smith, in Scribner's Magazine.

## POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

It's as difficult to find a friend as it is to lose an enemy.

A luxury becomes a necessity after you get used to it.

Unless you have money to burn don't try to keep the pot boiling in a poker game.

It's difficult to convince a man that his money isn't on a sure thing until after the race.

Don't worry over trifles. If you must worry, pick out something worth while, then get busy.

When you have them they are nations; when other people have them they are delusions.

It's an easy matter to side up a man if his dog crawls under the house every time he sees him approaching.

When a man tells you how you ought to run your business, just take a look at the way he is running his own.—Chicago News.

## Balzac's Buttons.

Balzac wore a blue dress coat with metal buttons. A play of his, "Les Ressources de Quinola," was in rehearsal at the Odeon theater in Paris, and Balzac, ever hopeful, expected an immense success. In order to appear in gala costume on the opening night he ordered a blue dress coat lined with satin, the buttons of which were of solid eighteen carat gold. "Quinola" was a ghastly failure, and for some time after it left the bill Balzac was exceedingly hard up. Whenever ready money failed him—and ready money failed him often—he used to cut one of his buttons off and sell it to a jeweler, and to the day of his death the coat with the gold buttons and its successors were called by Balzac and his friends "Les Ressources de Quinola."

## A Flavor of Antiquity.

In the little town of Munsiedel, in Bavaria, there exists one of the most curious charitable foundations in the world. One of the burghers, Christopher Wanner, died in 1451 and left his fortune for the establishment of a home for aged poor. He attached, however, the condition that every old man who was taken in should wear his beard and the same cut of clothes and cap as he himself used to wear. Consequently, after the lapse of hundreds of years, the ancient pensioners are still to be seen wandering about the streets of Munsiedel in the costumes of the fifteenth century.

## His Only Occupation.

"Yes'm, but if I do youah laundry work, ma'am, I must have de undahstandin' dat my husban' collects de pay."

"But why can't you collect it yourself, Manda?"

"Well, you see, ma'am, I don't want to rob de ol' man of de only job he's evah likely to get."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## The Truth of It.

Blusters—I dare say I do look mad, I understand Jigley says I'm the worst liar he ever saw. Wiseman—Oh, that's a gross libel! Blusters—Of course it is, Wiseman—Well, I should say. Why, everybody admits you're a pretty good liar.—Catholic Standard and Times.

## Literary Clubs.

Literary clubs are a very harmless form of hero worship. They make just the same excuse for literary people to meet together as what or bridge to a less bookish class.—Sphere.