FLEMMER FAMILY HISTORY

THE LITTLE DANE
ANNA LOUISE FLEMMER ROUS

1874 - 1941

CONTENTS

FOREWORD
2003 EDITION

The Little Dane was written before 1937 by Anna Louise Rous (born Flemmer) 1874 -1941. Although it cannot be called an accurate history it is a fascinating collection of stories about her family and about our ancestors, who arrived in South Africa in 1853.

We can be thankful that the original manuscript was transcribed in 1973 by Joan Geyser (born Flemmer 1929). This made it available to the many members of the family who have taken an interest in the family history over the years. In 1973 there were no such things as computers and photocopying was in its infancy. Duplicating was done by laboriously typing each page on to a waxed sheet, which was inked and run through a duplicator. A slow and messy process. Joan describes her Herculean labour:-

“In July 1973 our son Bruce was sent to Bethlehem O.F.S. to commence his compulsory army training in the Engineers. This left a gap in my life similar to ‘the empty nest syndrome’, so I decided to retype *The Little Dane*. Aunt Madge had mailed a rough copy, with many alterations, so now was the time to get busy

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I was employed as a bookkeeper in a mornings only capacity, so had some free time in the afternoon to do some typing on my portable typewriter, while Lindi was doing her homework or studying. I set up a little office in our glass enclosed summerhouse in the back garden, was given a discarded Gestetner Roneo duplicating machine by my employer, and as the duplicating black ink was messy it was necessary to leave all my ‘tools’ and paper, etc. in one place for some months.

Before I commenced the typing we wrote to all the Flemmers I knew plus those in the telephone directory and Aunt Madge contacted the people of Flemmer descent with whom she was acquainted. The orders rolled in. I still have the invoices for the material: - Three boxes wax stencils, eleven reams of duplicator paper (each ream 500 sheets), four tubes black duplicating ink - and pink stencil correction ink! I had quite a production line going and charged a cost price of R5 per manuscript consisting of 118 pages, and printed 46 books. I was told by Louie's granddaughter, Judith Canning, that unfortunately some of the last pages of the rough copy she sent us had been lost."

In 2002 it was decided to bring Joan's original into the digital age, making it more readily available to the growing number of people interested in our families and their histories. The family have to thank my brother Terry Herbert who completed the major part of this time consuming job with help from Fay Lea. Footnotes explaining and expanding on the text were added by me and Fay.

In 2003, 150 years after the Flemmers arrived in the Cape, the book will again be available, this time in CD format, continuing the chain and perpetrating the memory of Louie Flemmer - The Little Dane.

Steve Herbert
Kalk Bay January 2003

FOREWORD
ORIGINAL EDITION

JOHN DISTIN FLEMMER
Married
MAUD CROXFORD

John Distin Flemmer (Jack) brother of "The Little Dane", Louie, was born in 1872.

He had three brothers, Christian, Claude and Arthur and four sisters, Louie, Edith, Selina and Olive.

The children grew up on their father's large farm in the Cradock district. Their father was a hard taskmaster and the boys worked with the farm hands. The farm stretched as far as the eye could see.

Later in life Jack left to work on the Rand Mines.

John Distin married Maud Croxford in the year 1899.

Maud lived with her Aunt Janie before her marriage and spent some time in England studying music and art.

Maud lost her mother at an early age. She had a sister Ada and four brothers, Clem, Ports, Cyril and Arthur.

Ada lived with her Aunt Janie at 13 O'Reilly Road, Berea for many years. John Distin and Maud had seven children :- Madge, Doris, Jack, Ludvig, Neville, Gwynne and Barbara.

Their first home was at Rose Deep Mine, Germiston, where John Distin was an amalgamator (i.e. the process of melting the gold form the rock and pouring it into the moulds).

Twins, Ludvig (Lollie) and Jack, were born in Morekwen, Bechuanaland but the family left there when Jack contracted polio at the age of four. They moved to the Rand to be near doctors, etc.

Maud inherited money form her Uncle Porter Rhodes and they bought the farm Schoongezicht. Later Maud inherited more money when the loan to the Orphans Fund was paid off.

Eventually they sold the homestead section of the farm and had the other portion surveyed into 25 acre plots which were sold but they were taken back after the Miners Strike in 1920.

John Distin died in 1920.

Maud moved to Johannesburg and lived with her seven children in a house belonging to Aunt Ada, in Yeoville.

When Aunt Janie died, Maud moved into 13 O'Reilly Road, Berea which she inherited from Aunt Janie. Neville inherited the Yeoville house, which he sold.

Ludvig (Lollie) and Neville (Nick) immigrated to Kenya. Mother Maud visited them in Kenya on two occasions but they did not return to the Transvaaal in her lifetime. Lollie is still in Kenya but Nick and his wife Daisy, left Kenya when the Mau Mau terrorists hanged their faithful cookboy as he refused to murder his employer.

Grandmother Maud was loved by all her grandchildren and it is exciting to visit her at 13 O'Reilly Road. The big house with its wonderful furnishings: the tea cups and delicious eats all set out on the big table and covered with a teashower. The sing-songs with Granny playing the piano: the visit to the cinema with Granny and the lovely walk through Joubert Park. The walks to the koppie nearby where there was a magnificent view of the town: Granny teaching us to crochet and the pretty dolls clothes we made.

Joan (Flemmer) Geyser

PREFACE

"Old Ghosts, whose day was done ere mine began
If earth be seen from your conjectured heaven,
Ye know that History is half dream - aye even
The man's life in the letters of the man.
There lies the letter, but it is not he
As he retires into himself and is:
Sender and sent - to go to make up this,
Their offspring of this union. And on me
Frown no old Ghosts, if I be one of those
Who make you utter things you did not say,
And mould you all awry and mar your worth;
For whosoever knows us truly, knows
That none can truly write his single day,
And none can write it for him upon earth."

CHAPTER I

DENMARK 1773 - SOUTH AFRICA 1852

There landed in Cape Town towards the end of the 18th century Miss von der Spy, the heir of a romantic past, the great grandparent of *The Little Dane*.

“Woe to thee O Land,” saith the Preacher, “when thy King is a child “

Frederick V King of Denmark, was twice married and had one son by each Queen, there being only four years between the ages of the little Princes: the Crown, therefore, devolved upon the elder, Prince Christian.

Prince Christian’s stepmother was an ambitious, unscrupulous woman who wanted the crown for her own adored son. It is said that on one occasion the Queen came into the royal nursery while, little Prince Christian was being fed and sent the nurse out of the room on some slight pretext. The nurse, suspecting foul play, remained at the door peeping through the keyhole: she saw the Queen pouring some white powder into the little Prince’s food. On returning the nurse firmly refused to feed the Prince and the Queen, realising that her duplicity had been discovered, had her deported to Norway, and the matter hushed up.

Frederick V died in 1766 and Christian VII, a mere boy, became King with his stepmother as regent during his minority. He was completely dominated by her. Only in his choice of his wife did he follow his own judgement, to the great annoyance of the Queen. He married Princess Caroline Matilda, the youngest daughter of George II of England and sister of George III. She was hailed by the whole nation, much admired and loved, and affectionately called “the English Rose”.

When the time came for the cannon to roar forth to the nation the glad tiding that a Prince had been born to the happy King and Queen, the Queen-dowager’s jealousy knew no bounds and she never ceased to sow discord between the young couple. Her opportunity came:

The German, Struensee, a physician, the son of a clergyman, who had quarrelled with his father on religious matters, led an unsettled life for some years and then found himself at the Court of Denmark. He became Court Physician to Christian VII and travelled with him through England, France and Germany.

The young Queen resented Struensee’s influence over her husband, but as he was able to cure her of a very serious malady he became her favourite also. This admiration was only professional but much was made of it by the Queen-dowager. Struensee was made Prime Minister and he and his private Secretary, Toger von Abo, were given private apartments in the Palace. The Queen-dowager threw suspicion on the Queen’s character by saying that Struensee was her lover, and that the royal children were illegitimate.

The King, easily influenced by his stepmother, was an easy prey to the suggestion of the plotting woman. The Queen-dowager who, with her followers, entered the Palace at the dead of night, woke the King and told him that the Queen with Struensee was leading the town in rebellion, her object being to usurp the throne for her lover. She forced the King to sign a paper, already prepared, ordering all the inmates of the Castle to be arrested and the young Queen to be deported to the Castle of Kronberg. She might have shared the fate of Struensee, who was beheaded, had it not been for Keith, King George III’s representative, who declared: “if a hair of her head is touched, there will be war between England and Denmark”. At the intervention of England, Caroline Matilda was allowed to live in the Castle of Zell in Hanover, which belonged to the English King. During the remaining years of her life she repeatedly begged for a public trial. She died at the age of twenty three some think from poison.

Toger von Abo, Struensee's secretary, was a staunch supporter of the young Queen and for that reason received a sentence of banishment for two years. He left Denmark in 1773 and, taking service in a foreign country, did not return to Denmark at the end of the two years but distinguished himself by his bravery and other excellent qualities and at a very early age became an Admiral.

During the last years of his travels, von Abo touched at the Cape of Good Hope, where he met and fell in love with Miss von der Spy, who had lately arrived from Holland, and he carried her back to Denmark as his bride. He was well received by the then reigning King, Frederick VI, son of Christian VII and Caroline Matilda.

Toger von Abo and his wife lived in one of the King's castles and there Johannes, their only child, was born. The godson of a Danish Princess, he grew up surrounded by all the luxury and comfort of Court life and became a page to the Queen, a poor preparation for the hardships he was to endure in future years. He used to say of himself that he "was born in a Castle and died in a pig-sty". He died in South Africa, in the little town of Burgersdorp in 1869.

Through revolution and years of misrule Denmark was so impoverished that Toger von Abo, realising his country's need, lent large sums of money to the Government. He held "Obligations" as the papers were called in Denmark, but knowing the state of the country, he tore these papers up as so much waste paper. Nothing daunted and although well advanced in years, he decided to collect all he possessed, make provision for his wife and son and sail to China on a trading expedition - this being a very remunerative trade in those days. He sailed in his own ship on a most successful trip.

Returning home a wealthy man, he was looking forward to the reunion of his family after an absence of nearly three years. Alas, when within sight of the Cape of Good Hope he was taken ill at sea and was buried in Cape Town. Strange fate! There it was he had met his wife, his dream woman. What happy days when love's young dream came true, and now his last resting place!

Unfortunately his sacrifice was in vain: the next in command, being a dishonest man, took everything. The widow and son of von Abo received no benefit from the sacrifice their dear one had made for their sakes.

Eixkated was a Selesian nobleman who wished his son to marry a lady of the nobility. The son refused. They quarrelled. The son ran off to Copenhagen with the girl he loved. Here they were married in the church of St Nicholai. He changed his name from Eixkated to Naested. Unfortunately during the bombardment of Copenhagen by the English the church of St Nicholai was destroyed and all records lost. So the noble Selesian estate has been lost to the family of Naested who are the only heirs. A daughter of this runaway marriage was Louise Naested who married Johannes von Abo. They had three children, Toger, Marie and Betty. When Betty was six months old Denmark was again suffering as the result of wars and revolutions and Johannes and his mother decided that it would be a good thing for him to go out to South Africa and there make a home for them. His mother who had been a Miss von der Spy, was in South Africa when her husband, Toger von Abo, met and married her. She therefore knew what scope there would be in that young country for her son as his profession was survey. He sailed in 1816.

Weeks grew into months, months into years, and still no word from the breadwinner of the little family. With tear-dimmed eyes the young wife, Louise, watched the ships sail up the harbour of Copenhagen. With an anxious heart she waited, listening for the postman's knock, for the letter which never came!

Oh! For the news of the loved one who had sailed to that far unknown land. How she longed to carry out the happy programme they had arranged, which was for herself, her mother-in-law and

her three little children to go out and join her husband and make their home in that wonderful land of sunshine.

Two and a half years passed and still no letter. Louise caught a chill and died - died of a broken heart. In Denmark the dead are not buried until several days after death has taken place. On the day of Louise's funeral twelve letters arrived from her husband.

A month later her mother-in-law died, leaving the three little children to be taken care of each by a brother or sister of their dead mother. Lovely little Betty, three years of age, with her big brown eyes and her head one mass of curling black hair, was taken in by an aunt who had one child of her own, a girl considerably older than Betty. Betty's good looks caused much jealousy. She grew up almost the Cinderella of the family but reached maidenhood with a sweet unselfish character.

Living in Denmark at this time was a good and learned man, The Reverend Christian Flemmer. He was decorated with the cross "Knights of the Danebrog" which decoration he received for services, gratuitously given in the cause of education. He gave all his family plate to the Government to be melted into coin when the National Bank of Denmark failed. His youngest son Dr Christian Flemmer, was a medical student and a very welcome visitor at the home of Betty's aunt. Very popular with the two girls, he played his cards so well and hid his feelings with such success that it came as a great shock when he asked for the hand of Betty. He carried her off in triumph and they lived very happily for many years in the little fishing village of Korsoer in Denmark.

Betty's brother, Toger von Abo, had at an early age followed his father, Johannes von Abo, to South Africa. After an absence of sixteen years he returned to Denmark, full of enthusiasm about the Sunny south and persuaded Betty and her husband, Dr Christian Flemmer, to break up their little home and go out to South Africa with their family. Everything was arranged, Betty's brother giving them very substantial financial assistance. Betty was thirty seven years of age and the mother of seven children. Her eldest son, Ludvig Christian Flemmer, carried on the link of history down to the Little Dane.

After a voyage of nearly three months, the family of Danes together with servants and workmen, landed in Port Elizabeth during the month of February 1853. Betty's father, Johannes von Abo, who parted from Betty when she was six months old, now beheld his daughter a mother of seven fine children, two daughters and five sons. Tents had been pitched to receive the travellers as at this time there was only one house in Port Elizabeth, on the hill. After resting for a few days, the Danes, with all their possessions, were packed into ox wagons and the journey inland commenced. The wild unbroken country through which they passed was a mixture of grandeur and monotony, the ever changing hills a source of constant interest and delight, a great change from the almost dead level of the Denmark they had left, with trees and water everywhere and its dense population. Now they would travel the whole day without passing a single homestead. Weird and wonderful night noises thrilled the travellers. The furtive eyes and stealthy tread of animals beyond the range of the camp fire were abundant evidence of the presence of the denizens of the veldt: the call of jackals at night and the bark of baboons during the day kept the children in a state of panic or delight throughout the journey.

Parts of the country through which they travelled were thickly covered by a wild fruit, the prickly pear, a fruit which is relished by the Natives. Thinking to please the children, one old wagon driver, "Windvoel" collected a dish of the prickly pear fruit, the cleaning of which is quite an art as the fruit is covered with minute thorns, almost invisible. These are brushed off with a bush gathered for the purpose, and then a thin skin is removed, leaving the luscious juicy fruit the size and shape of a large egg.

Old "Windvoel's" efforts was greatly appreciated, the children were delighted and thoroughly enjoyed the fruit. The following day, as soon as a halt was called and the camp pitched, the eldest

son, Ludvig, full of enterprise, himself made off for the prickly pear bushes and collected a quantity of the fruit, filling his pockets and shirt without realising the presence of millions of minute thorns. The agony which he suffered can only be realised by those who have handled this unkind fruit and have found that one thorn is enough to cause great inconvenience. It was most fortunate that his father was a medical man and was thus able to alleviate his suffering. The rest of his life was spent in South Africa but nothing would induce him to eat another prickly pear.

After travelling in the ox wagons for three weeks, this little company of Danes arrived in Cradock. Here Dr Flemmer set up as a medical man: he was one of the first, if not the first M.D. to come to South Africa. He had a very successful practice and was much loved by his patients. He was specially interested in the ailments of infants and made up a powder which he used to say was "as necessary for a baby as the Lord's Prayer was to grown up people". It has been handed down from generation to generation and used by all his descendants with great success.

Dr Flemmer and his family were great favourites and much sought after by the little community of Cradock, to whom the family medicine chest had been their only assistance in times of illness.

Betty and her husband were very musical and in spite of her family cares, Betty retained her interest in the social side of life, and she and her husband would sing Danish duets and songs, to the delight of their audience.

Amongst their friends were a Mr and Mrs John Sweet Distin. Mr Distin was a gentleman from Devonshire in England, who had married Selina White. They had several children, amongst them a little boy who was lame as the result of an injury. It was the great delight of the younger Flemmer boys to take little Jack Distin about in his improvised cart. Though Mr Distin had no idea of music, he was an appreciative listener and could be entertained for hours, his favourite song being "Juanita".

A glorious calm summer's night in 1859! The home of Mr and Mrs Distin is gay with the sound of music and the tread of dancing feet. The whole town has been invited to the dance, Mr Distin being the most hospitable of men. The only member of their family who was considered old enough to take part was their eldest daughter, Anna, aged ten years! During the evening Dr Flemmer approached his son saying, "My son, have you danced with the little lady of the house?". "No Father, she is only a child and I am twenty, I could not think of dancing with her," replied his son with all the dignity of twenty years. "but it is your duty," replied his father. "it does not matter what the age is, you as a gentleman are in duty bound to dance with your hostess and any other ladies belonging to the home, and I do not wish to see my son neglect his duty."

Dutifully Ludvig asked Anna for a dance. How little he dreamed as he whirled his little partner over the floor to the gay music of the Polka, that he was dancing with his future wife! Ten years hence he was to ask her to become his life's partner!

Anna Distin's tenth year was full of thrills. She had been to her first big Ball and now her father had decided to take his family to Port Elizabeth where they were to spend three months, for the sake of his wife's health. They would be many weeks on the road, travelling by ox wagon, always a thrilling experience for the children, and they were going to live in a big double storey house in Port Elizabeth.

During their stay in Port Elizabeth, Prince Albert, the Duke of Edinburgh, visited South Africa, and while His Royal Highness was in Port Elizabeth, a Ball was given in his honour. Mr Distin was greatly distressed and disappointed that, owing to ill-health, his wife could not attend the Ball. He insisted that he must take a lady from his household and so it was arranged that little Anna should attend the Prince's Ball!

What excitement for the little maid! A dressmaker was sent for and a very beautiful white silk dress made. On the night of the Ball, Mr Distin who was familiar with the Town Hall Buildings, arrived with his charge. Opening the door of what had always been the Ladies' Cloak Room, he said, "Go in and when you have removed your cloak and changed your shoes, come back to me." He had hardly closed the door on his daughter when he heard her shout. He opened the door and what was his astonishment to behold the Prince sitting at a table with his staff, and Anna, clapping her hands and leaping in the air, shouting "Papa! Papa! The Prince, the Prince!"

With many apologies to His Royal Highness, Mr Distin carried Anna off and found the Ladies' Cloak Room.

Soon after their return to Cradock, Mr Distin bought a farm which he called "Tafelberg". Its name means "Table Mountain" so named because of a large mountain, nearly two thousand feet from the base, which lies in the middle of the farm. Mr Distin described his purchase as "The Heart of the World". Here he carried on farming operations on a very large scale. On several occasions Mr Distin got young men out from Scotland to learn farming. In 1862 he imported Cotswold Rams, an importation almost unheard of in those days.

He even lost his seat in the Cape Parliament because he tried to force the Fencing and Scab Acts on the country. But he decided to fence his farm. There was no one who knew anything about fencing, so he imported a man from Australia to do the work. Sneezewood poles were brought up from Bedford District and the fence erected in 1860. People came from many parts of the Middelburg District to look at this first fence, where now every farm is jackal proof fenced. When the fence which was erected in 1860 had to be removed in 1930, one of the poles was given to a cabinet maker, who successfully made a little jewel case which is much treasured by Mr Distin's grand-daughter, *The Little Dane*.

Mr. and Mrs. Distin were held in great esteem and friendship by English and Dutch alike, and their beautiful home Tafelburg Hall, was a sort of fairyland to all and sundry of their friends. The old home, Built in 1827, with its Dutch Gables, its huge hall and antique furnishings: the long dining table, with the Zulu boys, dressed in red caps and white coats, gliding silently about attending to the many guests, was indeed a place of rest and joy to friends and relatives. Joe and Tom, two Zulu boys, as black as the ace of spades, served Mr. & Mrs. Distin faithfully for many years. No white butler could have been more efficient than these two boys. Mr Distin carried a gold whistle on the end of his watch chain - one blast was enough!

Mrs Distin was a great gardener as the beautiful gardens with their shady walks, flower beds and orchards still testify.

Five miles from the main dwelling house was another homestead belonging to Mr Distin. Here Ludvig Flemmer worked as manager for Mr. Distin for several years. As there were no telephones or motors in those days, Mr Flemmer, to keep in touch with the farming operations, could constantly be seen covering the five miles on horseback. He was a great horseman and performed many amazing tricks while riding, such as off-saddling and re-saddling his horse while going at full gallop. These rides became more frequent as his interest grew in Anna, who had now grown to sweet maidenhood - the little girl whom ten years ago he felt too big to dance with! They became engaged. Mr Flemmer was very fond of poetry and wrote quite extensively. Here is a poem written to Anna on her first birthday after their engagement:

"November 3rd, 1867"

"Anna, I wish the first would be
To wish you joy upon this day:
First birthday that I spend with thee

Though seventeen have passed away.

And now the eighteenth has come round
To us, what changes since that last.
Love's golden chain we both have found
And firmly it is round us cast.

What hopes, what joys have dawn'd on us
Of which we could not dream before,
Nor thought to realise them thus,
That we should meet and part no more.

No thought will rise that may not be
From that true gentle heart of thine,
So I may surely hope to see
Fulfil'd this birthday wish of mine."

And this is how he describes her:

"A merry, bright and smiling face
No frown upon it ever,
Nought but goodness there you trace
Anger mars it never.
Dark and light brown tresses flow
In golden wavy ringlets,
Shade and sunshine do they show
Two colours in them mingle.
I wish I could describe the eyes
Not unlike bright summer skies."

The wedding took place on September 8th, 1869 in Cradock, in the beautiful Dutch Reformed Church which had just been completed. There, by special permission of the Dutch community, they were married by their own clergyman. The repairs going on at the Anglican Church, St Peters, made it impossible for the ceremony to take place there.

The Cradock Dutch Church is one of the most beautiful in South Africa. It was built by the Rev J.H. du Plessis and is a replica of St Martins-in-the-Fields, London.

This English-Danish wedding was a very popular one, and everybody in Cradock was present at the breakfast. Mr. Distin, in his splendid generous way, presented his daughter with the farm of which Mr Flemmer was his manager, with stock provided and home furnished.

Happily this loving couple dwelt in the little old farm house with its three foot thick walls of mud and its thatched roof. It seemed as if nothing could ever happen to disturb this perfect peace. Only three months did this happy couple remain in possession of their dear little home.

It was a Monday morning. Mr Flemmer was up with the lark, and on scanning the horizon, he beheld a horseman riding as if for his life. He was handed a letter which he scanned with paling face and trembling hands. He returned to the house. "Anna," he called, sinking into his chair, "I have very bad news. My Father is dead." He handed her the letter which she read, tears filling her sweet blue eyes.

Dr Flemmer had retired and was living on a farm near Steynsburg. On Sunday afternoon Betty left her room to attend to afternoon tea, and in the midst of her preparations returned to the bedroom

for her handkerchief. She was just in time to see her dear husband breathe his last! He died painlessly from heart failure. Ludvig had promised his father that should the Doctor be taken, it would be his, Ludvig's special care to take charge of his mother. He said, "We must leave at once. I will arrange to let this farm as we must now make our home with my mother on her farm near Steynsburg."

Poor little Anna shed bitter tears at giving up her charming little home where she had reigned supreme: and although she was very fond of her mother-in-law she did not look forward to making her home with the Danes, where practically only Danish was spoken and Danish dishes eaten. However, brave little Anna, with her sweet and gentle smile and her soft kind blue eyes won the love of them all, and they lived in peace for three years. Then the family decided to break up the home. Betty and her brother were given a small cottage in Cradock where they lived happily until his death.

Mr Flemmer did not return to the farm where they spent the first part of their married life. He set up in business in Cradock, which business he carried on for ten years. They lost their two eldest children, the boy, Christian Ludvig, died when he was four years old and Selina when she was six weeks old. Their third child, Louie, was born in Cradock - *The Little Dane*.

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CHAPTER II
HE

Captain James Rous came to South Africa from England about the year 1836. He settled in Cape Town and married the belle of Simonstown, a Miss Cowper, the daughter of an officer in the Imperial Army. They had three children and while the eldest of the family, James, was still very young his father died, leaving his wife in such poor circumstances that she had to earn her own living, beside supporting her children. To be able to do this she handed over each of her children to a different relative.

When James was ten years old, he ran away and managed to reach Durban. Here he went into a newspaper office. At an early age, in the late sixties, he was able to set up for himself in Pretoria. He started and edited Pretoria's first newspaper called "Die Volkstem" (the Voice of the Nation).

He married Alexa Cole, the daughter of a Church of England clergyman, who had come to stay with her married sister living in Pretoria.

Mr Rous and his brother-in-law, Mr Broderick, were much interested in gold, which was then being found on the various farms in the Transvaal, and in 1873 Mr Broderick with his panning outfit and a quantity of quartz which he had collected, proceeded to pan gold in the presence of members of the Volksraad on Pretoria Square. Mr Rous was present to represent his paper. This gold was taken to England by Mr Broderick where, in the English mint, it was turned into fifty golden sovereigns with the head of Burgers, President of the Transvaal on the one side and the Transvaal coat of arms on the other side. When he returned to Pretoria he presented each of the various men who were interested with a sovereign, and Mr Rous sent one of these sovereigns to his sister living in Cape Town. That sovereign, together with the photographs which were taken at the scene of the panning of the gold on the Pretoria market Square in 1874, are in the possession of Mr Rous' daughter-in-law.

Mr Rous was a very adventurous and enterprising man. On one occasion when travelling alone

on horseback through the wilds of Transvaal, he came upon a deserted Kaffir kraal. Wishing to protect himself from the wind and to rest his horse which had travelled for many hours, he sought shelter among the empty huts. Great was his surprise to find two magnificent lion cubs playing about in all abandonment of their free wild life. With cool contempt of the danger he was running, he lay and watched the gambols of the pretty creatures as they frolicked about like two playful kittens in the clearing which had evidently been made by the lioness. He rubbed down his horse, re-saddled him, then gathering one of the cubs in his arms, mounted and rode off.

After travelling some distance, the wind dropped and he was able to enjoy his ride as the heat of the day was passing and the cool of the evening was exceedingly pleasant. He happened to glance over his shoulder and there in the distance, where a bend in the road made her visible, was the lioness! He put spurs to his horse, keeping a sharp look-out, but when he realised that she was gaining on him, he felt forced to drop the cub. This he did with great reluctance and arrived home without further adventure.

Mr Rous had three children, Winefred, Vassall and James. Though he owned several farms and properties when he died of pneumonia in Pretoria, at the early age of thirty six, he left his widow unprovided for. To earn a living for herself, she taught music and drawing.

One day a lady called to see Mrs Rous. “Your little boy Jim is fighting in the street,” she said. “How shocking,” replied the boy’s mother, “I wonder why he does not go into the yard and fight!”

During the year 1881 when England and the Transvaal were at war, Mrs Rous (with her own and her sister’s children) was in the English camp in Pretoria. On coming out of her tent during a bombardment from the Dutch artillery, she saw with horror that four little boys had clambered on to the sand-bags which formed a barricade and were watching the enemy’s operations. She rushed out and seizing each one by the seat of his pants, pulled him to safety.

Jim well remembered the camp, and although only six years of age, was deeply moved at the sight of the British soldiers “downing arms” on the Pretoria Square at the close of hostilities, his loyal and patriotic little heart bursting with indignation.

When Jim was nine years old his mother’s health was in such a delicate state that the family doctor insisted that she should leave Pretoria. She was worried and anxious about her ways and means, when a brother-in-law came to see her. “There is a second house on my farm,” he said, “It is vacant and if you wish to do so you may live in it as long as you like. It is near Lichtenburg, but unfurnished.” Mrs Rous gladly accepted this offer. The necessary preparations were made and a native transport driver, with his wagons and oxen, engaged to drive the family to the farm.

Mrs Rous was a small woman with beautiful grey large eyes and lovely curling auburn hair. She had been reared in an English rectory so that it was a great change for her to be travelling by ox wagon through wild, almost uninhabited country. She was on the road for days with her young children and had to take charge of the native drivers.

The brave little woman carried a revolver and on more than one occasion it was necessary for her to get out and do some target practice, to show the native men that she was familiar with the use of arms and able to shoot should the occasion arise. (Today the revolver is still treasured by her daughter-in-law).

Great was their dismay on arrival at their destination to find a lonely deserted and dilapidated homestead with a small orchard in front of the house, and only two doors - one at the back and one in the front. One gable had completely collapsed and there were openings in the walls instead of communicating doors. Poor little lady! What heartache and distress of spirit she endured!

The family settled in as best they could. Vassall had to sleep on the floor of the dining room. In the middle of the night there was a piercing shriek. “What is the matter?” asked Mrs Rous, producing a light. “A rat has bitten me on my side, “ said poor Vassal, showing the marks of the sharp little teeth. The family settled down once more, but found it impossible to sleep with the rats and mice chasing one another over the furniture, making the night hideous with their noises. It was weeks before they were able to get a decent night’s rest.

On a neighbouring farm, within walking distance, was a Dutch family, but owing to the feeling left by the Transvaal War with England in 1881, the relationship between these neighbours was not a very happy one. Fortunately, however, they came to terms sufficiently for Mrs Rous to barter gunpowder for meat and meal, a teacupful of gunpowder being exchanged for a haunch of venison or bucket of meal. The youngest boy, Koosie, who was not old enough to realise any feelings of bitterness towards the English, became very friendly with Jim. Koosie spent his time taking care of his father’s sheep and it was Jim’s delight to go with him. Every day the two boys would take the old fashioned fowling piece and three bullets, all that were allowed them. Jim would listen in awe in his heart to Koosie’s father saying, “Mind, if you don’t come home with a buck tonight when you bring the sheep, you will get the biggest thrashing of your life.”

In spite of this terrible threat, Jim and Koosie would set off gaily, carrying a light lunch, the fowling piece and the three precious bullets. The boys were such accurate shots and game was so plentiful, that they thought it great fun firing at a target in the shape of an antheap, so they took turns to fire bullets at the antheap. Of course if they missed the antheap the lead would be lost, but they were able invariably to extract it with their pocket knives from the antheap as they seldom missed. This meant that the lead thus recovered was so misshapen that it had to be re-melted before it could be used again. The thrill of the situation was that one bullet remained to shoot the buck and so prevent them having their promised thrashing.

“This is a good antheap,” said Jim, after they had driven the sheep into a good pasturage: “It is my turn to shoot first today because you shot first yesterday, and it is my turn to shoot the buck.” “Alright,” said Koosie, “I saw a big troop of buck behind the koppies and they will be coming down to water towards midday.” Having fired their respective shots the boys lay in wait for the buck. As the troop came filing past, Koosie said: “ Fire, man, fire!” “ No,” came the answer from Jim, “ I want to get the big one.” The rear of the herd was brought up by a couple of fine big rams and Koosie watched breathlessly as Jim deliberately took aim. Bang! The two boys rushed forward and were delighted to find a fine ram.

This practice stood Jim in very good stead when later he took part in a shooting competition arranged by the Boers in which sixty grown Dutchmen were competing. These men were noted for their accurate shooting and Jim, though only twelve years of age, scored the highest marks of the day.

Mrs Rous never refused hospitality or food to any beggar. On a dark night of storm and rain there was a knock at the door. A tramp, a Frenchman, was seeking food and shelter. He was given food and put in the kitchen to sleep. Jim, who shared his mother’s room, woke to see her sitting up in bed, lighted candle flickering beside her, her revolver levelled at the stranger who stood in the doorway. “If you come one step further, I’ll shoot you dead.” came the calm voice in deadly earnest. “Go back to the kitchen.” After a few moments hesitations, as the man stood weighing his chances and facing the revolver whose aggressive point seemed to bore a hole in his forehead, he realised that the odds were against him and slunk off to his quarters.

The next morning, when Mrs Rous went to face him with his treachery and demand an apology, she was thankful to find that he had taken himself off, and she silently prayed that she might never have to face another such experience.

One moonlight night, during the month of June, as the little family sat around their frugal fire, the mother telling them stories of her life in England and reading to them from the poets she loved so well, was interrupted by a strange noise, and the whole family, listening intently, realised that something unusual was happening. “Vassall,” she said, “Go to the door and open the upper half very quietly and peep out.”

“Mother!” came Vassall’s voice in great excitement, “The hyenas are chasing the cattle. There is a whole pack of them. It is as bright as day, come and have a look.” They all crowded to the door: “Look!” said Jim, “they have pulled down a beast and are tearing it to pieces.” “Come away,” said his mother, “the sight is too horrible: the poor animal must be in agony.” Closing the door, they returned to the fireside.

“You must go over to the Snyman’s farm tomorrow morning early, Jim, and tell them that one of their cattle has been killed here by hyenas.”

The following night there was a scratching at the door and the pad of stealthy feet about the house. “Surely,” said Mrs Rous, “the hyenas can’t be getting so bold as to attack us too.” Vassall crept to the window and peeped out. “they are not hyenas but wild dogs.” he cried. A shot fired into the night frightened the creatures off.

Vassall, though only a boy of thirteen years of age, would walk once a month to Lichtenburg, a distance of fourteen miles, to fetch the post - a lonely difficult road and never a passing vehicle to give him a lift.

Many were the hardships, difficulties and privations which the brave little Englishwoman endured. On one occasion they were without bread for three months, living just on mealie meal. After a year of this farm life, Mrs Rous decided to move into the town of Lichtenburg, where another year was spent. During the family’s stay there they had a unique experience:

A terrific hailstorm was passing over the town: hailstones the size of fowl’s eggs, smashed windows and beat down flowers and trees, striking terror into the hearts of the inhabitants of the place. There was an old widow living alone and very poor. Adjoining her home was a field of wheat in full ear. This was all she possessed, so she depended on the proceeds of that wheat field to pay her rent and keep her in food and clothes during the following year. She came on to her stoep and gazed at the storm, at the angry heavens, the lightning and the destroying hailstones, whilst the roar of thunder deafened her. Her gaze fell upon the field of wheat, as destruction was sweeping down upon it. The old woman fell on her knees and raising her hands to heaven she prayed aloud that her Heavenly father would spare her field of wheat. The miracle happened: not one ear of her wheat was destroyed! Surely it could be said of her “Great is Thy Faith!”

The next move was to Ventersdorp - a small village situated on the banks of the Mooi River, a pretty little place with many gardens and beautiful willow trees growing on either side of the wide water furrow which runs right through the village.

At the early age of eleven Jim started to earn his own living: he became one of the world’s toilers. Twice a week he spent an hour in the evening taking lessons from a Dutch clergyman, a very good man for whom Jim had the greatest admiration and respect (the Rev Kriel). He gained much knowledge and information by reading and talking to his mother, who was a highly educated and cultured woman, speaking both French and German with the greatest fluency. She was also an excellent musician and no mean poetess: many beautiful verses from her pen were a joy to her family.

Whenever an opportunity offered, Jim and Vassal would do transport riding: the nearest rail-head in those days being Kimberley, which made this quite a lucrative occupation. On one of these

occasions Jim and Vassal, with a boy to help them, were returning from Kimberley. Many weeks were passed on the road, the custom being to outspan during the middle of the day and to allow the animals to feed and rest. Outspan places could be found all the way along the road, always at a spot where there was water, and sometimes trees, the cool shade of which would be greatly appreciated by travellers. Towards sunset the animals were collected and inspanned and the journey resumed, most of the travelling being done during the night. Jim and Vassall had two wagons loaded with goods in their charge which they were taking up to Ventersdorp. They had chanced upon a nice spot and had been resting in the shade of the trees for several hours while the native lay sprawled on his back in the blazing sun beating down on his upturned features. Jim shook himself, stretched and stood up as he noticed how the shadows were lengthening.

(He had his mother's large grey eyes and her firm chin: he was tremendously energetic and ambitious and had a wonderfully high standard of duty and there certainly was no such word as "can't" in his vocabulary. If a thing needed to be done it had to be done and he was never satisfied unless he felt he had done it better than anyone else could have done it. He was short for his age and lightly built, but as brave and fearless as a lion.)

He walked over to where the black man lay: "Hurry up Zwartboy," he said in a voice of command, although only twelve years of age he was every inch the master. "It is time to inspan. Collect the oxen." Zwartboy continued to sprawl where he lay and in an insulting voice said, "Go and fetch them yourself." "I'll do nothing of the sort," flashed out Jim. "It's your work and you've jolly well got to do it. Get up at once, it grows late." "If you don't collect the cattle, I'll thrash you with my sjambok," replied the native. "You won't dare touch me," cried Jim as with flashing eyes he stood and faced the native. "We'll see," said the great hefty brute lifting himself into a standing position with his sjambok in his hand. He then seized Jim by the scruff of his neck and proceeded to thrash him.

"Don't beat him! Don't beat him!! I'll fetch the cattle," shouted Vassall, suiting his actions to his words as he ran off to where the cattle were grazing. But that great beast of a man took no notice. Again and again the sjambok was raised, to fall with all the brute force of which the man was capable on the thin body of the little lad. Not a sound from those firmly closed lips, not a tear in those brave eyes. "You beat me now," spoke Jim in a calm voice, "but one day when I'm a man, I'll kill you!" At that the sjambok dropped. Jim lay in the wagon, his poor little body bruised and painful, with murder in his heart, but fortunately for the native who thrashed him so cruelly, he never came across him again. The journey was resumed and completed without further adventure.

The long wagon road, winding like a thin ribbon for miles over the far reaching plains of the Transvaal could be seen plainly on a moonlight night. A wagon was outspanned and two boys lay asleep within the tent of the wagon, snatching a little rest before resuming the journey in the early morning hours. Jim and Vassall had sold a load of flour in Johannesburg and were on their return journey to Ventersdorp with a considerable quantity of gold as flour was an expensive item in those days. Jim, always a very light sleeper, woke. He lay and listened, wondering what could have wakened him. Listening, he heard the sound of a horse's hoofs as the rider galloped through the night. "Vassall!" said Jim, giving him a shake, "wake up man, and listen." "Yes," came the sleepy voice of Vassall, "I hear a horseman," and was preparing to resume his interrupted slumber. "Vassall, you are not to go to sleep."

"Why, man, it's only some fellow riding," said Vassall. "he's riding a big, powerful horse and I feel as if we're being followed. Keep your wit's about you," whispered Jim as the horseman brought his horse to an abrupt halt at the side of the wagon. The boys listened breathlessly.

"I say, you fellows, wake up!" came a perfectly modulated, cultured English voice. "What's wrong?" asked Vassall in as deep a tone as he could command. "my wagon is stuck in a bog about a mile back." Just for a fraction of a second the boys, in the kindness of their hearts, were prepared to get up and lend a helping hand to a fellow traveller, when suddenly Jim breathed into Vassall's ear,

“Scotty Smith.” “There’s no bog near here and it hasn’t rained for a week: we are not getting out to help anybody,” said Vassall.

As he spoke he was pushing the long barrel of a gun through the tent of the wagon, where it glittered ominously in the bright moonlight. The boys wanted the man to know that they were armed and above all, they did not want him to know that there were two mere boys alone in the wagon.

Without another word the stranger turned his impatient horse, which the boys could see was a thing of beauty, as peeping through the slits of the canvas, they watched the impatient champing of the animal as it fretted to be off. As the sound of the beating hoofs died in the distance, Jim said, “That’s Scotty, alright. What an escape we’ve had!” “Yes, it must be him though I’ve never seen him before,” replied Vassall. “well,” said Jim, “I’m jolly glad we’ve seen him now. Did you hear what he did to Oom Jan last week?” “No, tell me.”

“Poor old Oom Jan was outspanned on his return journey with heaps of money; the old man had taken a big load to Johannesburg, when up rides Scotty, holds a pistol at the old chap and says ‘Hand over your money!’ The poor old fellow with trembling fingers starts opening the wagon chest and say, ‘Does Mr Scotty want the notes as well?’ ‘Of course I want the notes,’ answers Scotty, who knew nothing about the notes and would have been quite satisfied with the golden sovereigns which the old man was going to give him. So Scotty went off with the notes and the gold!”

“What a shame! I do wish the police could catch him.” “What’s the good of their catching him,” said Jim, “He breaks jail every time. I wonder who he really is! They say he comes from a very aristocratic and noble English family.”

They were up at dawn and reached home the following afternoon. As they gathered around the tea table they told of their experience with Scotty Smith. “What an escape you have had,” said their mother, “I hear that Scotty is most resourceful and has a very intelligent brain; our neighbours are full of his latest exploits. It appears that there is an old Dutchman who does not trust the banks and had between two and three hundred pounds in a bag which he kept hidden somewhere in his house - this hiding place was a secret. One evening, as the old man sat at his front door, smoking his pipe, he saw a horseman coming towards him at a furious pace. The rider leapt from his horse, which was covered in sweat, and said, in a breathless whisper, ‘Scotty is after me; I’ve ridden like the very devil! See,’ producing a bag heavy with gold, ‘See, he wants this, please help me, hide me, hide it!’

“The old Dutchman was all sympathy at once. ‘Come, my friend, we’ll hide it; we won’t let Scotty get it,’ said the old chap as he hobbled into his house. ‘We’ll hide it where I hide mine.’ He lifted one of the stones with which the floor was flagged and there the greedy eyes of the stranger beheld the old man’s bag of gold and watched while his own bag of gold was placed in the hole, the stone replaced and the spot strewn with a little sand to prevent any sharp eyes being able to detect the fact that the stone could be removed.”

“Oh! Mother, how exciting!” exclaimed the boys, “What happened then?”

“The stranger took his horse to the stable, rubbed him down, saw that he had a plentiful supply of food and joined the family at their supper table. ‘Now,’ said the stranger, ‘I’m expecting Scotty any minute. I feel it would be unsafe for us both to sleep. You have no idea what a clever man Scotty is; he will be sure to find this money. What I propose is that you sit up and watch until midnight, then you wake me and I’ll take the watch for the rest of the night.’ The old man agreed.

The stranger, after a hearty supper and several hours of refreshing sleep, was awakened. ‘It’s midnight and your turn to keep watch.’ The stranger rose, and after waiting until he was certain the old man was asleep, lifted the stone, took the bag of money, went out, saddled his horse and rode off.

Next morning, when the old man woke he found that the stranger had gone. Hurrying to the hiding place he lifted the stone - there was one bag but on opening it, what was his agony to find it full of pieces of lead and small stones, his precious bag of sovereigns gone!

“Of course the stranger was Scotty,” shouted both boys. “Yes you are right. It was Scotty who had thought out a clever way to get the old man’s money. On the other hand, I hear stories of his wonderful kindness to people. He will rob a storekeeper of a whole roll of flannelette or calico and sometimes a bag of sugar, and give these supplies to a family in need. He is a strange mixture! Of course you know who he really is?” “Yes, but it is such a secret we are afraid to breathe his name.” Six years later his mother died and Jim’s uncle (H.W. Struben - the founder of the Rand) who had bought Tafelburg Hall from Mr Distin, offered his nephew a chance of going down to the Colony to learn farming. Jim gladly accepted this offer.

He had his first experience of a long train journey and arrived at Tafelberg Hall on September6th, 1892. He was greatly impressed with the grand old house, its large hall and many rooms; also the beautiful gardens with their shady walks and lovely flowers.
As one of Mr Distin’s sons was acting as manager, it was arranged that the family should remain on some time, so Jim found himself in a home where there were the dearest white-haired old lady and gentleman, Mr and Mrs Distin and several young ladies.

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CHAPTER III
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It was mid-summer in South Africa and the little town of Cradock, situated in the heart of the Karroo, almost surrounded by ironstone koppies, lay parched and baked in the fierce rays of the semi-tropical sun. January was a cruel month for the inhabitants of Cradock!

In Cross Street is a tiny cottage of interest, named by Mrs Distin “Vine Cottage.” Here she and her husband, the grandparents of The Little Dane, spent the first months of their married life in 1848. In this same cottage Olive Schreiner lived with her brothers in 1869. The cottage still stands and is often visited by Olive Schreiner’s admirers.

On either side of the wide streets were rows of trees, growing on the edges of the open water furrows. The shade which they cast was much appreciated by the pedestrians. There was no park in Cradock in 1878 and groups of nurse girls could be seen in different parts of the town, sitting with their precious charges under the shady trees.
Many of the inhabitants had homes with lovely gardens. Mr and Mrs Flemmer were not so fortunate. Their house was in the upper part of the town; in the last street called Frere Street. Across the street were a few big mimosa thorn trees and beyond the trees the ironstone koppies. A tall iron railing enclosed a strip of ground in front of Mr Flemmer’s house; at the back of the house were two yards, the first flagged and separated from the second by a brick wall, in which there was an ordinary wooden door. In the second yard were the stables.

Mr Flemmer was able to indulge his youthful love of horses and kept a racing stable, ‘Meldrum’ of Karroo fame being one of his ‘favourites’. Meldrum was often ridden by the youth and beauty of Cradock. Most ladies were excellent horsewomen then. (Living in Cradock in this year 1934, is a white-haired lady, a great grandmother, who well remembers many a thrilling canter on Meldrum.)

Beyond the stables was a well from which water was lifted by a handpump, supplying both the house and the stables; the water being conveyed in buckets by native servants.

It seemed as if the long hot day would never end! The palpitating heat penetrated closed doors and windows and made everyone wish that the cool South East wind would spring up. “Oh! I’m so hot,” was the fretful plaintive cry which was heard throughout the day from Louie, the three year old little daughter of Mr and Mrs Flemmer. “Yes dear,” said her mother, “I know you are very hot, but you will feel better when Sannie has changed your frock. She is going to take you out for a walk, under the cool shady trees.”

Louie was a thin little girl, small for her age; her people said of her that she only grew after she was ten years of age. She had black hair reaching to her neck, where it ended in slight curls; she had solemn dark eyes and a fringe across her forehead.

During the summer months her mother dressed her in the daintiest of muslin frocks. If the same consideration had been given to her underwear she would not have suffered so acutely from the heat; but unfortunately, the wearing of a flannel petticoat and thick homemade calico stays was as inevitable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, so in spite of her pretty muslin frocks, poor Louie could constantly be heard saying : “Oh I am so hot!”

When her charge was dressed, the Kaffir nursemaid Sannie, instead of going out of the front door to the cool shade of the trees, slipped out the back way. On reaching the second yard she opened the door of a room in which there was a quantity of hay. “Play in there like a good girl and don’t dirty your dress.” Sannie closed the lower half of the door and sat down on an upturned barrel, and was soon in conversation with one of the grooms.

Louie was used to playing alone and quite able to entertain herself as her brother Jack was only eighteen months old and too young as a companion. All would have been well and Mrs Flemmer would never have known that her child’s walk had begun and ended in the hay-room if it had not been for a broken bottle concealed in the hay. Louie, playing happily about was unaware of the hidden danger. As she played she put her foot through the hay into the bottle, the sharp edge easily cutting her thin little shoe and almost severing the small toe. (The mark remains to her dying day: it has been of much interest to her children and will one day be shown to that wonderful first grandson, Michael-jon.) The shriek of pain and terror brought the nurse’s pleasant afternoon to an abrupt end. She rushed in to find Louie lying on the hay, her foot one mass of blood! Tenderly lifting her little charge, she carried her back to the house. Mrs Flemmer, who was one of the most kind hearted and gentle of women, with a very sympathetic nature, was greatly shocked and distressed to see the state of her child. Sending the nurse running for the doctor, she meantime removed shoe and sock. The old gentleman, Dr Fershen, arrived on his pony and came in, sjambok in hand. Louie shrieked and was so frightened she would not allow him to touch her. Lifting the sjambok he brought it down on the table saying, “If you don’t let me attend to your foot, I’ll bring the sjambok down on a very naughty little girl instead of the table.”

The startled child lay still while the foot was bandaged. For some time Louie had to be kept very quiet. These were happy days for her as she had all the attention of her devoted mother. Mrs Flemmer was a most unselfish little lady, giving her whole life to her family. She taught Louie how to cut out pictures as for a scrap book and these were arranged in gay order along the wall at the side of the cot. The stories she told…….Louie would lie quietly for hours listening to the sound of that dear voice.

“Please tell me about when you were a little girl.” This was her constant request and she did not mind how often she was told of the same events - she just loved it all!!

When she was able to run about again the heat was still very great and no doubt that was the reason for her next escapade: She had an intense desire to cut her fringe. It was certainly not for any desire of improving her looks; she was too young for that. The strong North wind which was blowing seemed to whisper to her that now was her chance because the wind would blow her hair

away and nobody would know! She longed to feel the scissors cutting through her hair. Securing a pair of scissors and a piece of paper, the little maid went into the passage, carefully closing all the doors.

She sat herself down with her back against the big front door. Taking a tuft of fringe between her small fingers she cut,……. then carefully wrapped the hair in a bit of paper. This she pushed under the door for the wind to blow it away. Again the delicious sensation of feeling the scissors cutting….there was not much fringe left when the door opened……there stood her mother. “Oh Louie, you naughty little girl, what a fright you have made of yourself !”

Mrs Flemmer’s kind blue eyes were very sorrowful as she led her little daughter to her bedroom, where she trimmed and cut the hair as best she could, lecturing and scolding a very sad Louie who could not find words to explain why she cut her hair and that she had no intention of being naughty. For a long time she had to wear a circular comb which took all the hair from her forehead.

A few weeks later Louie came rushing into the house, to be seized by her father who hugged and kissed her and tossed her into the air in his excitement, saying “Louie, come and see what a lovely surprise Mother has for you.” He carried her into her mother’s room where she was shown a new baby brother. “His name is going to be Christian and he will be the fourth of that name,” said her father, not meaning this information for the child so much as taking pride in the significance of the descent, and thinking of his grandfather, Christian Flemmer whose munificence had helped to save Denmark so many years ago.

Unfortunately Louie’s maternal instinct was so highly developed that her one idea was to hold the darling baby. All the explanations of her mother and the nurse were of no avail; she was carried out kicking and crying, saying, “I want to hold him, I do want to hold him.” Every time she came into the room there was trouble. “Darling,” said her mother, “he is so tiny and tender you can’t hold him.” “But I’ll be so careful; I do want to hold him.”

When the baby was three days old, Louie was awakened by the wonderful news that it was her birthday - she was four years old. “Mother says you must come to her as soon as you are dressed. She has a lovely surprise for you,” said Louie’s aunt. The excited child could hardly wait to be dressed and bursting into her mother’s room, she was held in those dear arms and given sweet birthday wishes. “Now Louie, see what I’ve got for you. A baby for your very own.” Mrs Flemmer placed a beautiful baby doll in her little daughter’s arms.

The child’s joy was pretty to see. She hugged the doll and covered its face with kisses. It was indeed a beautiful birthday present, with its long robes like baby brother’s, its pretty little face framed by the soft ruffles of its bonnet. On its forehead a little tuft of golden hair just peeped from beneath the bonnet. Joy swelled her little heart! “Oh, Mammie! Thank you so very much. It’s so lovely to have a baby of my own, my very own.” For the next few days the precious doll was never let out of her arms. She took no notice whatever of the baby now, for which everyone was thankful, and the peace thus secured might have continued right through Mrs Flemmer’s convalescence had it not been for the indiscretion of the nurse. One day Louie came into her mother’s room, the doll in her arms as usual. The nurse sitting on a chair at the foot of the bed with nothing to do, thought to amuse herself and please the child; “Let me hold your baby, Louie,” she said, “I want to see if it is quite well. Perhaps it needs a dose of castor oil.”

Very seriously Louie placed the doll in the nurse’s arms and looked on with great pride to see her doll being held just like her baby brother. “Oh! Nurse isn’t it a lovely baby? I do love it so much.” “Yes,” said Nurse, “it is a lovely baby and so good.” Oh! Fatal moment when the nurse’s fingers idly strayed to the ribbons of the bonnet. Horrors! The doll’s head was as bald as a billiard ball, the only hair being the golden tuft!

This was a thing of beauty while the bonnet was on, now it seemed to exaggerate the baldness. With a piercing shriek Louie dashed forward, seized her beloved doll by its skirts and flung it with all her baby strength into a far corner of the room. There it lay, fortunately not broken. Louie stamped her feet and shrieked and screamed in a panic of rage and sorrow. The nurse recovered the doll and replaced the bonnet. “Come, Louie,” she said, “be a good girl, see, your baby is wanting you. Such a pretty baby!”

But Louie could not forget the hideous bald head; she seemed to see it through the ruffles on the bonnet. Flinging herself into her mother’s arms, she wept bitterly, saying between her sobs, “I hate it! Take it away!! I hate it!!!”

Mrs Flemmer removed the covering from the baby, saying, “See Louie, my baby hasn’t a hair on his head: all babies have bald heads. You must not be so unkind to your baby. You must love it even though it is bald.” But Louie refused to be comforted and continued to sob so distressfully that Mrs Flemmer asked her sister to hurry out and buy a doll with lots of hair. It was only when Louie held the new doll in her arms that her sobbing ceased. The bald headed doll was put away, and months afterwards was a great joy to Louie, when she was able to love it in spite of its bald head.

Louie’s grandfather, Mr Distin, was laid up in his daughter’s house with rheumatism and it was the little girl’s delight to arrange all her dolls on the floor beside his couch. “See what I’ve got for you, my dear,” said her grandfather, handing her a parcel. “Oh! What is it Grandpa? Can I open it?” “Yes, dear, it’s for you.” Whereupon Louie removed its wrappings and there was a lovely big black doll. “OH! Grandpa, what a funny doll!” “She is going to be your nursemaid; her name is Dinah. We will ask Mamma to make her a red dress with a white apron and she must wear a red ‘doek’.”

Louie danced about in great glee with her new possession. She would play for hours beside her grandfather’s couch and he never wearied of her childish prattle. Often in those childhood days she would be conscious of a wonderful rush of love and joy in her little heart; especially did her heart swell with love for her mother. Some of the members of the family thought her a naughty spoilt child, because she wanted always to be with her mother and made such great demands on her mother’s time, who was a very busy little woman with her growing family.

Louie always preferred being with her mother to going to a party. Living almost next door was her girl friend, Lily Ziervogel, who was one year her senior and her greatest friend. It was a sore trial to Lily that Louie would always insist that they should play in her home; nothing in the world would induce Louie to play at Lily’s home.

“I am going to have my birthday party tomorrow,” said Lily, “and Louie you must promise me that you will come.” After a great deal of coaxing and persuading from both Mrs Flemmer and Lily, a reluctant promise was extracted from Louie. But the next afternoon, when all Lily’s guests were assembled in the dining room, there was no Louie. Lily felt that she could not have her party without her greatest friend, so, leaving her small guests, she dashed off to Louie’s home, where she found Mrs Flemmer trying to induce her small daughter to keep her promise of the day before. It seemed easier for Louie to go now that Lily was with her, so, hand in hand, the two girls set off. Lily led her friend up to her mother. Louie had a confused idea of crowds of little girls, of feeling utterly bewildered and lost. She then realised that she was being spoken to, a voice saying, “How could your mother send you to a picnic in such a pretty new frock?” This was too much for Louie who turned and fled, never stopping till she fell sobbing into her mother’s arms. OH! Those dear arms, why did anyone ever coax her away?

One day as Mr Flemmer came in from his Office, his wife Said, “Ludvig, please go and talk to Jack, he is being so naughty, his nurse cannot pacify him.” Mr Flemmer went to the nursery where he found his little three-year old Jack weeping bitterly. He took the child in his arms and sitting

down with him said, “My little son, you must not cry like this! You are growing such a big man and big men don’t cry. I don’t like you to cry, I love you.” “You don’t,” came the angry baby tones, “you let me walk to the races on my foots.” “Oh, what a shame,” said his father, “Mammie meant you all to stay at home with Sannie. It was very naughty of her to take you to the races. But never mind, stop crying and next time there are races, I’ll see that you go in the carriage with mother.”

Thus comforted the little boy allowed himself to be put to bed. Mrs Flemmer was horrified when she heard that the children had walked out to the race course, a distance of nearly three miles, on a dusty road and during the heat of the day. Although the native nurses are devoted to their charges and very kind, they cannot always be trusted.

Eighteen months later, in 1879, came the news that there was trouble in Basutoland. There were many tear-dimmed eyes and aching hearts in Cradock when it was known that the Cradock Volunteer Corps had received orders to march north. Mr Flemmer was the Captain.

Louie and Jack were delighted to see their father in his smart dark blue uniform and white helmet, from which waved a huge black tuft, like a horse’s tail. The day came when, to the sound of a beating drum and that heart-stirring martial music, the Volunteers “fell-in” on Cradock Market Square. Mr Flemmer tore himself from the arms of his weeping wife. It seemed as if her heart would break but even in her sorrow, the mother had thought for her children, and what was her distress when, on enquiring for them, she was told that they were at the end of the lane, with their nursemaid Sannie, watching the soldiers march past. They were sent for. The children had never seen their mother weep, her bright smile and endearing words had been the sunshine of their lives. They were greatly distressed. This was Louie’s first conscious sorrow. She flung herself into her mother’s arms and with loving words and kisses begged her to stop crying. “Oh! Mammie, don’t cry so,” she pleaded, “I’ll take care of you till father comes back.”

They wept together. “See how wet your hankie is, Mammie?” said Louie, and blinded by her tears, she pushed a chair to the big old-fashioned wardrobe, climbed up, opened a drawer and produced a fresh handkerchief. Jack looked on with wonder in his big blue eyes. Suddenly the situation dawned on him and he knew that his little mother, who was all his world, was crying…..yes, crying because his daddy had gone away with the soldiers. In a voice of command he shouted: “Send Sannie to fetch him back! Send Sannie to fetch him back!”

The picture which his words conjured up of the little nursemaid calling a soldier from his duty because his wife wept, was so sweet and simple, that it brought a smile, through her tears, as she gathered her son in her arms, and pressed his manly body to her sad heart. The brave little mother tried to put her sorrow aside for the sake of her children.

But dark days were in store for her, days of anxiety and tribulation. Her third son, Willie, was born and he was so delicate that had it not been for her grandmother, Mrs Distin, he would not have lived. He grew to be a fine strong little chap, but died under tragic circumstances when he was eighteen months old. To add to Mrs Flemmer’s troubles, while the new baby was still very delicate, the ex-baby,Christian, got typhoid fever.

Then came the news that the war was successfully over and her husband was on his way home! Her trouble seemed small to Mrs Flemmer when she pictured the joy of reunion…. to have her dear husband safely back. Days of watching and longing, days of longing and watching, and then a horseman arrived in Cradock ahead of the marching army with news for Mrs Flemmer. The buggy in which her husband was travelling had been overturned, Mr Flemmer had been thrown out, and his leg broken. With wonderful courage and devotion, his men had carried him back to the Field Hospital, on an improvised stretcher, walking for miles over rough broken country. There he lay for weeks with his leg in plaster-of-paris. Mrs Flemmer’s brother went to Basutoland with spring wagon, drawn by horses and brought him home.

In spite of all her troubles and sorrows, her mother found time to teach Louie to crochet. She worked a long yellow watch chain for her father, on which he was to hang his watch at the head of his bed. With great importance and interest she watched her mother place the gift in an envelope, to be sent by the first opportunity to her father. On his return he did not forget to make much of his little daughter for her industry.

When the spring wagon arrived in Cradock and drew up at the front door of Mr Flemmer's house, he was carried in by several men and laid on the floor of the drawing- room. He was greatly changed in appearance, having grown a beard. Seeing him on the floor, frightened the children to such and extent that they refused to go near him. He was amused to see little faces peeping at him from the door. Reaching for his stick, he gave his leg a tap, the plaster-of-paris emitting a hollow noise. The children were greatly intrigued, approaching closer at every bang. Little hands gingerly laid on the injured leg, were hastily withdrawn as they gazed at their father with wide eyes of wonderment. Thereafter one could hear them tearing through the house shouting, ""It's my turn to bang Daddy's leg. It's my turn."

Thus they learned to know and love the father they had forgotten.

When Christian, who was convalescent from his typhoid fever, was placed on a sofa and given Osborne biscuits to eat, Louie and Jack watched him enviously. "I know what we will do to get some," said Jack, "We'll pretend to be his little dogs." "Yes," said Louie, "We'll crawl round the sofa on our hands and knees and bark." Christian was much amused by the caperings of the "little dogs" and threw them biscuits, which they readily gobbled up.

One day Mrs Flemmer came into the room where Louie and Lily Ziervogel were playing with their dolls. "Louie," said her mother, "I want you to run to the shop at the end of the lane, and buy some condensed milk. Take Lily with you and don't be long." "Come along, Lily," said Louie and the two friends set off, hand in hand.

As they were crossing the second yard, they were attracted by the appearance of the pump, which was undergoing repairs. The workmen were away as it was their dinner hour and their tools lay scattered about in much confusion.

"I wonder what they are doing to the pump," said Lily. "See, Lily, they have taken off the handle," said Louie, and the children continued their examination, Louie standing on a plank the better to see the strange changes in the pump. All unconscious of her danger she was standing on a plank which was covering the mouth of the well, a well thirty feet deep, with sixteen feet of water!

Suddenly the plank gave way…..instinctively Louie stretched out her arms, and so hung suspended in the mouth of the well, with the greedy black water below waiting for those small arms to tire. A moment before she was a bright, happy child, standing in the sunshine, and now! - "Help!" screamed Lily in a frenzy of misery as she ran back and forth. "Louie is falling into the well! Help! Help!" She ran towards the house but was so impressed with her friend's danger that she could not bear to lose sight of her and would come running back, calling to Louie in a voice of misery, "Oh, Louie! What shall I do, what shall I do?"

The seconds were growing into minutes, and Louie was becoming tired, with the sharp pain across her shoulders and smarting bruises where the rough masonry was pressing on her arms, but there were no tears in those dark eyes which saw death so close. She was biting her lips and her small face was contorted with the agony of the struggle. On one of the occasions when Lily returned to her, she managed to gasp out, "Can't hold any longer. So tired. Am falling in…."

This was too much for Lily; her little friend could not fall into the dreadful well and so spurred to

definite action, she stooped down, taking hold of Louie's hand she pulled and, with a supreme effort dragged her to safety. Louie lay on the ground at the side of the well, dizzy and exhausted, her clothes torn and her arms bruised.

Now that she was safe, Lily had no hesitation about leaving her and swiftly running, her feet carried her to the house to tell the news of their terrible experience.

Mr Flemmer was in the act of opening his front door, having just arrived from his office, and was looking forward to his dinner. He had a healthy appetite, a Danish trait, and his wife was an excellent cook. As he walked in to the passage he heard Lily's screams. Between her sobs she tried to tell them what had taken place, but it was impossible to follow what she was saying. Only two words were clear, "Louie" and "Well". They were enough for Louie's parents; the whole family, led by Lily and followed by the servants, arrived at the well. Picking up Louie's little huddled figure, Mr Flemmer carried her back to the house. Placing her in his own special arm-chair, he sat down opposite and proceeded to lecture and scold her. "What have you been doing, you naughty girl?" and not waiting for a reply continued "You deserve a whipping; how dare you go near the well?"

This, instead of the love and sympathy she had expected, was too much for Louie; feeling that her father was a very cruel man, she rushed to her mother and, clutching hold of her, began to sob.

"There now, Louie dear, father is not really angry." "Not really angry," shouted Mr Flemmer, "She deserves to be severely punished for going near the well!" "But, Father," said Louie, lifting her tear-stained face, "I didn't mean to be naughty, I didn't know about the well!"

Realising that his anxiety and fright might be causing him to be too severe, he left the room. Mrs Flemmer and Lily bathed the bruises and changed Louie's clothes. Thank God for our mothers!

Dr Fershen, the village doctor, a fine old gentleman with snow white hair who was in constant attendance on Mrs Flemmer or one of her children, was very sorry for the poor little lady, and she very much appreciated his sympathy. When Louie and Jack had been laid up with rheumatic fever, the doctor insisted that Mr Flemmer should send his family to the coast, as it was essential for the children to have sea bathing.

The railway line only came to Cradock during the following year, 1881, so it was necessary for the party to travel by wagon. Charles Anthony, a very fine coloured man, a descendant of the slaves, was engaged to drive Mrs Flemmer, her four children (Louie and her three little brothers) and aunt of Mrs Flemmer's and her niece, and the nursemaid Sannie, to the Kowie. Great were the preparations and great the excitement of Louie and Jack for they were going to have their first sight of the sea, of which they had been told such wonderful stories.

After several days spent on the road and nights in wayside inns, they arrived at their destination. "Let us go and inspect the beach and find a nice place for bathing," said Mrs Flemmer to her aunt. They set out. People who have grown up in the Karroo are extremely ignorant of the sea. "I don't like those breakers," said Aunt Annie. "No," said Mrs Flemmer "and I don't like so many people. Perhaps we can find a quieter place."

The ladies strolled along the beach and, walking for some distance came upon a spot which charmed them both. "I wonder no one is bathing in this lovely spot," said Aunt Annie. "Isn't it beautiful," said Mrs Flemmer, "See how calm it is and so private, not a soul in sight." They gazed at the calm blue water lapping a small stretch of beach and then hurried back to the hotel to fetch the children and give them their first dip in the sea.

Jack was terrified! "Come along, Jack," said his mother. "No, I don't like it; it is too big," replied Jack. "Come," coaxed his mother, "Aunt Annie and I will hold your two hands and you won't be afraid." So saying, Mrs Flemmer and her aunt took hold of the little boy by force and led him into

the water. As they were trying to submerge his body, he called out “Oh! God, save me! Oh, God save me!” It was too much for his tender hearted mother. She decided to allow him to play in the little pools which were left by the tide along the shore.

One day Jack was playing in the pools; Sannie, in charge of the youngest children, sat on the beach watching the rest of the party, who were enjoying the bathing. Suddenly the sea came towards them like a huge mountain. “It is the tide,” shouted Aunt Annie, “All clasp hands and we must run for our lives!” They were swept onto the beach - the tide almost reached Sannie and her charges. As they picked themselves up and turned to watch the receding water, what was their horror and dismay to see a little head far out, bobbing about in the waves.

“Jack, Jack!” they all shouted. They knew that Jack was being carried out to sea and no one there to save him. Before Mrs Flemmer’s cry of agnoized distress had left her lips she was watching Sannie, the little black nursemaid, plunge into the boiling surf, clothes and all, going to what seemed certain death. Will she reach him in time? Those were moments of cruel uncertainty. She has got him! Here she comes, carrying him in her arms, treading with difficulty through the water, her clothes heavy and soaked. Brave little Sannie, you deserve well of life! One wonders whether she was adequately rewarded for so noble and self sacrificing a deed!

Jack was safe and sound in his mother’s arms, too terrified to cry, scratched and bleeding in several places. “We have had such an experience this morning,” said Aunt Annie to her neighbour at dinner and she proceeded to relate what had happened. “My dear lady,” said the astonished man, “You don’t mean to tell me you were bathing…….” mentioning the spot. “Good heavens! The sea there is deep enough to sink a ship! The coast is very dangerous. You say you did not like the breakers but they were your only safety. Where the sea is breaking on the rocks you are safe; where it lies so calm it is because of the great depth. It is indeed a miracle that you are not all lying at the bottom of your calm sea!”

No more sea bathing for Mrs Flemmer. She employed native women to carry the sea water to the Hotel and in this way they got their sea bathing!

Louie’s grandmother, little Betty of the black curly hair, often stayed in the house of her son, Louie’s father. To the great delight of the children she would sit with her knitting, her hands never idle, and tell them about Denmark and lovely Danish fairy-tales. The one they loved best was about the Danish twins - “Florence and Florentina.”

“Come, Jack and Christian,” said Louie, arranging her brothers on stools at her grandmother’s feet, “and here is a stool for Lily; she is anxious to hear about ‘Florence and Florentina’. Please, Grandma, will you begin?”

The old lady smiled at them, no spectacles for those bright eyes and hardly any grey in her pretty black hair which waved on each side of her forehead. “Yes, dear, I’ll begin - I am surprised that you are not tired of the story of

FLORENCE AND FLORENTINA

Florence and Florentina were twins and on their seventh birthday, their mother gave them a basket of cakes and sweets and as a treat allowed them to go down to the sea for the afternoon. But you must not go out in the boat, she said. There is much sea in Denmark; hardly any land and everyone learns to swim and to row. The children promised to be good and to come home in good time.

At sunset they stood and watched the sea, so calm and beautiful was the lovely evening. ‘Oh! How I wish we could go on the sea,’ said Florence and immediately there appeared a boat with a little old woman in it. ‘Come my dears and I will take you for a nice row,’ she said. ‘We won’t go very

far,' said Florentina as they climbed into the boat.

Away they sped. It felt so lovely to be in the boat, skimming over the water. But it was getting late and they remembered their promise to their mother. 'Please will you turn back now?' they begged the old woman. 'Oh no!' she said, 'you are my little children now.' They begged and they pleaded and then wept, but the old woman rowed on and on, until they reached land, and then she walked so quickly that they stumbled and fell as they tried to keep up with her. At last they reached her funny little house. She gave them a piece of dry bread and a mug of water for their supper and they lay down on the bare ground and cried themselves to sleep.

The next morning she woke them early with more dry bread and water. Then she showed them a bag of peas and beans all mixed and said, 'You must separate these peas and beans and if when I come home tonight you have not finished, you will be soundly whipped and put to bed without any supper.' So saying she left them.

They sat and cried and cried. Presently they heard a noise and on looking up they saw a little dove flying against the window, trying to get in. Up jumped Florentine and opened the window. This was a fairy dove and could talk. In he flew and hopped about on the table.

'What is the matter, little ones? Why are you crying so?' 'Oh! See,' they said, 'we have to separate all these beans and peas. We cannot do it and if it is not done the old woman is going to whip us and put us to bed without any supper.'

'Well,' said the dove, 'if you sit and cry it will never be done. Let us set to work. I will help you and I will eat some of the peas and take some home to my children. In this way we will have the work done when the old woman returns.'

They set to work in real earnest and at sunset the task was completed. The dove flew away and the children waited for the old woman's return. When she came she was very pleased, saying, 'You have been good children,' and gave them their supper and again they cried themselves to sleep as they thought of their mother and father and their dear little white beds at home.

The next morning the old woman put out two bags of mixed beans and peas, saying, 'Now mind, a good whipping and no supper if these beans and peas are not in separate bags by tonight.' Off she went. The two children looked at the bags in dismay. 'Even if the dove does come again, I am sure we can never do two bags,' said Florence.

They watched the window and great was their joy to see the little dove flying swiftly to them. They welcomed it with grateful hearts 'See,' they both cried, 'she has left us all this to do. We shall never be able to finish tonight!' 'No,' said the dove, 'it is too much, we must run away. Get a bottle of water and a stick and follow me as fast as you can. You must keep looking back and if you see the old woman coming you must tell me.'

They set off, the little dove flying ahead to show them the way and the two children following as fast as they could. By-and-bye Florence said, 'Oh! I see the old woman coming!' 'Throw the stick over your shoulder,' said the dove. She did so and immediately there was a dense forest behind them and the old woman had to go home to fetch her axe to chop a path for herself through the thick trees. On the little dove flew and the children followed as fast as they could. Then Florence again said, 'I see the old woman coming!' 'Pour the water out of the bottle over your shoulder,' said the dove. She did so and there was a lake and the old woman had to go home to fetch her boat and row across the lake.

After a while Florentina shouted, 'Oh! I see the old woman coming!' 'Throw the bottle over your

shoulder,' said the little dove. This was done and there was a big glass mountain behind them and the old woman had to go home to fetch her snow shoes in order to climb the glass mountain. On and on flew the little dove, the children following as fast as they could. At last, just as the sun was setting and their father and mother were sitting down to their supper, the children dashed into their home. Shouting and weeping for joy, they fell into their parents' arms and told their experiences.

The little dove was given a good feed and then it flew away to its home."
"Oh! Thank you so much Grandmama, it is a lovely story. Now I am going to do my knitting. Lily, did you know I could knit? Yes Grandmama is teaching me. I am going to knit a pair of socks for my doll and then a pair for Baby," said the ambitious little girl, as she sat down beside her grandmother with her knitting.

"I do wish it wasn't Sunday tomorrow; I hate Sundays," said Louie. "My dear," said her grandmother, "that is very wicked of you, you should love Sunday. Tell me why you hate it?" "Because Mother goes to Church and stays away such a long time; I hate her to go away," was the reply. "I am afraid you are a very naughty girl, always wanting your mother," said the old lady.

On Sunday the elder members of the family set off for the morning service. A long dreary time it was for Louie. At last she thought, "I am sure mother must be coming now, I'll just go into the street and meet her." When Louie reached the front gate she found it locked! As if bolts and bars could stop her from going to her beloved mother! She looked at the rails; the space between looked quite big enough for her little body. Taking hold of two of the rails with her hands, she tried to push her head between them. Instead of it going through, it stuck! She could not draw it back! Her screams of pain and fright brought the servants to the scene. They tried to push her through, or pull her back, but in vain. The situation was too awful! "Will they ever be able to get me out?" thought Louie, "Perhaps I'll have to spend the rest of my life fixed between two bars! What will mother think when she finds me like this?"……

"I wonder what all those people are doing in front of our house," said Mr Flemmer as he turned into Frere Street and watched the increasing crowd. "I don't know, I locked the gate, here is the key. I did not want the children to run about the street. Oh, dear!" exclaimed poor Mrs Flemmer, "it would have been better to have left the gate open."

There was Louie presenting a most fearsome sight, her face red and swollen with crying. Each of her family felt quite sure that he/she knew just how to get her out, but at last her father exclaimed, "It is useless, we must have the blacksmith, I'll go for him myself. Being Sunday he may not come unless he is made to realise the seriousness of the situation."

Mr Flemmer soon returned with the smith and his tools. The iron railing was sawn through while Mrs Flemmer held Louie, giving her all the assurance and comfort she could. At last the task was completed and the poor child freed!

A few days later a little native child, seeing a toy lying within the rails, tried to creep through and got stuck in the same way that Louie had. Mrs Flemmer was wondering what to do when a passing native woman came up. Pushing the child's shoulders through, it's body easily followed. "How stupid the English are," she said, "where the head will go the body will follow."

There was great excitement in Cradock in the year 1881, when the railway was opened. "Come along, Jack and Louie," said their father one day. "We are going down to the station to see the first train to arrive in Cradock." "Oh! Father, how exciting," said Louie, 'what does it look like?" "Wait till you get there my dear, and you will see."

Jack and Louie chattered all the way to the station about the wonderful train they were going to see. Arrived on the improvised platform, they clung to their father's hand as the train came roaring,

clanking and whistling into the station.

Their father answered their many childish questions and gave them the thrill of their lives as he showed them all the compartments of the box coaches, explaining to them that one had to carry one's own basket of food, to be used between the different stations where meals would be supplied. "How does it go?" asked Jack. "Come along and I will show you," said his father and taking them along to the engine he asked the driver to open his furnace. The children were terrified to see the roaring inferno and Louie begged her father to take her away.

"The Engineers are now building the line to Tafelberg," said Mr Flemmer, "and we will soon be able to go by train to see your Grannie, instead of going by cart and getting so tired with the long drive." "Oh! Father! Will you take me in the train with you?" asked Louie. "I expect I will," answered her father, "if you don't fall into wells or get your head stuck between iron rails again." "No father, I promise you I won't; I should love to go in the train with you to Tafelberg."

The following year Louie and her father, with the engineer were in the first train to run from Cradock to Tafelberg, a journey of fifty miles. They travelled in an open truck and Mr Flemmer carried a pass, a blank card from a pack of playing cards - on which was written, "Pass Mr Flemmer and party." This unique ticket is still treasured by Louie as a memento of her first railway journey.

She spent two weeks with her grandparents at Tafelberg hall, the home where her mother passed her childhood, and was very happy playing with cousins of her own age. Then there were two happy weeks with an aunt at Plaat River, five miles from Tafelberg, the dear little house her mother had been so sad to leave many years before, when she and her husband had gone to Steynsberg to take care of his mother. Louie loved the farm life and two years later, when her father decided, for business reasons to leave Cradock and return to Plaat River, she was wild with excitement.

"Father," she exclaimed, "I want you please to give me a little calf." "Yes certainly," was the reply, "but you must first have a name for it." "I have one already, I will call it 'Buttercup'." Many years later the progeny of 'Buttercup' helped Louie buy her trousseau.

The family had been increased by two sisters and a brother when the move to Plaat River was made. The children loved the wild, free farm life - the old Dutch house with its mud walls, three feet thick, and its thatched roof. In front of the house was a water furrow planted with trees, and beyond, a big garden with fruit and vegetables. They found the house rather small and Mr Flemmer made arrangements for a bathroom which, though primitive and unique, was very satisfactory. Under the trees a canvas structure was set up, in the roof of which was a tank. It was filled with water from the furrow. By pulling a string a torrent of water was released and one had a shower bath.

A tutor was engaged for Jack and Christian while Louie did her lessons with her mother. She proved herself to be very helpful with the children. One day Mrs Flemmer said, "Louie, I am going to be very busy and I want you to take charge of Claude. It is too hot for you to go out and I don't want father to be disturbed as he is reading his paper so take baby to your room and keep him amused."

Louie walked off proudly carrying Claude, a lovely boy a year old, with rosy cheeks, blue eyes and fair hair. She was devoted to this baby brother and nothing pleased her more than being put in charge of him. All through the long afternoon she exerted herself for his amusement but at last she came to the end of her resources and he was fretful. She had seen grown-up people tossing him in the air, and remembering how much he loved it, she did the same. Each time she threw him up he would gurgle and shout with delight. He was thrown higher and higher and then, Louie's heart seemed to stand still; she realised that she had thrown him too high! He was falling beyond her reach and would land on the hard clay floor. With a desperate effort she managed to lean far back, grabbing him by his clothes, she drew him into her arms and collapsed on the floor with a sharp pain in her back. Putting Claude down she lay on her bed, feeling very distressed and frightened.

Vowing to herself in her childish way that as long as she lived she would never toss a baby again, she decided not to tell her mother anything about the afternoon's experience. Whenever she felt the pain her conscience pricked her, but still she did not tell, and so the months passed on.

One afternoon a carriage drew up at the front door. The children ran out in great excitement to find Mr Distin there. "Hello Grandfather!" called Jack, while Louie ran off to tell her mother of his arrival. "Now, my little man, have you learned to ride?" he asked Jack. "Oh, yes," replied the boy, "Father lets me go on his pony every day when he comes home and I ride to the stable." "Splendid," said grandpa, "but now run away, my dears, while I talk to your mother."

When they were alone, he turned to his daughter. "Don't look so worried, my dear, I have only good news for you. I have decided to have a Government farm School. There are my three orphan grandchildren, and my own little daughter, but to have a Government Grant, there must be five children, so if you will allow Louie to come to us, we shall be very pleased, and by so doing, you enable me to obtain Government assistance."

"Thank you very much Papa," said Mrs Flemmer, "I will gladly accept your offer as I am very worried about Louie's schooling. I am unable to give her the time she requires."

"Well, that is settled, my dear," he replied, "the governess will arrive after Christmas, and that gives you plenty of time to get Louie ready."

"Come along, Louie and Christian," shouted Jack, "Father says they are going to thrash the wheat and we can go and watch." The children stood all day greatly interested in the process. The thrashing floor was a piece of ground enclosed by flat stones standing on end, forming a circle. This area was swept, beaten and watered, until it was as smooth and clean as a piece of glass. Bundles of wheat were scattered over the floor and a number of horses driven in and chased round and round, their tramping feet breaking up the ears of corn. The children were fascinated and greatly intrigued with the men who wielded the long whip. He would flick a horse here and there, always keeping up the pace and not allowing any of the horses to be idle. Then came the winnowing. How they loved watching the straw being lifted on the long forks and tossed in the air to be blown away where it fell into a heap a little distance off, while the grain fell on the floor. What games they played in the straw which rose as high and big as a house.

"Louie, why are you lying there so still?" asked Jack as he came upon her in a quiet corner to which she had crept in order to be alone. "My back is hurting me so. Help me up, I am going straight home to tell Mama about it." At last the confession was made, and Louie's mind was much relieved, though her elders had not been nearly so concerned as she had expected them to be. "I think you are just suffering growing pains," said her father.

Christmas came and went and the preparations for school kept Mrs Flemmer busy. Louie was very proud of the little trunk her father bought her and which was used for her journeys to school.

When school had started, every Sunday afternoon saw the cape cart inspanned and the entire family set off to take Louie to school at Tafelberg Hall. She was not very fond of her school work but loved her music lessons. On Friday afternoons the family arrived to take her home. Mrs Flemmer was very happy to feel that Louie was being educated and yet able to spend her week-ends at home.

One day the sound of a cart drawing up at the front door sent Jack running to see who had come. "Mother, it is Auntie," he shouted as he brought the visitor in. "How nice of you to come and see us," said Mrs Flemmer embracing her sister, "You are just in time for tea. Come along, we are all in the dining room." "How is Louie?" asked Mr Flemmer. "Oh! She is lying on the broad of her back and can't walk. This is what I came to tell you; she can't go to school."

“Jack,” said Mr Flemmer, without waiting for further details, “run out my boy, and tell Piet to inspan as quickly as possible, and when we’ve finished tea, we will take mother with us and fetch Louie.”

The drive was agony for Louie. The next day she and her mother left by train for Cradock, where, after examination the doctor said she was suffering from curvature of the spine. “She cannot go back to school; in fact, she must lie down all the time,” he said. “By-and-bye I will get a surgical jacket for her and then she will be able to move about again.”

The family were greatly distressed on hearing the doctor’s verdict. Mrs Flemmer arranged a small narrow bed in the sitting room where Louie lay all day. What a blessing it was that a good, kind uncle came to see her! “You poor child,” he exclaimed, “ You must be dreadfully hot lying on that bed! I’ll send you one of my cane chairs.”

True to his word, the next day Louie was transferred to the cool comfortable cane lounge chair, where she was forced to spend a long weary year. Her eyes were affected and ached so continuously that she was unable to read; and her arm too ached badly, so she was unable to knit. Her mother’s love and devotion were all her comfort, and her religious teaching had been such that the child had no fear of death, for death was heaven, a place where there was no pain, only peace and beauty. She used to long to die. Many a night when she dropped off to sleep she was quite sure that God would send one of his beautiful angels to take her to that “Better Land” and in the morning when she awoke she would look round at the old familiar bedroom with a feeling of disappointment. She loved her mother to read, but that little woman’s bust fingers could not be spared from her many tasks. She would bring her sewing and sit by Louie’s chair and tell her lovely stories, or they would chat away by the hour. Never once was there any reproach or blame for this trouble which Louie had brought upon herself.

The three youngest children were a great amusement to the little invalid. She would tell them stories and taught the little sisters their letters. She still loved her dolls, her favourite being a tiny china doll about three inches long with china limbs which were jointed. It was kept in a blue box with all the wonderful and beautiful clothes her mother’s busy fingers still found time to make for her.

She enjoyed seeing her relations from Tafelberg Hall. They were all kind and so good to her and would always read a chapter from the book which she kept beside her in readiness. “Louie,” said an aunt who was only two years her senior, “I had such a lovely dream about you last night. I dreamed that you were grown up; that you were quite strong and well and always dressed in grey, and everybody loved you.” A wonderful impression that dream made on Louie - she has always been grateful to her aunt for remembering it and telling it to her.

“I have such a lovely piece of news for you, Louie,” said her mother, coming into the room with an open letter in her hand. “My great friend, Mrs Andrews, is sending her little daughter, Dorothy, to spend a few weeks with us. She is arriving on Wednesday, in three days’ time!” “Oh! Mother how lovely, may she sleep in my room?” “Yes, dear, I am sure she will like that.” “How old is she, and I wonder what she will be like?” asked Louie. “Well, you will soon find out, but I am sure you will love her.”

With what impatience Louie awaited the arrival of Dorothy; it seemed the day would never come! And then one morning she was all excitement, listening for the sound of the cart wheels when her father would return from the station, a mile off, with Dorothy.

At Last! The two little girls clasped hands, looking at each other with interest and enquiry. Louie saw a child of ten with dark brown eyes, soft brown hair and rosy cheeks. The prettiest girl she had ever seen, thought Louie; and her heart went out to Dorothy who was to become her lifelong

friend.

The day after she arrived, Dorothy was shown the bathroom and departed with towels and soap. After a while she came rushing back to Louie, who was waiting for her mother to dress. “Oh! Louie,” she exclaimed, “I’ve had such a fright! I’ve never seen a shower bath before and when I pulled the string the water made such a noise falling into the bath, that I nearly died.” How the little girls laughed at Dorothy’s experience.

Dorothy, though so young a child, was an excellent reader. It was the greatest pleasure for Louie to lie and listen while she read story after story. One day she read from a book called “Sunshine”, the story of a boy whose parents lived in India. He was sent to his uncle to be educated; he was heart-broken at parting from his parents and as he had been thoroughly spoilt and was quite uncontrolled, he found his new life very difficult. On coming into the hall one day, he saw an envelope lying on the table addressed to his uncle. He knew it was a foreign telegram and wondered if it would not be something for him - perhaps about his mother whom he adored. Picking up a book he tried to read - but it was useless. He could not resist the temptation - he tore open the envelope and read that his mother had died.

Both little girls had tears in their eyes. “Oh!” said Dorothy, “it is too sad. I can’t read any more. How dreadful it would be if anything like that happened to me! Oh! Louie I could not bear my mother to die, I do love her so - my darling, darling mother. I did not want to leave her but she said I must come and so I came - I wish I was going home tomorrow.”

Fortunately Jack and Christian, who were always trying to coax Dorothy out to play with them, arrived and carried off the little visitor. She never really enjoyed these outdoor games because she could not rid herself of the thought of the child spending her life lying down. Louie found her a dear, unselfish companion and shed bitter tears when the day came for her to go to an aunt who lived thirty miles away.
During the following week Louie missed her mother’s bright smile. “Is anything the matter?” she asked, “you look so sad.” “Darling,” replied Mrs Flemmer, “I hardly like to tell you: I’ve had such sad news. Dorothy’s mother is dead.” “Oh! Mother,” said Louie, bursting into tears, “I cannot bear it,” she sobbed. “But, my dear child, I know it is very sad, but why should you be so upset?”

Between her sobs Louie told of the story they had read together of the little boy from India, whose mother had died, and how upset Dorothy had been and what she had said. “And now it has happened just like the little boy in the story,” sobbed Louie. “She is away from home and her mother has died. My poor, poor Dorothy!” And she buried her face in her pillows and wept bitterly.

“Come dear,” said her mother, “Don’t cry so. Let us talk about Dorothy. What else did she tell you?” “She told me about her little twin sisters and how she loved them and liked helping her mother. She said her mother was a darling, darling mother.” And so they talked until Louie was comforted.

The poor child had a dreadful experience when she was put into plaster-of-paris. She stood for hours, clad only in a vest while the doctor wrapped broad thick bandages, which had been dipped into plaster-of-paris, round and round her thin little body.

At length she was helped back on to the bed. No one seemed to realise how miserable and uncomfortable she was. She was left alone for the night, not even a bell at her bedside, during those long dark hours. It was impossible to sleep. Being encased in the hard plaster-of-paris, she could not turn on to her side so the night was spent on her back.

Next morning the doctor arrived with his instruments and, using a saw, he cut through the plaster-of-paris, and with difficulty managed to drag it off. “Now,” he said, rubbing his hands in a satisfied way, “I am sending this to Cape Town as a model for the jacket they are going to make for you. When you have the jacket you will be able to run about again.”

Louie looked forward to that day with intense longing.

“Oh! Grandpapa, I am so glad you’ve come,” said Louie as Mr Distin walked into the sitting room at Plaat River, where she lay on her lounge chair, “Everyone has gone to Middelburg, but they will be back before sunset. The little ones have been playing in here to keep me company. Take the children away, Katie, and tell cook to bring tea.”

“How are you, my dear?” asked Mr Distin, sitting down beside the child’s couch. “Oh! I am ever so much better, thank you grandpapa. I shall be able to sit down and pour your tea when it comes.”

“What! Are you allowed to sit up?”

“Yes, and next month, when my surgical jacket arrives from Cape Town , I shall be able to walk about.”

“Splendid,” exclaimed grandpapa, “How long have you been lying here?” “Nearly a year; it will be a year next month, November.”

“You poor little thing, you have had a rough time.”

“Oh! No, grandpapa, everybody has been so kind to me and now I hardly feel any pain.”

After an enjoyable tea Louie said, “Grandpapa, please tell me a story.”

“A story, my dear, I don’t know any stories.”

“Well, tell me about when you were a little boy.”

“Oh! That is such a long time ago, I’ve forgotten.”

“Then tell me something that happened when you were big.”

“Now, let me see,” said the old gentleman, “yes, perhaps this will amuse you.”

“Some years ago, before we had the railway and telegraph, it was very difficult to get in touch with the police and I was having a great deal of difficulty with sheep-stealing. Try as I would, I could not find the thief. At last I thought of a plan. I had the whole staff, every man on the farm assembled in the yard. There they stood in a long row and I addressed them. ‘I have not been able to catch the thief who is killing my sheep but I have got a fowl, a snow white rooster, who is going to tell me who the thief is.’”
“But, grandpapa,” interrupted Louie, “how funny!”

“Yes, my dear, but you must not interrupt me and you will see what a clever fowl I had. I said to the men, ‘A fowl is going to tell me who the thief is. You see that storeroom over there? Inside is a three-legged pot, in the pot is a fowl. You are going to take it in turns to go into the room, one at a time; you must lift the lid for the fowl to see you, and when you’ve all been in there, the fowl will tell me the name of the thief. Now, Jacob, you are the oldest and at the head of the row, so you must go in first.’ Jacob went in and all the men followed in turn. When the last man returned, I said, ‘Now I am going in and will come back and tell you the name of the thief.’

I walked into the storeroom and in a few minutes returned. ‘Hendrick!’ I roared in a voice of thunder, ‘you are the thief!’ ‘Oh! Please baas! Please baas!’ pleaded Hendrick, grovelling about on his knees in the dust, ‘Please forgive me, please baas.’

He was in abject terror and the rest of the men were scared out of their wits. Anything occult appeals to the native mind."

"Yes, but Grandpapa…."

"Wait a minute, my dear, and I will tell you how I did it. When I placed the fowl in the pot, your uncle and I made a hole in the wall, which separates the storeroom from the skinroom. He sat in the skinroom looking through this hole. I told him to watch each man as he came in and 'The thief,' said I, 'will not lift the lid. Remember his name, and when all the men have been in, I will come to you and you will tell me the name of the man who did not open the pot.' When I went in, your uncle said, 'The only man who did not lift the lid was Hendrick; he walked round the pot and then went out.' Of course he would not lift the lid because he really believed the fowl would be able to tell me what I wanted to know, and thought that by not showing his face to the fowl, he would be keeping his secret. This deceit was just what gave him away."

"Oh! I do think that was very clever of you, grandpapa. Mother told me once how when you were playing hide-and-seek with your children, you put Uncle Harry into your big safe and then could not get it open."

"Yes, that was a dreadful experience; I could not work the combination simply because I lost my head.

"Let this be a warning to you and take for your motto 'Keep Cool'. If one could keep cool, one would always be master of the situation. Losing one's head is the undoing of most people. I had to call Uncle Willie, wasn't that absurd? He, of course, opened the safe without any difficulty. The trouble was that as soon as I began to work the combination the thought came over me, 'How long was it since I shut Harry in - what should I find - perhaps he had been suffocated.' However the little chap was alright.

"Now I will tell you a story with a moral:

"Once upon a time there was a beautiful garden. Running through it from end to end was a narrow path. On each side of the path grew the most beautiful flowers. A girl was taken there by her fairy godmother who, on opening the gate, said - 'Now, my dear, you must walk along the path to the gate at the other end and you may pick one flower - remember only one!'

"'Oh! How beautiful,' exclaimed the girl, 'I'll pick this one.' She dashed forward but in the act of stretching out her hand she saw another flower she thought more beautiful; then she saw another and so on and on she went. She reached the further gate and realised she had to pass out. She had not picked a single flower! She had missed her opportunity.

"As you go through life, Louie, always remember:

'Gather the roses while you may,
Today, my friend, today.'"

And so they chatted through the long afternoon. Louie was very fond of her grandfather and among her treasures are letters which he wrote to her during each of her visits to England. She received the first one when she was only four years old, dated 1878.

Once more November: Every day the surgical jacket from Cape Town was anxiously expected. At last a big square packing case arrived. This was opened but it was with feelings of bitter disappointment that Louie beheld the contents. Poor Louie, it seemed too much! Instead of a nice

comfortable jacket, here was the plaster-of-paris model covered with chamois leather; three large straps and buckles across the front and padding under the arms and where it would rest on her hips. The ghastly thing!

There was tragedy in her eyes as Louie sat and gazed at it. The problem was how to put it on. “I know, mother,” said Louie, “put it on the floor, I’ll step into it and you can pull it up.” This was done and Louie beheld herself. Could anything be more awful!?! ……Her thin legs, thin arms and face and her trunk a solid block! Poor child, the misery and agony of the situation was almost unbearable. She had to go back to her couch for weeks while clothes were being made which would fit over the dreadful plaster-of-paris model.

“Of course,” said the doctor, “there has been a mistake; they should have used this as a model for the jacket.” But the fact of there having been a mistake did not help Louie, or make it any easier for her. Nobody can ever know the heartache and suffering that having such an awful figure caused her.

After she went back to school, one of her school companions asked the new governess, “When you first saw Louie, did you notice how fat she was?” “No,” answered the governess, “I thought what a straight back she had,” What joy these little grains of comfort were to Louie!

At last the year was passed and the dreadful plaster-of-paris jacket was discarded. What a relief to the poor child and what a pleasure to wear clothes fitting her natural figure. She was once more a glad and happy girl.

Mr Flemmer decided to have a Government Farm School on his farm for his six children. One of the outside rooms was arranged as a schoolroom and a Governess engaged. Louie’s weekly drives to and from Tafelberg Hall ceased, but she often spent a week-end or a short holiday with her grandparents. The ambition of her life was to possess a Teacher’s Certificate and to be a governess in some interesting home where there would be delightful children to each - she was devoted to children.

At the end of the third year of the School at Plaat River, Louie sat for the examination. To do this she had to go to Port Elizabeth by train, a journey which occupied the whole night. There she stayed in her governess’ home. They were very kind to her. She sat for the examination and failed!

“You have not the examination temperament,” said her father, “You had better give up your ideas and come home and teach the children. You know as much as your mother did when she left school.” “No, Father, I am determined to try again. I am sure the Governess we have is too young and inexperienced. Why, she is only four months older than me. You have no idea how Jack and Christian tease her and she does not see through them but argues with them instead of finding out that they have not done their lessons. I am sure that if I go to Rocklands Girls School in Cradock, as a pupil teacher, I shall be able to get this Certificate,” replied Louie.

“I think it is quite unnecessary. Mother and I would like to have you at home instead of a stranger in the house.”

“When I have the certificate I’ll come home and teach the children,” and Louie saw her dreams of that romantic home with its wonderful children she was to teach, fade into nothingness.

Everything was arranged and she settled to work at Rocklands. She loved the life, the teachers and the girls. She wished she were a teacher on the permanent staff, and felt that if that wish could be attained, she would have reached the zenith of her ambition. She loved the sound of the ringing bell, which each half hour made her change her occupation; the noise of the girls as they passed upstairs to the dormitories. The life appealed to her and she was sorry for those who did

not live at Rocklands.

Louie made many dear friends during this year and also lost one. The dear old Danish grandmother at the age of seventy four passed away. She, “little Betty of the black wavy hair”, had never worn spectacles and her hair was only slightly grey, still with beautiful waves on each side of her forehead.

At the end of the year Louie sat for the examination and waited with the greatest anxiety and impatience for the result. Alas and alack! FAILED!! Her father was very annoyed - which she thought unfair - she had done all the hard work and had to suffer the bitter disappointment of failure. She would get into such a state of nervous excitement whilst writing for an examination that she was quite ill.

Now she was willing to take over the school at Plaat River. She loved teaching. Jack had left home to work in Johannesburg. Christian was in her schoolroom for six months and left to help his father with the farming. She had two sisters and little Claude and four children whose homes were near Tafelberg Station, and they walked down to school every day.

“Oh! Father, isn’t this splendid of Dr Muir, the Superintendent of Education,” said Louie one day. “he is giving us all a chance to hold a Teacher’s Certificate.” “Are you still worrying about that wretched Certificate?” said her father, as he took the circular from her. Louie continued, “Yes, I am going to try until I get it, and this seems a possible way. See, Dr Muir is arranging for lectures to be held at different centres during the holidays, for uncertified teachers. I am going to fill in this form at once, and will go to Grahamstown for the June holidays and attend the lectures there.”

“Oh! Very well, if you are so determined.”

Fortunately Louie was able to stay with friends, but, unfortunately, her friends’ home was a very long way from the lecture hall. She engaged a cab to fetch her every day but once or twice the cab failed to keep the engagement and she had to walk the distance. She thoroughly enjoyed the lectures and was much interested in the number of women who were attending, amongst whom she found two who were known to her.

During this course of lectures she had a curious experience. The class was given a book on Elocution and the English lecturer chose a piece to be prepared for the next day. “I will call upon any one of you,” he said….. “to read a paragraph.”

Louie set to work on this piece of reading. She read it aloud about half a dozen times, determined to know every word and be sure of full marks for reading at any rate. Then, closing the book and her eyes, she thought, “If only I could know which paragraph he will tell me to read, I would learn it off by heart! I am going to choose a paragraph and it must be the one he is going to give me.”

She opened the book and her eyes fell on paragraph 8. This she read aloud about twenty times.

The next day the class assembled in the English Lecture room. The Professor stood at his desk, opened his book and said, “Now is there any young lady who will begin? Ah! That’s right!” as a brave woman stood up to read the first paragraph. “That will do - will some one else volunteer to read? No…nobody! Well, I have a list of your names before me and I am just going to call on the name on which my pencil falls and that person must read.”

Down went the pencil, a name was called, and the young woman stood up and read. Paragraph after paragraph - nearer and nearer came the paragraph which Louie had prepared…At last No 7 is read. “Now,” said Louie to herself, “He is going to tell you to read,” and she held the book in readiness to stand up.

“Louie Flemmer!”

Poor Louie! She nearly passed out but managed to pull herself together thinking, “This is just what I have wished for, prayed for. I know it and, without mistake, I’ll read it,”….And she did!

Again the anxious waiting for the results. One night Louie, having retired early, was still awake, lying in the dark, when there was a knock at her door. Her father stood there with a newspaper in his hand. “Here you are, my dear child, here is your name…..Congratulations! You have got your wish at last and will soon have that certificate. Go to sleep, Good-night!”

At last! At last! To think that there would be no more examinations!

With a thankful heart Louie fell asleep.

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CHAPTER IV

THEY

Louie’s two young sisters, Edith and Olive, watched her as she packed a small portmanteau - the same portmanteau that she had used in the old days when she went to school at Tafelberg. “Yes,” she said in answer to their questions, “I am going to stay for the week-end. Father is going to drive me up to Tafelberg and as there will be room in the cart, you may both come, so run away and dress.”

The same big old Cape cart, the same dear old cart horses, which jogged along at a slow pace which nothing, not even a whip, could induce them to change. These horses had become so knowing that no driver could prevent them slowing down when they were about to pass a vehicle or a pedestrian on the road. They seemed to have the intelligence to know that it was friendly to stop and greet people. Their master, Mr Flemmer, certainly did not object; being of the most friendly disposition, he was always ready for a chat with anyone he happened to meet on the road. The horses went by the peculiar names of “Bokkie”, which means little buck, and “Stopper” one who stops.

“We shall be just in time for tea,” said Louie as she sprang from the cart when it drew up in the carriage drive in front of her grandfather’s fine old farm house, Tafelberg Hall. They received a warm welcome and after a tea of delicious buttered toast and cakes, Mr Flemmer and the children drove home.

“Come, Louie,” said her cousin, Ida, “it is such a lovely afternoon, let us go down to the big garden.” “I should love to do that,” said Louie, “but first show me your tame springbok.” “Come along then, it is in the top garden, and I’ll take its bottle of milk with me.” Ida led the way to the kitchen where she collected the bottle of milk and passing through the back premises, the girls reached the garden.

“Sabie! Sabie!” called Ida. After a few minutes the little animal came bounding towards them, leaping and springing high in the air, opening the white hairs which run down the middle of the back. This is a sign of great pleasure; if the buck is unhappy or ill, that part of its back can hardly be seen so tightly is it pinched in.

“How pretty it is,” said Louie, as she watched the little thing drink from an ordinary bottle to which a

teat had been attached. “Doesn’t it do any mischief?” “Oh! Yes, it nibbles all the heads off the flowers, that is why it has to remain in this part of the garden, where there are only trees and shrubs. Now, Sabie, you’ve had quite enough supper.”

Passing around the side of the house, the girls descended a flight of steps, on either side of which ran a long terrace about three feet wide and two feet high. On these terraces were masses of verbena, their riotous growth making a beautiful splash of colour as they grew in wild profusion over the stones of the terrace, trailing down into the gravelled road. On the terraces were trees, shrubs and flowers, also a beautiful bush of heliotrope.

They crossed the gravelled carriage drive and passed between two terraced gardens, in which grew trees and flowers in wild profusion. Here they came to a large pond. At the one end was a very big weeping willow tree, whose enormous rough stem showed up against the soft, green foliage of the shrubs growing beyond; its long overhanging, feathery branches trailing on the surface of the water made a perfect picture. The pond was almost surrounded by trees, poplars and mimosa thorn trees. The girls paused to admire the lovely scene. They reached the green gate set in a stone wall and entered the garden - a beautiful old garden. A long walk running from end to end was bordered on either side by trees of every description; cypress, almonds, walnuts, pear trees and grape vines - midway along this path was a wooden seat. Another path led through an orange grove to a second seat under three immense Adam Fig Trees. The stems and branches of these trees were covered with initials, sometimes names and dates, carved by relations and friends of Mr and Mrs Distin. A clergyman once said of these old fig trees, “I think there are as many names on these trees as there are in a Family Bible.”

September is a perfect month in the Karroo. The weather is delightful, the cold of winter past, and the intense heat of the summer still far off. The trees and flowers, all bursting into leaf and bud are a gorgeous sight after the winter months. The scent of this budding life and the sound of the birds as they twittered about the trees and called their mates, made the old garden seem a veritable Paradise. Nothing of this beauty was lost on the two girls as they strolled up one path and down another, admiring the beautifully shaded blossoms of the fruit tress.

“How pretty the orange trees are,” exclaimed Louie, “see the buds. What a lovely scent and how strange to have the blossoms and all this lovely golden fruit at the same time. I think the orange tree is one of the prettiest of the fruit trees. Oh! Listen! I love the cooing of the turtle doves.”

As they were coming up the centre path, Louie observed a young man in the distance, a stranger, attending to a clutch of ostrich chicks. “Who is that?” asked Louie, to whom a stranger was always an object of great interest. She could not bear to hear her friends or relations talk of someone she had not met. When this happened, she became almost beside herself with anxiety to meet the person mentioned. This trait became a complex and she explained the feeling by saying, “I am so afraid I may miss someone nice.”

“Didn’t you hear that a young man was coming from the Transvaal to work on uncle’s farm?” was Ida’s answer to Louie’s question. “Yes, I did hear about that.” “Well, there he is - come along and I’ll introduce you to Jim Rous.” So saying, Ida left the path, followed by Louie. They crossed the intervening space and stood beside the young man, who was putting prickly pear pieces into a machine which cut the leaves into small pieces - these were being given to the ostrich chicks.

“Mr Rous, allow me to introduce you to Miss Flemmer.”

“How do you do? I’m afraid I can’t shake hands, I’m all mucked up with the juice from these leaves.”

“I hope you are liking the Karroo.”

“Yes, thanks, very much indeed.”

“You will meet again,” said Ida, “Miss Flemmer is staying for the week-end.”

The grey eyes of the young man met the look of interest from the brown eyes fixed on him.

The following morning, as they sat at breakfast, Mrs Distin turned to her husband, “Excuse me, my dear, there is something on the stove which needs my attention.” So saying, she rose and left the room.

“Mr Rous, do tell us some of your Transvaal stories,” begged Ida, “I loved your stories about Scotty Smith. Louie you must get Mr Rous to tell you his adventures with Scotty Smith some time. Now Mr Rous, do tell us something.”

“I feel you don’t believe my Transvaal yarns.”

“Never mind. I like hearing them. Come now, begin.”

Encouraged, he said: “I’ll tell you a very extraordinary experience a man had, which I can hardly believe myself, so I won’t blame you if you don’t believe it.”

“Oh! How lovely. Do begin or you will be rushing off to your work before you reach the end.”

“Here’s for the story,” said Jim. “A number of Dutch families were camping on the side of the Crocodile River in the Transvaal. One afternoon the men went down to the river to bathe. Leaving their clothes on the bank, they plunged into the water. After a delightful swim they proceeded to dress - then it was they missed one of their companions. They called, they searched, but there was no sign of the missing man.
“Sadly they gathered up his clothes. A solemn procession reached the camp with the tragic news that a man was lost - either drowned or eaten by a crocodile. There was great weeping and wailing. The dejected occupants of the camp sat around the fire, too sad to eat, or to tell their usual fire-side stories. As they talked of their departed friend they were startled by hearing the voice of the man they thought to be dead, shouting ‘Bring my clothes! Bring my clothes!’

“No ghost could be asking for clothes, so one of the men rushed off into the bush in the direction of the voice. There he found the naked man and, helping him into his clothes, he hurried him back to the circle of his friends. He sprawled in front of the fire, drinking a mug of steaming hot coffee. As soon as he had sufficiently recovered, he satisfied their curiosity by telling them his experience.

“A crocodile caught me alright. I’ll show you fellows the marks of his teeth later on. I can only think that it had had a meal, so instead of eating me, it swam with me under the water and left me on the ledge in the side of the bank; the ledge was above the water mark. There I lay. When I got used to the gloomy place, I crawled about and examined the crocodile’s pantry. What was my joy when I discovered a chink of light. I realised that I was near the surface, so I got to work and with great difficulty, dug myself out and here I am!!”

“Oh! That does seem an impossible story; but never mind……” The sentence was never finished. Those at the breakfast table were startled by screams and shouts coming from the native servants in the kitchen. Something dreadful must be happening. In great confusion they all jumped up, rushed through the big dining room and down a short passage into the kitchen.

What was their horror to see Mrs Distin in flames. With marvellous presence of mind and dexterity for so old a gentleman, Mr Distin wrapped his jacket around his wife, thus extinguishing the flames. Whilst standing in front of the stove, Mrs Distin was unaware that a piece of burning wood

had fallen out and in a moment her light summer frock was ablaze. She was helped to her room and put to bed.

But tragically enough there was no oil in the house. Jim sprang on to his horse Moscow and raced for the station four miles off, where there was a little wayside shop. There were thirteen gates to be opened and closed but Jim never drew rein - he dug spurs into his horse and leaped the gates. When he reached the shop, he threw himself from the panting animal, dashed inside, leaped the counter, seized a bottle of olive oil, gasped at the shopkeeper, “Mrs Distin burned - no oil.”, and was on his horse racing back. He did the double journey four miles each way, in thirty minutes! Surely a record.

Mrs Distin was laid up for many months and most devotedly nursed by her family.
“I hope you are feeling better,” said Mrs Flemmer as she sat beside her mother one afternoon.
“Yes, thank you my dear, but I am so worried about a strange experience I have every night. A snake glides up the leg of my bed, drinks the milk from the cup on the bedside table, curls itself up under my pillow and then, towards morning, goes back to its hiding place.”

“Have you told anyone about this?”

“Yes, but I know they don’t believe me.”

Mrs Flemmer, with soothing, loving, words tactfully changed the subject, as she did not want her mother to see what she was thinking, finding it impossible to believe the story. Months after Mrs Distin had left Tafelberg Hall and her bedroom turned into a sitting room, Jim saw the snake and shot it. So she must really have had the dreadful experience that nobody believed.

Two years after Jim’s arrival at Tafelberg Hall, he became manager of the estate and retained that position for the next five years.

While he was at Tafelberg, Louie was carrying on the Government Farm School in her father’s home. They were great friends, Louie firmly believing in platonic friendship. They met at all the country dances and many a pleasant evening Jim spent at Plaat River, where he learned to play whist and chess, and where he discussed farming matters with Mr Flemmer.

Jim had a very valuable and helpful friend in a Scotchman several years his senior. For a year he took night classes with this man who taught him Algebra and Euclid. He also worked out a course of serious reading for Jim, who much appreciated and valued this friendship and the knowledge and help thus gained.

One day when Jim returned from a visit to Plaat River, Scotty said: “Well, how’s The Little Dane?”

“Who?”

“Oh! Don’t pretend you don’t know who I mean and don’t imagine I’m blind. I know very well you are in love with Mr Flemmer’s eldest daughter.” “Nonsense!” Jim said and hurriedly left the room on the pretext of attending to his work. Scotty chuckled to himself - thereafter whenever they spoke of Louie, she was always referred to as “The Little Dane”.

When Louie had been teaching in her home for four years, she decided to make a change and wrote to the Principal of Rocklands Girls’ High School in Cradock, asking to be taken on as an assistant Kindergarten Teacher. Her father was much annoyed. “But Father,” she argued, “you don’t give me the support I need. When I punish the children you think I am too severe, and you always take their part. The result is that they are not working as they should,”

When Jim heard of her change of plans, he argued and tried his best to dissuade her from going to Cradock, but she was determined and so carried out her arrangements.
Louie loved the work at Rocklands and the first year was a very happy one indeed. She met a Scotch lady, Miss Charlotte Campbell; they became the greatest of friends and thirty six years after their parting in Cradock, Louie with her only daughter, Marjory, was able to visit her friend in Scotland, where they spent a wonderful month; the intervening years seemed just to fall away as if there had not been that long passage of time.

During Louie's second year at Rocklands she had the misfortune to break her spectacles. As her eyesight was very bad, she suffered acutely. She went to Grahamstown to consult an oculist but could not be suited. During this trying experience the most wonderful thing in the world came to her ……..LOVE.

When Louie's engagement to Jim was announced, her youngest sister, Olive remarked, "What a good thing you are engaged, you are nearly and old maid."

"My dear, you don't call twenty-four an old maid!"

"I do," said the child.

When Louie left Rocklands to spend the Easter holidays at her home, the Principal, who was very sympathetic and kind about the trouble with her eyes, said that if she could find a substitute she need not return until she had been successful in getting suitable glasses, and suggested that she see an ex-pupil of Rocklands, who was living on a neighbouring farm, and ask her to take her place.

That happy Easter week! How the days and hours flew! Jim, who was the most conscientious of men and very busy, could only spare the evenings for their new-found happiness.

Louie was living in the house where her father lived when he was engaged to her mother, and Jim was in the house where Louie's mother lived - so history was repeating itself.

The Flemmer family were confident that the substitute would be able to take Louie's place. The lovely autumn days of March sped on.

Louie and her father drove to the neighbour's farm and what was their disappointment when they found that the proposed substitute was not available! There was nothing for it but for Louie to return to Rocklands. She caught the train, leaving a note for Jim at the station, explaining what had happened. He, on his way to spend the evening with her, touched at the station, and instead of proceeding to Plaat River, he turned his horse and rode straight back to Tafelberg Hall, saying to himself, "Tomorrow I'm going to Cradock to fetch her."

The next evening he arrived at Cradock. As he was walking from the station to the Hotel, he passed a house where a great friend of Louie's lived: hearing the sound of a voice he stropped to listen - Yes, it was Louie singing - she was singing his favourite song "The Garden of Sleep". "So that's where she is - so far so good," and he continued his walk to the hotel. After disposing of his luggage and engaging a room, he walked down to the girls' school and asked for the lady principal.

'When Greek meets Greek'!! It is a pity such an interesting hour was without an audience! Jim was emphatic that he was taking Louie home the very next day! The poor lady, though sympathetic, tried to make him understand how he was upsetting her school.

"Madam, isn't it better for your school to be upset than for me to have a blind wife?"

So they argued and parted without either of them having given in.

Louie, standing with her eyes closed, while her friend played her accompaniment, was in the middle of a song, when there was a noise. Looking round, what was her startled amazement to behold Jim being shown into the drawingroom by one of the members of the family - dear little Chris. The family discreetly disappeared, leaving Jim and Louie alone.

“Whatever has happened?”

“I’ve come to fetch you home.”

“But, Jim….”

“It’s no good arguing, you are coming home.”

“Did Father send you to fetch me?”

“No, they know nothing about my being in Cradock. I have not seen them, but I’ve been to Rocklands.”

“What?”

“Yes, I have seen the Lady Principal and told her I am taking you home tomorrow!”

“But….”

“It is no use saying ‘but’. I am quite determined. We return tomorrow. I am not going to have you run the risk of being blind for anybody’s school. Now, I’ll call these good people, who so kindly gave up their drawingroom to us, and we’ll explain the situation.”

The next day, when Louie had to go to the Principal’s study, she wished the earth would open and swallow her, and felt she could endure anything rather than the coming interview. However, her fears were groundless as the lady proved sympathetic and granted her sick leave.

It was dark when the train in which Louie and Jim were travelling arrived at Tafelberg station. They set out to walk the short distance, a mile, to Louie’s home. When they arrived at the farmhouse, instead of going in immediately, they stood on the stoep and looked in the window. They were able to see the inmates of the sittingroom, as they had neglected to draw the curtain. It was a small window and set in a wall three feet thick, therefore it was hardly necessary to worry about curtains. The old fashioned round mahogany table, in the centre of the room, on which rested a standing oil lamp; Mr Flemmer in his armchair, reading.

“What a blessing it is Sunday,” whispered Louie, “and Mother is able to enjoy her book.” The piano stood across the far corner, and where her lounge chair used to stand was a sofa. A pretty, homely scene, quiet and peaceful - what a shock they would have in a few minutes.

Jim rapped loudly and then opened the door. The family were even more astonished than Louie and Jim expected them to be. Explanations followed. Louie and Jim were relieved to see how well Mr Flemmer took Jim’s drastic action. Being a man of peace, he was only too pleased to have someone else do the fighting, and was thankful to have Louie safely home.

During the next nine months Louie sat, day after day, with a ribbon tied across her eyes, only opening them to eat, dress or undress. In all that time she did not read a single word, write a letter

or sew. Every moment Jim could spare, he devoted to her. He read aloud for hours and would take her for long walks, when she would hold his arm and walk with her eyes bandaged. Two lots of spectacles had been supplied by the occulist in Grahamstown, but they only caused greater pain.

At the end of ten months an occulist arrived in Cradock, a very clever Frenchman who was only in Africa on account of his health. The glasses he prescribed were so wonderful that thereafter, Louie had no more trouble.

It was indeed fortunate that Louie once more had the use of her eyes, because Jim had decided to leave Tafelberg Hall. “I long to get back to the Transvaal,” he said. “The farm called ‘The Pyramids’ which I am going to hire is twelve miles from Pretoria. These are the plans of the house.” They studied them with interest. “When the house is built I am coming to fetch you. You will be ready by November?”

So much for the plans of mice and men!

The wonderful thrill of making her trousseau kept Louie busily occupied. A new sewing machine was bought and a roll of the finest calico, and Louie and her mother spent many happy months As they settled down to work in real earnest.

Jim was joined by his brother Vassall on “The Pyramids” where they lived in a tent until the house was built. This at last was complete and the final arrangements were made for the wedding. October came, and on the tenth day of that month the world was startled by the news that war had been declared between England and the Transvaal. (1898).

As Pretoria was the birthplace of both Vassall and Jim, they were Transvaal burgers, and as such were commandeered. They left the farm riding on one horse, the faithful Moscow, each carrying a small handbag containing the barest necessities of life.
When they reached Pretoria, they found everything in the wildest confusion. Moscow was taken in charge by an official and never seen again. Often his master thought of that good and faithful horse which had served him so well and wondered what his fate had been.

Farmers were pouring into the town, receiving instructions and falling into line in their ordinary clothes; so Jim and Vassall, who were not conspicuous by their lack of uniform, planned to escape on the outgoing train which was leaving for Delgoa Bay, from whence they could catch a boat to Port Elizabeth and from there would join the English forces.

They mingled with the crowd on the Pretoria Station. Jim waited until the last minute and then walked up to the railway official who was issuing tickets and demanded passes and tickets for himself and his brother. The official received the impression that he was on some secret mission and without more ado granted his request.

Several very anxious moments were spent before the train rushed on its way carrying a large contingent of troops, amongst whom were Jim and Vassall. Great was their relief when they were over the border and in Portuguese territory! On reaching Delgoa Bay they were overjoyed to find a boat sailing that very day, the ‘Garth Castle’. Once aboard, they breathed a sigh of relief.

These last few weeks had been full of heart-burning and anxiety for Louie as there had been no word from Jim after the outbreak of hostilities; private communication between the Transvaal and the Colony was interrupted. One day as she sat with a sad heart thinking that it was just six weeks to the day fixed for their wedding, Claude dashed into the room, crying, “Look what I’ve got for you!” She seized the yellow envelope he flung on the table, and tearing it open, read the glad news from Jim. “Arrived safely Port Elizabeth. With you tomorrow.”

The relief to know that he was safely out of the Transvaal! She knew that he intended joining the English forces as soon as he cold be taken on, but for him fighting for the English forces was very different from being commandeered by the Dutch.

After spending some days at Plaat River, Jim, who was on Colonel Gorringe's special secret service, decided to take over the management of Tafelberg Hall, for his cousin, who was away on military duty. This would not interfere with his secret service work and would keep him occupied until he could get on to active field work. No telephones or cars in those days. Every day a little native boy rode on horseback from Tafelberg Hall to the Station, taking half-an-hour each way to cover the distance of four miles, returning with letters and papers and whatever information was available.
One day Jim received notice that a Dutch Commando was on a neighbouring farm, This farm lay beyond a range of mountains which ran along the southern boundary of Tafelberg Hall, about six miles from the homestead.

After supper Jim took his little fox terrier, Vixen, always called Vic, and shut her up, knowing full well that she would follow him if she got the chance - as he was going into the enemy's camp it was no place for a dog. He went to the stables and saddled a horse for himself because he did not wish anyone to know that he was leaving the farm. "Oh for my dear old Moscow!" he sighed.

A glorious summer night, the great blue vault of heaven thickly studded with stars, and the full moon in all her glory throwing a radiance which made it almost as light as day. When he was out of earshot of the house, Jim put spurs to his horse and rode hard. Soon he had crossed the mountains by a path and riding for a short distance, on the other side, he came upon a donga, a deep hollow caused by the flow of water. Here he fastened his horse and then proceeded on foot. He came to a field of wheat in full ear and, creeping through the wire fence, walked up a furrow, which fortunately was dry. When about half way along the field, Jim stood still for a few minutes to get his bearings. He saw that the field ran nearly up to the front door of the house. "Splendid! There is the house and there to the right the native huts."

A piercing, ear-splitting noise broke the stillness of the beautiful, calm summer night. In an instant Jim was down, flat on his face, his body pressed to the ground. A wheat field in the Karroo is not the place anyone would choose for 'cover'. Owing to the dry and arid climatic conditions, the wheat grows about three feet in height and very sparsely.

Jim heard the front door of the house being flung open and a troop of Dutchmen rushed out. The continuous yells of a dog in agony guided the men to the spot whence the noise was coming. The hideous and unearthly sounds continued. He realised at once what had happened; his little dog, Vic, had escaped, followed him and now by her devotion was going to betray the master she loved so well. With beating heart he heard the Dutchmen as they passed within a few feet of his hiding place say: "It's a dog." "Yes, it's been caught in a trap." "It's an Englishman's dog; it must have followed it's master. We'll loosen it. It will make straight for it's master which will take us to his hiding place - we'll soon make short work of the devil!"

With bated breath Jim listened to the rattling of the chain as the men released the trap. Poor little Vic! He felt it would not be many minutes before he would be feeling her warm wet nose snuffling all over him, and then ….death…no possible way of escape!
What was his astonishment when he realised that Vic, instead of continuing her search for her master, was making off for home as fast as her legs could carry her! She had decided this was no place for her, master or no master.

The men stood and watched her flight for some minutes, as she disappeared in the far distance; they retraced their steps, passing close to Jim where he lay hidden. He was able to hear every word of their conversation. If they had made the slightest attempt to search for him, he would have

been found, but they were content to go back to the house and close the door.

Waiting until all was quiet, Jim rose. At a fast swinging pace, without making any noise, he passed out of the wheat field, close to the house in which the enemy sat, and reached the native quarters. He went up to a hut which he knew was occupied by a renegade Englishman and his Hottentot wife - alas! that any white man can sink so low! Jim placed his finger on the latch, raised it; silently opening the door he passed in. Stealthily closing it behind him, he struck a match.

“Oh! For God’s sake, Mr Rous, go away, go away - they’ll kill me, they’ll kill me!” gasped the Englishman in a terrified whisper, sitting up in bed and waving his arms about - a pitiable sight of abject fear. A most despicable sight.

“Shut up!”, came the fierce whisper from Jim, “Shut up or I’ll kill you. You give me the information I require and I’ll go.”

Questions were asked, answers given. When Jim had all the information he required, he left the hut as silently as he had entered. Reaching his horse he turned for home and bed which he reached without any further adventure, and sent in a full and detailed report to Colonel Gorringe.

“Ring the bell,” Jim ordered a few days later, and the men as they sat in their huts during the midday meal and heard the tones of the big bell boom forth, knew that something unusual was happening. Never, since the world began, had they had so short a time for their dinner. They poured out of their huts, and all, with one accord, made straight for the house. Here they found Jim waiting for them. “There is a commando of Boers approaching us from Middelburg. You’ve all got your jobs. Everyone get into your work at once. I don’t want the Boers to find you in your huts - remember you know nothing. If any questions are asked, you know nothing.”
“Isaac,” turning to a young Hottentot, “you are the best runner I know; I must get a message to the stationmaster. If I send a man on horseback he would be seen by the Boers and caught - my only chance is to send you. You’ll have to run for your life - if they catch you, they’ll kill you. Will you go?” “Yes, Baas,” answered Isaac without the slightest hesitation. “You are not afraid?” “No, Baas.” Jim handed him a porcupine quill; a hollow quill from the porcupine’s ‘rattle’. On the tail of the porcupine are a number of hollow quills which he rattles when approached by an enemy; the noise thus produced will cause a man to leap aside with his heart in his mouth.
“The letter to the stationmaster is inside this quill. How are you going to carry this precious quill?” “So, Baas.” Removing his dilapidated old hat, he passed the quill into the thick mat of his closely growing hair, then replaced the hat.

“If you are caught, throw the quill into a bush without letting them see. Now, off with you and run for your life.”

“Alright, Baas.”

“Remember to keep close to the stone wall.”

“Yes, Baas.”

So saying, Isaac set off at lightning speed and disappeared through the trees and buildings of the homestead. “Poor little devil,” said Jim as he watched him go, “I wonder if he will come through alive.”

Jim ran up through the garden, where years ago Louie had watched Ida’s tame springbok. He mounted a prominent position on the outskirts of the garden, adjusting his field glasses and gazed at the surrounding country. He could see the mountains which lay thirty-six to forty miles away. Four or five miles from where he stood were a few scattered koppies. Bare open country lay be-

tween the homestead and those koppies, not a mound, not a bush or tree, nothing but the small karroo bush, which grows from a foot to eighteen inches in height, and the ash-bush. This is a bushy plant growing about three feet in height, with very shallow roots. It is called the 'ash-bush' because when burned the ash is used by farmer's wives as lye, for making their soap, and also for making their raisins.

When Jim looked towards the North he could see an irregular line of horsemen as they jogged along at a slow trot. When he looked towards the East he could see the figure of the little Hottentot as he sped on his way, keeping close to the stone wall, which Jim hoped was going to be his protection - not a mound, not a tree or shrub to intercept the view, just the bare unbroken veldt.

"Good Heavens!", ejaculated Jim, and his hand trembled as he adjusted the field glasses, "they have seen him! By Jove! The poor little devil does not stand a dog's chance." He watched in intense excitement as two of their number broke away from the column and bore down on Poor Isaac who ran for his life. "Thank God, they don't fire, but if they catch him….what can save him?"

He ran but the horses came thundering down on him. "Heavens! What has happened, he has disappeared! Gone completely, as if the earth had swallowed him up!"

Jim watched the two men as they rode back and forth over the spot where Isaac was last seen. They were as puzzled as Jim. At last they gave up the puzzle and turning their horses rejoined their companions.

Jim returned to the house, there to await the arrival of the commando and prevent them doing unnecessary damage. After feeding their horses and themselves, they proceeded on their way.

Isaac was never out of Jim's thoughts; his disappearance was a puzzle to which there seemed no solution, and Jim made up his mind he would never see the brave young man again, little dreaming that Isaac would live to serve him for many, many years.

The next morning, as Jim was leaving the house at the crack of dawn, who should be waiting for him at the stables, but Isaac. "By Jove, Isaac!", he said, "I never expected to see you again. What happened?" "Baas, when I saw those horses coming at me I knew I cold not get away. So as I ran, I grabbed a big ash-bush and made for an antbear hole, which I could see just in front of me. I ran right into the hole, pulling the bush after me, and as I sat in the hole I held the bush up, to make it look just like one of the other ash-bushes growing around. I heard the men looking for me, I could hear what they were saying. They think I am the devil's own child," giggled the little Hottentot.

"Did you get to the station?"

"Oh yes! Baas, as soon as I knew the commando was out of sight, I ran as hard as I could and gave the stationmaster the porcupine quill."

"Good for you! Go to the kitchen and get some breakfast."

In 1900, after fifteen years' residence, Mr Flemmer sold Plaat River. The new owner changed the name to "Springfield". The Flemmer family settled in Cradock.

Jim arrived in Cradock and great was the rejoicing to see him safely back. "I have ridden a thousand miles during the month I have been away, on the same horse - yes, on the same horse and he is in splendid condition! Three of us rode from Tafelberg to George, over the mountains along the sea coast to Humansdorp, then up to Cradock, and here I am."

"Have you had any exciting times?" asked Olive.

“Exciting times! I should think so, and amusing ones too. We were arrested as Boer spies at Oudtshoorn.”

“You don’t say so,” exclaimed Mr Flemmer, “how could such a thing be possible?”
“If you could have seen us you would not be surprised that we were taken for Boers. Sunburned, the skin peeling off our noses, three day’s growth of beard, hot and dusty. We were arrested and taken before Sir George Parsons; but we did not have much trouble as we were able to show him the little slips of paper, signed by Colonel Gorringe, which we carried inside our neckties. In spite of this we had a couple of plain clothes men watching us. What fun we had dodging them - we did lead them a dance,” concluded Jim, laughing.

“What about the rest of your journey; was there any more excitement?” asked Olive.
“Any more excitement? I should think there was! Near Bethesda we were on the lookout for a commando; as we rode we came to a long deep valley. We could not see a trace of the enemy, so decided that we would ride down the valley and reconnoitre. We had ridden a couple of miles when a shot was fired at us. It was hopeless to try and retrace our steps, the only thing to do was to scramble out at the side.”

“Oh! Jim, how awful!” exclaimed Louie.

“It was pretty awful climbing up a steep rough incline and expecting every minute to have a bullet in your back. Why they did not get us, or our horses, I cannot tell. However, we reached the top and then, imagine our consternation: we were looking down into the Boer camp!”

“Mercy! What ever did you do?”

“There was nothing to do but to race for it. Our unfortunate horses slithered and shot down that mountainside; fortunately it was dinner hour and the men were in their tents. We put spurs to the poor horses and dashed right through their midst, and were away over a long smooth stretch of country, riding for our lives. We were out of sight before a shot was fired. The last part of our ride was very tame, no excitements. I have all my papers in order, and am going up to the Transvaal as Intelligence Officer. I leave next week.”

“I also have something very interesting to tell you,” said Mrs Flemmer, as the family, including Jim, gathered around the tea table in the afternoon. “I have a letter from my sister from Kimberley. She tells me of my brother, Ernest Distin’s experiences. You know, Jim, he is on Haig’s staff as Field Intelligence Officer. Well, he was taken prisoner and thrown into jail in Bloemfontein. During his imprisonment he was able to send out information to General French’s advance column, advising him of President Kruger’s whereabouts; but Kruger slipped away in a horse wagon drawn by eight horses.

“From Bloemfontein, Ernest was removed to the concentration camp on the Show Ground in Pretoria; fortunately one of his guards was a man whom he knew, and this man, for a consideration disclosed certain information with reference to General Cronje’s ammunition.”

“How very interesting,” said Jim, “yes, what happened next?”

“Ernest found out that Lord Rosslyn, who is a correspondent for one of the big English newspapers, and had been in the field working for his paper, was in the adjoining camp, Hospital Camp. While exercising in the recreation ground, Ernest fell down at Lord Rosslyn’s feet and as Lord Rosslyn bent over him, managed to whisper the words ‘Information - watch out.’ Ernest was successful in getting hold of the book ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ and used the old code of making dots under the letters, which when written out convey a message. Later, when passing Lord Rosslyn, he was able to hand him the book, saying ‘Urgent message, page…please forward.’ Lord Ross-

lyn returned to England and has published his book ‘Twice Captured’. In this book he tells of Ernest’sclever acting. He gives the full page from ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ with the dotted letters which, when written out, convey very important information to the British. My sister has the book and of course the enemy has access to it as well, with the result that they were on the special lookout for Ernest Distin.”

“This really is most exciting,” said Jim.

“It is going to be far more exciting before I have finished. Though we have all read my sister’s letter see how interestedly the family are listening to me!” said Mrs Flemmer as she glanced around, her dear blue eye resting on her three daughters who smiled back at her and Louie said: “I think it is one of the most exciting stories I have read, and it does give me such a thrill to think that I have an uncle who is such a brave man! Please go on, Mother.”

“Ernest was released from the hospital camp and again on active service, when he was caught, by a party of General de Wet’s Commando. He was recognised as the man they were looking for, and sentenced by Field Cornet Marais (who took his boots and most of his clothes) to be shot. A grave was dug. As he stood at the edge of the open grave waiting while the firing party were busy with their preparations, which fortunately, were taking longer than usual, one of their scouts rushed in amongst the crowd, shouting ‘The English! The English are on us!’ They flung Ernest into a cart. In this he travelled for three days, and General de Wet joined his Commando. The case was re-opened, and the death sentence confirmed. The sentence was to be carried out on the column reaching Paardeberg. His captors were very bitter against Ernest as they had all been told about Lord Rosslyn’s book, and the part he played in getting information through their lines to the British.

“As we all know, Ernest is one of the most kind-hearted and generous of men; and was not this trait in his character was to stand him in good stead, for on being thrown in prison in Paardeberg, what was his joy to find that the jailer was his friend! At some time he had done the man who was the jailer a great kindness - and now the jailer was all anxiety to be good to him. Ernest says it made him think of the story he learned at school, about the lion and the mouse! How little he dreamed when he helped a man, that one day his life would be practically in the hands of that same man! Ernest, though his case seemed so desperate, felt that while there was life there was hope, and determined to put up a fight for his life. He therefore persuaded the jailer to have his case re-opened and for him to be tried before a full board of officers.

“The jailer was successful and a full Court was instituted. The man who had sold Ernest the information while he was in Bloemfontein jail, was one of his guards, and stood close beside him all through the trial. What must the feelings of this man have been, when the Board demanded that Ernest should tell them the name of the man who had sold him the information! But, of course, Ernest absolutely refused to disclose the man’s name. Some of the officers on the Board were all for carrying out the death sentence without further delay.”

“How awful!” said Jim.

“Yes, but wait a moment. Fortunately for Ernest, Judge Hertzog (Now General Hertzog and Prime Minister of South Africa) was one of the officers on the Board of Enquiry; he argued in Ernest’s favour, saying it would be against all humane practice to carry out the death sentence. Hertzog carried the day. Ernest was released but made to sign a parole promising not to enter the Orange Free State or the Transvaal while hostilities lasted. He reached Kimberley. After resting for a short time he was sufficiently recovered to join Haig’s staff. Hasn’t he had the most thrilling experience?”

“He has indeed; I’ll be proud to shake him by the hand, “ said Jim.

The last time Earl Haig visited South Africa there was a parade in front of the City Hall, Cape Town, when 1,500 ex-servicemen fell into line. Amongst those present was Ernest Distin. Haig rec-

ognised him at once, and as he shook hands with him he said, “Distin, you are one of the bravest men I have known.” Distin was invited to the Mayor’s Parlour where he and Haig talked long and interestedly of their experiences during the Boer War.

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CHAPTER V
MARRIED

Early in 1901 Jim spent a week-end in Cradock with the Flemmers and then left for the Transvaal. He was appointed Intelligence Officer to the Railway Pioneer Regiment. He had many interesting experiences and hairbreadth escapes. In one of his letters to Louie he wrote:

“ While camping on the Vaal River, our Colonel received a pathetic message from some Dutch women asking for help as their children were ill. We could see the farm house from our camp, though it is some distance on the other side of the river. We set out, the doctor, a couple of men and myself. The doctor examined the children who certainly were very ill. After he had done what he could, we re-mounted, and as we rode off from the farm we were fired on by men in hiding. We rode for our lives, crossed the river, bullets whizzing past our ears, but reached the camp without a man being hit! When the Colonel was told of what had happened, he ordered a military force to take the women and children into custody and destroy the premises. It was most amusing to hear the women quarrelling when we went over to take them away, each accusing the others’ husband of firing on the men who came to help them in their extremity.”

Louie received a letter from Jim towards the end of 1901 from Meyerton, in the Transvaal, where he was Commandant, in which he said he had been granted a month’s leave of absence and expected to arrive in Cradock on Christmas Eve and they would be married on Boxing Day.

Louie’s trousseau was complete, even to the wedding dress, but she decided not to make any further preparations for the wedding until after Jim’s arrival in Cradock. Alas, poor Louie, another disappointment was in store for her.

On December 20th she received a telegram from Jim which read “Boers have attacked Meyerton - leave cancelled.” This was the second time her wedding had been postponed; some of her pessimistic friends had much to say about it, and when they heard that she intended wearing her wedding dress, which was a simple white frock, when she acted as bridesmaid to her dearest cousin and greatest friend on February 3rd, 1902, they were horrified. However, so much for superstition, for Louie’s married life was one of the happiest.

As the Flemmer family sat round the breakfast table on Sunday morning, March 23rd, they were startled by a knock, followed by the opening of the front door. As they listened, a quick, firm step could be heard coming up the passage. “Jim!” said Louie, recognising his step. “I’ve only got a month’s leave,” said Jim when they were alone, “but I’m hoping that my Commanding Officer will send me round on military service to Durban, which would be a piece of luck, as that will mean we will have so much longer together. I am sure the War is nearly over; the Boers cannot hold out for much longer. I must see the Rector and arrange for him to marry us on Wednesday.”
On Jim’s return from his interview with the Rector, he said, “The dear old man was so pleased to see me. Gave me such a welcome. How lucky we are that he is here in Cradock and no longer in Middelburg! I remember you always wanted him to marry us. Well, everything is arranged and we are going to be married on Wednesday.”
The happy Sunday passed. In the evening, as the family sat and chattered, they were greatly surprised by the arrival of the Rector. “I am so sorry,” he said, after greeting the various members. “I

was so pleased to see you safely back," turning to Jim, "that for the moment I forgot that it is Lent. Next week is Holy Week. You cannot get married until Easter Monday."

"Yes, that's the only thing for them to do," said Mr Flemmer.

"I am afraid," said Jim, "I cannot agree with you. Our wedding has been put off twice already. We would have been married two years ago if it had not been for this War. Being in the field I knew nothing about the Church festivals; had I known I would most certainly have arranged to come down next week. I've been granted one month's leave, two days of it have been spent travelling. I refuse to have our wedding put off for the third time. We are going to be married on Wednesday."

"The Church cannot marry you during Holy Week," said the Rector.

"Then we'll be married without the Church."

The family was horrified by this statement. "We'll go to the magistrate," said Jim.

"Surely you would not be married by the magistrate?" asked the Rector, turning to Louie.

Poor Louie. All eyes were fixed on her, waiting for her answer. Was life always to be full of these difficult problems? However, she was determined not to disappoint Jim and answered bravely, "Yes I will. We are going to be married on Wednesday. If the Church will not marry us, we will go to the magistrate," she concluded in a firm tone, as she read the pleasure and approval in Jim's eyes.

"Well," said the Rector, who had known both Louie and Jim for many, many years. "I cannot let you be married without the blessing of the Church. I will wire to the Bishop of Grahamstown tomorrow and ask for special permission for your wedding to take place on Wednesday." The following day when Jim returned from his second visit to the Rectory he said, "The Bishop has given his permission but we must be married very quietly and at 8 a.m."

Louie felt very annoyed and vexed. She did not like the idea of a quiet wedding nor did she like being married at 8 a.m. However, on Wednesday, March 26th 1902, a perfect morning, she arrived at the church to find it crowded - in fact it was so crowded that her Danish Uncle and Aunt, who were a little late, remained at the entrance. This was fortunate because as Jim and Louie were leaving the Church, they received loving greetings from the couple, and had a good view of the fine old gentleman, wearing his beautiful medal, a gift from the King, Christian IX of Denmark. (The King had been pleased to honour him by presenting him with this medal when he re-visited the land of his birth in 1872. He had taken many articles of interest and trophies from South Africa, which he gave to his King.)

The happy couple found the station platform crowded with their friends, and they left by train amid a shower of rice, for New Brighton, near Port Elizabeth.

Here Louie met a lady from Cradock. As mixed bathing was unheard of in those days, Louie was delighted when her friend asked her to go bathing with her and she gladly accepted the invitation. She, however, was unaware of the fact that the proprietor of the hotel had warned ladies not to bathe, as the sea was most dangerous.

"Dear me," said Louie, "how terrible the sea looks, just like a huge mountain coming on." "Don't you worry about that," said her friend, "you hold on to my hand and we shall be alright." The wave came and knocked Louie off her feet. Fortunately the lady had hold of her wrist. As the wave broke, the water reached the lady's chest, even though she was a tall woman. The suction was tremendous, almost dragging her from her feet. Being a courageous woman she still held on to Louie's wrist and did not lose heart, but there were moments when she felt that they would both be swept out to sea. As she thought of her husband and three young children she felt that such a sac-

rifice would not be justified. However, stimulated by the realisation that Louie was a bride on her honeymoon the brave lady made another desperate effort and managed to drag Louie to safety. Saved!

Jim on hearing of what might have been a tragedy, was overjoyed to have his little wife safe, and expressed great appreciation of the lady's courage.

"Jim," said Louie, as she came into their sitting room a few days later, "I have a letter from mother. I want to read part of it to you. Listen: 'Claude, as you know, has at last got his wish and has been taken on at the remount depot'. Being only eighteen, explained Louie, it was the only military service the authorities would allow him. But to continue her mothers letter: 'He has had some trying experiences and endured hardships; taking horses back and forth to Port Elizabeth and sleeping in open trucks amongst other things. On his last trip he spent his only shilling on two very gaudily coloured prints for you, one of King Edward and the other of Queen Alexandra, because he says you are so fond of royalty and he feels sure you will like these pictures. I am sure you will value them when you know that he was starving - this because he was delayed in Port Elizabeth and ran out of rations. He was very tempted to change the pictures for food or money, but did neither because he did not want you to miss having them. I am sending them under separate cover.'

"Poor old Claude," Louie loved his unselfishness and treasured the prints for many years.

As Louie sat in a dentist's chair in Port Elizabeth, undergoing the usual torture associated with that chair, Jim burst in and said excitedly, "Please allow me to speak to my wife for a few minutes. I have some exciting news for her. I have received my orders, Louie, to proceed to Durban as Recruiting Officer. You are coming with me and now I am on my way to book our passage on the first ship I can get."

This was indeed thrilling news for Louie, who, until that moment expected they would part on the following day, she would return to her mother and Jim to the front - and now - Durban!

It was her first experience of a big steamer and she thoroughly enjoyed the voyage. "I don't like the idea of being swung in that basket," said Louie, as she and Jim stood leaning on the rail of the ship, watching people being lowered on to the tug from the basket. However, when their turn came it was not as bad as it looked. They spent six weeks in Durban where they attended the peace celebrations early in May 1902.

"Oh joy!" exclaimed Louie, "to think the dreadful war is over." "I have orders though," said Jim, "to rejoin my Regiment near Pretoria. You will go back to your mother until I have everything ready for you. I do hope I shall find something left of our home. Fortunately our furniture is stored in Pretoria, so I expect to find that alright."

Two months later, Louie left Cradock for Pretoria. She found the journey very unpleasant, as she resented the military necessity of having her person searched by a woman at Vereeniging, and on arrival in Pretoria she experienced the unpleasantness of having her luggage searched.

Jim met her in Pretoria and they drove out to the farm "The Pyramids" arriving there at sunset. "Stand on the stoep," said Jim, "and look at the view. Those three foothills are what gives the farm its name. Look beyond at the Magaliesberg - isn't it beautiful? Unfortunately the garden is rather far from the homestead. We go down this incline - there is a narrow path through the grass, but it is a lovely old garden with an orange grove. You must wait until tomorrow to see it." He then led Louie into her first home.

"Jim," said Louie, "I am going to do housekeeping for the first time in my life."

"Well, I hope you won't poison me."

“No, I won’t do that. One thing I can do, I can make bread.”

“As long as I have good bread, I shan’t grumble.”

Their evenings were spent reading aloud. Jim was an excellent reader; he read in a charmingly modulated voice, in deep, soft tones, most pleasing to listen to. He never seemed to tire and would read for hours on end. They did all their reading together. Both loved history and had many tastes and interests in common.

“How I am looking forward to this evening,” said Louie a few weeks later, “I think ‘The Wandering Jew’ is one of the most exciting books. I am more excited about our next chapter than if I were going to a dance or theatre.”

“How nice it is,” said Jim, “that we can both get so much pleasure from our reading.”
Many happy hours were spent in the shade of the orange orchard. On Sunday mornings Louie and Jim would carry their book, rug and cushions and spend the whole morning in this well-sheltered and pleasant spot.

One afternoon as they were coming up from the garden, Jim suddenly put out his arm across Louie’s chest and prevented her from taking another step. “Whatever is the matter?” “A snake! Your were almost on it!”

The reptile was slinking into its hole, Jim after it. He stood over the hole, fighting with the snake, hitting it with his hat. This battle continued for several minutes, when to Louie’s great relief, the snake slipped past Jim’s feet into the hole.

“I did get a fright,” said Louie.

“Of course you did, but there was no time to warn you. Snakes are only dangerous when they are hurt or molested. Had you trodden on it, as you would have done with your next step, it would almost certainly have bitten you.”

“That is one of the things I don’t like about these parts; too many snakes.”
“But there are snakes everywhere! I wonder how many I killed at Tafelberg Hall! And that in spite of the fact that for years in your grandfather’s time he paid half-a-crown for every snake that was killed. But, as I say, you need not worry, a snake will never attack you - I would far rather have a snake in my room than a spider,” and Jim shuddered at the mere idea of a spider.

“I can’t agree with you. I certainly don’t like spiders - but snakes! Oh! I could never kill one.”

“That is rather much to expect of you. I hope you will never have the occasion to try. Talking about spiders, did I tell you that our neighbour’s little son was bitten by a spider?”

“No. What happened?”

“A poisonous black spider bit him on his tummy. The doctor was sent for but nothing could be done, the child lay as if dead. Everybody expected that he would die when someone suggested an old witchdoctor. He saved the child’s life.”

“How wonderful! I wish I knew their secrets!”

“I have a letter from my sister Winnie,” said Jim one day, “She is coming to stay with us and I am glad for your sake. Do you realise that you have been on this farm for eight months and not had an opportunity of speaking to a white woman?”

“It does not seem so long and what does it matter as long as we are happy? We have our books, our letters - the time simply flies!”

Winnie, Jim’s sister, arrived the following week and a happy family party gathered round the tea table. “I’ve had a letter from my brother Christian, “ said Louie, “and he tells me he has had a dreadful experience.”

“Do tell us about it,” said Jim, “but please give me another cup of tea before we begin.”

“Winnie, I must explain to you that Christian has left his farm in charge of a man and has gone as farm manager to a neighbour. He rides over to his farm every Sunday for an inspection, and to leave instructions for the week’s work. So his house is closed during the week and opened on Sundays and his dinner served at his own table.
“He tells me in this letter that after having finished his dinner, he went to his bedroom and lay down. Thinking how badly the bed was made, he kept digging his elbow against his side where there seemed to be a lump. After a while he turned on his back. As he slept, he felt an oppression on his chest and when breathing became difficult he decided to open his eyes. Winnie, what do you think he saw? Jim, you are not to answer, you’ll spoil my story - Winnie, what did he see?”

“I am sure I don’t know.”

“A snake! Yes, a snake! Its head within a few inches of his nose!”

“Horrors!” exclaimed Winnie.

“He says,” continued Louie, “it was too near to strike him otherwise he would certainly have been bitten.”

“Whatever did he do”” asked Jim.

“You see, the snake was coiled up under his waistcoat and just had its head sticking out within a few inches of his nose. He leaped off the bed, jumping about and calling for help, but nobody heard him, the snake meanwhile, dangling about his legs as he leaped and pranced around. At last it slipped through the waistcoat, glided along the floor and disappeared into its hole.”

“Oh! How dreadful,” exclaimed Winnie.

“Yes, it was horrible. It makes me think of the experience my grandmother, Mrs Distin, had some years ago.”

“Tell me about it,” said Winnie.

“Well, I’ll leave you ladies to your snake stories,” said Jim and he went off to his work.
“Tell me about your Grandmother, Louie. Jim’s letters used to be full of all your people and the beautiful Tafelberg Hall, when he lived there. I feel as if I know them all and hope some day to visit those parts.””

“You would love Tafelberg Hall, you are such a gardener. Dear Grandmama, her frock caught alight and she was badly burnt and was in bed for weeks. During the night a snake used to glide up the leg of her bed, drink the milk from the cup on the bedside table, then coil itself up under her pillow, and towards morning would glide away.”

“How dreadful,” said Winnie, “they love milk and they love warmth. I was told a story, so I don’t know if it is true or not:

“A little girl would take her plate of porridge into the garden saying, ‘I want some for my big wormie.’ She did this for weeks, nobody thinking anything about it, but one day her father watched to see what she meant by ‘Big Wormie’. Imagine his horror when he saw a huge snake drinking from the child’s plate, and the child quite rough with it, pushing it away with her spoon, that she might have her turn at the porridge. Of course, the father killed the snake and the little girl fretted for a long time.”

“Don’t let us talk any more about snakes. Tell me about your children. I am longing to see them. You must all come and spend a holiday with us. I simply love children and hope you will come early next year.”

Jim and Louie’s two eldest children were born in this their first home, “The Pyramids”, twelve miles from Pretoria.

When Marcus, the eldest, was six months old, Louie sat sewing as he lay asleep in his perambulator beside her.

“How’s the kid?” asked Jim, as he came in for his tea.

“He’s splendid, he has been asleep ever since dinner.”

“That is very nice for you as you’ve been able to get on with your sewing. I must have a look at him.”

“Be careful not to wake him.”

As Jim leaned over the perambulator to admire his first born, his blood turned cold with horror as he saw a spider, a poisonous spider on that fair baby cheek! Without a moment’s hesitation, he shot it off with his finger and thumb, as hard as he could, leaving a red mark on the poor little one’s face.

“It does not matter how much he is hurt or how much he cries,” he said, as he watched Louie lift the baby and comfort him. “he is safe, and that’s a mighty close shave. I loathe spiders and that was a deadly kind, had it bitten him his number would have been up, alright. What a mercy it is tea time and I came in.”

A few weeks later, as they sat before a glowing fire in their cosy little sitting room, Louie said, “What are you thinking about, Jim?”

“A holiday.”

“A holiday! How perfectly lovely! Tell me more!”

“Yes, we are going to Cradock to spend a month with your people, if they will have us.”

“How glorious! Of course they will have us.”

“You do love holidays and travelling. I remember how you enjoyed our trip to Edenburg, when we bought our sheep.”

“Oh! That was a perfect week! How I loved it! Our walks for miles every morning to look at the sheep, then sitting in that old-world garden with its lovely roses - I can smell them now.”

Jim laughed.

“I agree with the old monk,” continued Louie, “when he said ‘Blessed are all flowers but thrice blessed those that have a scent.’ That garden was truly a Garden of Eden to me, a Garden of Eden in Edenburg. How I loved the hours we spent there, I knitting and you reading aloud ‘Romola’ and ‘Coniston’. I shall never forget those books and they will always be associated with that happy time in Edenburg. But do let us talk about this holiday.”

“Your father has not seen his first grandson and your mother would like to see him now that he is more like a human being.”

“For shame, Jim, you are a tease.”

“And I know you are anxious to show him to all your friends. Write to your mother tonight and as soon as we know it is convenient for them to have us, we’ll be off to the Colony to spend a month there.”

“How too lovely!” exclaimed Louie, full of joyous anticipation. She was a very happy person in the preparation of Marcus’ little wardrobe, and in making arrangements for their journey.

At last the day came. They drove by cart and horses to Pretoria where they caught a train. Louie’s anticipation was fully justified; it was joy to be back in parts where she had spent so many years of her life.

“I do love Cradock,” said Louie as they gathered round the breakfast table.

“I don’t know how you ever can,” protested her sister Olive.

“Isn’t it Scott who says:
‘Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land.’

“The Flemmers lived here,” continued Louie, “Grandma Distin was married here, mother and I were both born and married in Cradock, so I can’t help loving it.”

“Louie,” said her father, “there’s been a terrible murder.”

“Yes, I know,” said Louie, “Jim and I heard all about it this morning when we were on the train. Don’t let us talk about it.”

“One of the girls you used to teach is involved.”

“I know; please don’t talk about it. I can’t bear it. Do talk about something else.”

The happy month in Cradock passed all too soon, and once more Louie and Jim are back and settled on the farm. They were anxious to help a couple, a man and wife, with their four small children. An outhouse was arranged as a cottage and the family settled in. It seemed an ideal arrangement, the man to work on the farm, while the woman and children would make life more interesting for Louie. Fortunately for this family, Jim was a very observant man. One day, as he passed their door, he noticed the youngest child, three years of age, with a piece of blue-stone in her hand - deadly poison of course. He took it from the child and called to her mother, “see,” he said, “what she was about to suck and perhaps swallow. You know how poisonous it is. I advise you to thoroughly wash her hands and mouth.”

“I wonder how she came by it,” said the mother.

“I am afraid I am to blame. Last evening I was weighing off blue-stone, to dose the sheep, and the few crystals I did not require I tossed through the pantry window, never thinking of the children. She must have picked up one of them. I am awfully sorry but feel sure she has not swallowed any of the blue-stone.”

Marcus, who was about a year old, started vomiting during the afternoon. “He keeps on pointing at the cup and as fast as he drinks the water he vomits,” said Louie.

“Let him drink as much as he wants,” advised Jim.

All through the long afternoon the vomiting continued. “I had no idea children cold be so ill when they are cutting their teeth!” said Louie in great distress.

Jim and the lady from the cottage, who was doing all she could to help, looked at one another, but refrained from saying what they thought, as they did not want to add to Louie’s distress. After four hours the vomiting ceased and then Jim said to Louie, “I am quite convinced that Marcus swallowed one of the crystals of the blue-stone.”

“But how could he have done such a thing?”

“Those little children playing around his perambulator must have picked up a piece and given it to him. As I was passing the cottage before dinner, I saw Elsa sitting on the door-step, with a piece of blue-stone in her hand. I took it from her, called her mother and she washed her hands and mouth. As she has not shown any signs of poisoning, she could not have swallowed any of it. Marcus most certainly has been suffering from blue-stone poisoning.”

“Oh! Jim, how dreadful! He may still die of exhaustion.”

“I don’t think there is any need for you to worry. I am sure he is alright.”

Louie leaned over the cot and watched that precious baby as he lay asleep. It was many hours before she slept. However, he woke the next morning a perfectly happy and well baby.

Being two hours by cart from the nearest doctor made Louie and Jim very self-reliant and independent of medical advice. Though Louie was the mother of four children, none of them had medical assistance until they had measles, when Marcus was twelve years of age. Louie had been married for seventeen years before she had occasion to consult a doctor.

“Don’t make a noise, I am listening,” said Jim, as he was in the act of opening a bedroom window before retiring for the night, “It is a chicken in distress, I’ll go out and see what is wrong.” He left the room.

It was bright moonlight. Underneath the bedroom window was a box, used as a sleeping place for the chickens, a hole cut in the side allowed the chickens to run in and out. Jim put his hand through the opening and felt about, thinking the box had been placed on a chicken’s foot, and as the little thing could not release itself, it was making this sound of distress. Passing his hand over numbers of warm, fluffy bodies, his fingers suddenly touched something smooth and cold. Quickly withdrawing his hand, he looked around for some weapon of defence, knowing full well he would need it. He found a piece of plank, holding it in readiness, he raised the box - an enormous snake lifted itself up, ready to strike, but one blow from the plank flattened it out. On examining the snake the next morning, Jim found it had swallowed four chickens and two others were dead and covered with s limy substance which the reptile had smeared over them. Jim had a very narrow escape, as the snake did not bite him because it had a chicken in its mouth.

Before the end of the year, Louie received the sad news that her Father had passed away.

“All the business has been completed,” said Jim, coming into the sitting room at “The Pyramids” where Louie sat with her baby, Marjory, a month old, her mother and sister who were visiting her, and were watching Marcus as he played about with his toys. “The farm is bought,” he continued, “here is the plan. It is ten miles from Witbank. I want you to decide where we shall build our house. Here is a lovely spot with good water; here is the old homestead, a ruin.” Jim pointed out the different spots with his pencil. “I am glad there is no house fit to live in. People always try to alter and patch old places instead of building new ones. It will be lovely to have a new house according to our own plans.”

“This is the boundary,” continued Jim, “the owner of the adjoining farm lives here, about a mile from the old homestead.” “Oh! Jim, do let us have our house here, near the boundary. It will be nice to be within walking distance of our neighbours.” “Alright, you gregarious little animal - that’s where the house will be - now for a name. What are you going to call the farm?”

“I don’t know. I’m thinking. What is this line here?”

“That is a river. The farm’s boundary on three sides is a river, the Brugspruit.”

“Oh! Jim, I have it. We’ll call it ‘Riverside’.”

“Splendid! A very nice name, ‘Riverside’ it will be. The old name was ‘Hartebeestespruit’ but that name would not do because the original farm had been divided into four farms and they can’t all be called ‘Hartebeestespruit’. Our part is ‘Riverside’…. We do have another point to discuss, and that is what am I going to do with you and the babies while I am building the house. There is no place at ‘Riverside’ where you can stay - you can’t stay here alone. How would you like to go home with your mother and in three months time I’ll come and fetch you?”

“That would be very nice, but I don’t like the idea of leaving you alone in the ruin of a house.”

“Don’t worry about that,” said Jim, “Vassall will join me and we’ll manage quite well.”

“I am glad Vassall is going to be with you. I am always grateful to him for the many times he has saved your life. Twice from drowning…..”

“No, three times; and at Tafelberg Hall - you remember the time I was ringing the Bull?”

“Yes, but do tell it to me again.”

“How you do love being told stories; I am sure you remember the incident perfectly:

“Vassall, a number of native men, and I were in the shed with a wild young bull which had to have a ring put through its nose. I told the men that should the bull charge, they must stand perfectly still and no harm would come to them. We got the thong around the bull’s foot, and then somehow he broke away and charged. Every man fled to safety. I stood. I had to practice what I’d preached. The bull came for me. I was standing with my back against a manger. Fortunately I was a good deal thinner than I am now. As he charged, his horns passed on each side of my body, his forehead was pressed against my chest, and he proceeded to rub me up and down. There was no skin on my backbone as a result of the close contact with the manger. When Vassall saw the danger, he shouted to the men to follow him, seized the thong and by their united efforts they dragged the bull off and we successfully fixed the ring in his nose.”
“How dreadful if one of the horns had gone into you!” said Louie, shuddering at the thought. “It was lucky that they passed round your body. I am glad we don’t have to farm with wild bulls or ostriches. Though I love the Colony, I think the Transvaal makes up for the droughts and the hard life of

the farmer."

"Yes, there's a lot to be said for the old Transvaal."

"You love it," said Louie, "a case of the call of the blood I suppose."

After her husband's death, Mrs Flemmer had made her home with her son, Christian, who was acting as farm manager on the farm 'Plaat River' now called 'Springfields.' Here Louie arrived with her two children, very thrilled to be back in her old home.
"How strange it must be for you, Mother, to come back," said Louie. "This is the third time you have made your home in this dear old house, and how it does bring back my childhood."
"Yes, dear, it is very strange and bitter-sweet; it is so full of memories. The first three months of our happy married life we spent here, then we came back when you were ten years old, left after fifteen years, and after spending four years in Cradock, I am back again."
"Yes, it must be very, very strange for you," said Louie, gazing at her little mother with loving sympathy. "What I do love about this house," she continued, "are its thick mud walls and its thatched roof - and those funny old ceilings. Those huge beams supporting the ceilings are trees."
It is necessary to have such beams because there is a layer of reeds and then a thick layer of mud making the floor of the loft above, that is why the house is so beautifully cool.
"It is very interesting," said her mother, "to think people could build such comfortable, substantial houses so long ago."
"I wonder how old this house is?" asked Louie.
"It is a pity we don't know," said her mother, "but Father told me of a huge stone on the boundary on which is carved a sentence in Dutch: 'TODAY I LOOKED FOR CATTLE' and the date - I don't remember exactly what date, some time in the eighteen thirties."
"Come along, Louie," called her sister Olive, "you bring the children. I have the cushions and the rugs. We are going into the garden, under the trees."
"Wait a moment. I see the boy coming with the post. AH! A letter from Jim," said Louie, "I am glad to have this letter. I had not heard from him for a week and was feeling very worried."
`"Well, you need not worry now - you've got your letter."
The shade of the two large mulberry trees which grew just beyond the garden gates made an ideal spot for the little group: Marcus on the rug with his toys and picture books, Marjory asleep in her perambulator, and Louie and Olive with their work. Louie settled herself comfortably with her letter, the reading of which she was looking forward to with great pleasure. She read with blanching cheeks and frightened eyes and many ejaculations of distress.
"Do tell me what the trouble is!" exclaimed Olive.
"Wait," replied Louie, "until I've finished."
At last the letter was read and Louie breathed a sigh of relief and thankfulness as she leaned back amongst the cushions.
"As you know," she said, "all his life Jim has suffered most cruelly from headaches. Well, he decided to have medical advice on the subject and went to town to see their old family doctor. 'I will cure your headaches alright if you will take the medicine,' he said, 'that's the trouble. After one or two doses the bottle will stand on your wash-stand and be forgotten.'
"Jim promised to be very good and to take every dose until the bottle was empty. He took the prescription to a chemist and went home with the medicine and the prescription in his pocket. The next morning, after breakfast, he dutifully took the dose and another after the midday meal. In the afternoon he became so violently ill that both he and Vassall thought he was going to die. They sent for Oom Jan, a dear man, Jim says, who is our neighbour. When he saw how ill Jim was, he set off immediately for the local doctor.
"On his arrival, the doctor said, 'You have been poisoned.' 'That's impossible,' said Vassall, 'we are alone and even doing our own cooking.' 'I can't help that, you have been poisoned.'
"After a lot of questions, Jim told him of the medicine he was taking for his headaches. 'The prescription is in the pocket of my coat, hanging on the door.' 'Ah! Here we have the answer to the riddle - someone has made a mistake - one more spoonful of that medicine and your headaches would indeed have been cured for good and all.'"

“What a dreadful thing to have happened! Is he alright now?” asked Olive.
“He says he is and that is why he did not write; he did not want me to know about his illness until he was quite well.”
It took two years for Jim to completely recover from this experience of poisoning. His headaches were cured very much later in life by a doctor who advised him to cut out porridge and all sloppy foods - porridge and bread and milk being his favourite dishes.
At the end of three months, Jim arrived back at ‘Springfields’ to take his little family back to the Transvaal. “I have visited my friends in Cradock,” said Louie, “but I am very sad that I have not been able to go to Tafelberg Hall.”
“That is a pity,” said Jim, “and now we must hurry back. I cannot be spared a day longer than is necessary.”
The train journey of a day and a night was quite pleasant; Marjory sleeping peacefully all the way, and Marcus, who, like his mother loved stories, sat quietly for hours and listened to story after story. Arrived at Park Station, as the old Johannesburg station was called in those days, they sat in the station restaurant having their breakfast, when a train rushed through the station, making a terrific noise. The whistle was blowing and the station bell clanging as a warning of its approach.
“Don’t be frightened, Daddy, it’s only the train,” came in Marcus’ shrill, childish tones, which were heard by everybody in the room. Many turned and smiled at the little fellow. He still had nine days to go before reaching his second birthday.
After her husband’s death, Mrs Flemmer had made her home with her son, Christian, who was acting as farm manager on the farm ‘Plaat River’ now called ‘Springfields.’ Here Louie arrived with her two children, very thrilled to be back in her old home.

“How strange it must be for you, Mother, to come back,” said Louie. “This is the third time you have made your home in this dear old house, and how it does bring back my childhood.”

“Yes, dear, it is very strange and bitter-sweet; it is so full of memories. The first three months of our happy married life we spent here, then we came back when you were ten years old, left after fifteen years, and after spending four years in Cradock, I am back again.”

“Yes, it must be very, very strange for you,” said Louie, gazing at her little mother with loving sympathy. “What I do love about this house,” she continued, “are its thick mud walls and its thatched roof - and those funny old ceilings. Those huge beams supporting the ceilings are trees.”

It is necessary to have such beams because there is a layer of reeds and then a thick layer of mud making the floor of the loft above, that is why the house is so beautifully cool.

“It is very interesting,” said her mother, “to think people could build such comfortable, substantial houses so long ago.”

“I wonder how old this house is?” asked Louie.

“It is a pity we don’t know,” said her mother, “but Father told me of a huge stone on the boundary on which is carved a sentence in Dutch: ‘TODAY I LOOKED FOR CATTLE’ and the date - I don’t remember exactly what date, some time in the eighteen thirties.”

“Come along, Louie,” called her sister Olive, “you bring the children. I have the cushions and the rugs. We are going into the garden, under the trees.”

“Wait a moment. I see the boy coming with the post. AH! A letter from Jim,” said Louie, “I am glad to have this letter. I had not heard from him for a week and was feeling very worried.”

`”Well, you need not worry now - you’ve got your letter.”

The shade of the two large mulberry trees which grew just beyond the garden gates made an ideal

spot for the little group: Marcus on the rug with his toys and picture books, Marjory asleep in her perambulator, and Louie and Olive with their work. Louie settled herself comfortably with her letter, the reading of which she was looking forward to with great pleasure. She read with blanching cheeks and frightened eyes and many ejaculations of distress.

“Do tell me what the trouble is!” exclaimed Olive.

“Wait,” replied Louie, “until I’ve finished.”

At last the letter was read and Louie breathed a sigh of relief and thankfulness as she leaned back amongst the cushions.

“As you know,” she said, “all his life Jim has suffered most cruelly from headaches. Well, he decided to have medical advice on the subject and went to town to see their old family doctor. ‘I will cure your headaches alright if you will take the medicine,’ he said, ‘that’s the trouble. After one or two doses the bottle will stand on your wash-stand and be forgotten.’

“Jim promised to be very good and to take every dose until the bottle was empty. He took the prescription to a chemist and went home with the medicine and the prescription in his pocket. The next morning, after breakfast, he dutifully took the dose and another after the midday meal. In the afternoon he became so violently ill that both he and Vassall thought he was going to die. They sent for Oom Jan, a dear man, Jim says, who is our neighbour. When he saw how ill Jim was, he set off immediately for the local doctor.

“On his arrival, the doctor said, ‘You have been poisoned.’ ‘That’s impossible,’ said Vassall, ‘we are alone and even doing our own cooking.’ ‘I can’t help that, you have been poisoned.’

“After a lot of questions, Jim told him of the medicine he was taking for his headaches. ‘The prescription is in the pocket of my coat, hanging on the door.’ ‘Ah! Here we have the answer to the riddle - someone has made a mistake - one more spoonful of that medicine and your headaches would indeed have been cured for good and all.’”

“What a dreadful thing to have happened! Is he alright now?” asked Olive.

“He says he is and that is why he did not write; he did not want me to know about his illness until he was quite well.”

It took two years for Jim to completely recover from this experience of poisoning. His headaches were cured very much later in life by a doctor who advised him to cut out porridge and all sloppy foods - porridge and bread and milk being his favourite dishes.
At the end of three months, Jim arrived back at ‘Springfields’ to take his little family back to the Transvaal. “I have visited my friends in Cradock,” said Louie, “but I am very sad that I have not been able to go to Tafelberg Hall.”

“That is a pity,” said Jim, “and now we must hurry back. I cannot be spared a day longer than is necessary.”

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CHAPTER VI
RIVERSIDE
PART I

On the first day of the year 1905, the little family arrived in their new home, RIVERSIDE. Proudly Jim showed his wife the well-built house. Joy filled their hearts in the proud possession of their own property, a they passed through the lofty rooms. It was a home planned to suit their ideas of comfort and convenience, and now that it was complete they were more than satisfied.

“I think it is perfect,” said Louie. “I had no idea when we worked at the plan that it would be as nice as this!”

“I am glad that you are so pleased but I am afraid that you will miss your beautiful view of the Magaliesberg which you so loved and enjoyed.”

“It certainly was wonderful looking across at that magnificent range of mountains, especially at sunset, but I would far rather have this farm, knowing that it is our own, our very own, than any view in the world.”

“I am glad that you feel like that,” said Jim, much relieved to find that Louie was not disappointed in the farm he had had to buy without her first seeing what was to be her new home. “Come on to the stoep,” continued Jim as he led her out. “Unfortunately, the few trees we have planted are a good distance from the house; but I have transplanted one of the full-grown peach trees at your bedroom window, for you to have some shade when you are out with the children.”

“That will be nice, I hope it will grow!”

“Of course it will grow,” replied Jim with energy, “it does not know it has been moved.”

“How lovely that sheet of water looks in this sunset glow.”

“Yes, it is pretty, that dam was a brainwave.”

“Yes? In what way?”

“I killed two birds with one stone. While we were making the bricks for the house, we were making the dam. It is being filled with water from a fountain which flows from the foot of the rise about a mile away.”

“What a splendid idea. I have got something beautiful to look at.”

“Do you see that row of peach trees beyond the road? Well, that is where I am going to plant an orchard, mostly apples. In the enclosure round the house I am going to plant seventy-two trees - you won’t be long without shade. The men are now digging the holes.”

“How lovely it will be when there are tall evergreen trees, waving their lofty branches and casting their cool shade over all this bare, barren ground - I can just see it all,” said Louie, in keen antici-

pation of what the future held in improvement and comfort of their property.

Many months later Jim sat reading his newspaper, and Louie was occupied with her knitting.

“I don’t know what the country is coming to! I cannot understand how the Government could have imported these Chinese labourers for the mines.”

“Have they not proved a success?” asked Louie.

“A success! I should think not. They are deserting as fast as they can, their one idea being to get to the sea, to get back to China. They are thieving and murdering as they go.”

“Oh! Jim, how dreadful. I am glad we are not on the high road to the sea! They would never come to such an out of the way farm as this is, ten miles from the railway?”

“That’s just the trouble. A family, not twenty miles from here, has been visited by a band of Chinamen; they stabbed the man when he opened his front door in answer to their knock. They also stabbed the woman and her child. Though the man is dead, it is thought the others will live.”

“How perfectly dreadful!” exclaimed Louie, much distressed.

“Yes, and as a result of this last outrageous act, the district has decided to hold a mass meeting on Vassall’s farm.” (Jim and Vassal’s farms lay two miles apart) “With the object of asking the Government for arms and ammunition so that the farmers may be able to defend themselves against the Chinamen.”

“Dear me! How dreadful it is to think that we are in danger from such attacks!”

A few days later, when Jim returned from the meeting, Louie met him in the hall, all excitement to hear what had taken place.

“Come in here,” said Louie, leading the way to the drawing room, “where we will be undisturbed.” Placing a chair for his wife and sitting down beside her, Jim described the proceedings with great energy and excitement.

“The farmers rolled up in force and we had a most interesting meeting,” said Jim. “It was unanimously decided that a delegate must be chosen to go to Pretoria to ask Sir Arthur Lawley for arms and ammunition.”

“Yes,” interrupted Louie, fear in her eyes as her intuition told her what she dreaded to hear, “who is the delegate?”

“They are sending me.”

“No, Jim, they cannot. You cannot go and leave me alone with the children.”

“Of course I can’t. If you would have a little patience and let me finish what I am saying, you would not be unnecessarily worried. I told the meeting that I absolutely refused to go unless Gert van Rensburg and his wife be appointed by the meeting to take charge of my wife and home during my absence. This was done. You know Gert is one of the bravest men I’ve ever known; so you have no need for anxiety, he is capable of dealing with any situation.”

“Are they coming?”

“Yes, there was no trouble about that, they will be here at sunset. I leave for Pretoria this after-

noon."

"Jim, I do wish you didn't have to go!"

"I'll be back again before you can say knife!" he said reassuringly.

"I suppose I had better go and make the necessary preparations for my visitors. I do wish you were not going away!"

Louie had seen Jim drive off to Witbank where he would catch the train to Pretoria; taking her knitting, she seated herself on the stoep, enjoying the lovely afternoon. She was startled by hasty footsteps hurrying towards her. "What is the matter, Martha?" she exclaimed in anxious, frightened tones as she caught sight of the fifteen year old daughter from the neighbouring farm "Nothing, nothing, don't be alarmed," Martha reassured her, "I have come with a message from my mother.""

"Dear me! What a relief; I thought you had the Chinamen with you."

"Heavens no," said Martha, laughing, "Mrs Rous, mother wishes to know if you will be so kind as to allow us to come over and sleep in your house tonight. Father is in the Bushveld collecting wood and has not returned. We are afraid to be alone."

"Of course you may come, and welcome. I shall be very glad to have you. What a pity your brother is not older! We shall be a crowd of women and children for Gert to defend. Let me see, there is your grandmother, your mother and her three children and my family and Gert's wife - nine of us! Give your mother my love and tell her to come over as soon as she can,"

When the household were about to retire, Louie said, "Gert, this is Jim's Mauser pistol which he carried during the Boer War. You must have it. I do hope you won't have occasion to use it! How I wish this night was passed and that it was tomorrow!"

"I am sure there is nothing to worry about," Gert replied, "I would keep an army at bay with this revolver."

"Heavens!" thought Louie, as she sat up in bed an hour later and listened to the banging on the front door. "During all the months we have been on this farm, no one has ever knocked on our front door at night, and tonight of all nights! It must be the Chinamen!"

She lit the candle, slipped into her dressing gown and slippers, paused for a moment to gaze at her two sleeping little ones as they lay in their cots; then, with the lighted candle in her hand, she stole softly across the room. She opened a door leading into the hall, a large square room with the front door at the further end. She was greatly relieved to see Gert van Rensburg standing in his bedroom door, Jim's Mauser pistol grasped in his huge hand, levelled at the front door. Beside him stood his wife, grasping the flickering candle, whose yellow, uncertain light cast dancing shadows on the wall, thus adding to the tenseness of the situation. It seemed to Louie that her heart would stop beating. White faced and with terror in her eyes, the two women gazed at one another.

"Who knocks?" asked Gert in a loud voice, first in Dutch and then in English.

More bangs were the only answer.

This brought Martha's family on to the scene, mother and children crowding behind Gert and his wife,

Again the loud knocking and again Gert shouted, "Who knocks? If you don't answer I am going to fire through the door and shoot you dead!"

A roar of laughter! Every member of the little group at once recognised that voice; it was the husband of the woman who had taken refuge with Louie. He had returned from the Bushveld to find his house locked and his family missing. He guessed at once where they were so had come over to fetch the key of the house and have his little joke.

“By Jove, man!” said Gert, “ you will never be nearer your death, without being dead, than you were tonight.”

On Jim’s return he was much annoyed at being told of the episode. “If Gert were not the brave man he is, Klaas would have been shot dead,” he declared. “Nine men out of ten would have fired through the door as the person knocked, but being brave, he gave the other fellow a chance. I do hate these practical jokes.”

“Yes, it was very foolish of him. What was so dreadful, Jim, was that if they had been Chinamen they could not have understood either Dutch or English, and when we got no answer to Gert’s question I felt sure that at least a dozen Chinamen were on the stoep!”

“Never mind,” said Jim feelingly, “it is all over now. Don’t think any more about it. My trip to Pretoria was quite successful, and the farmers will be supplied with firearms.”

Six weeks later, Louie’s twin sons were born; they were fine, healthy boys, and so much alike it was impossible to tell one from the other.

“Jim,” said Louie as they sat down to supper, “I am so upset; I find I have overfed one of the twins and starved the other. I can’t tell one from the other. What can we do to distinguish them?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” said Jim, laughing.

“How can you laugh?” said Louie, joining in the mirth.

“We must think of some way to mark them. Had they been little lambs, an earmark would have solved the problem.”

“Jim, I know, I have a gold chain.”

“That’s an idea; we’ll toss and see which of them must wear the chain! Heads for Graham and tails for Leslie. Graham’s got it….!” Said Jim as he tossed the coin.

Graham wore the chain for three years; it was given to him when he grew to manhood and is often worn by his sweet wife, Joan.

Louie never regretted having chosen the old homestead as the site for their house - a mile from their neighbours. Many a pleasant afternoon was spent walking over and chatting to their Dutch friends. Oom Jan was one of Nature’s gentlemen, quite illiterate, but a good farmer. He used to say, “If I went to school I should pass Standard I, but in farming I should pass Standard VIII.”

When the twins were four months old and Jim away from home, Louie was very upset and worried about Graham; he could not cry, just catching his breath in little fitful, gasping moans. This continued all through the day, in spite of the many home remedies which Louie used. In the afternoon she sent a messenger to the Jouberts. Oom Jan and his wife hurried over to her assistance. They decided that Louie could not be left alone for the night; that there was nothing for it but for them to stay.
After Graham had been bathed, his fitful moaning and feeble wailing were so distressing that Oom Jan asked to be allowed to hold him. Taking the baby in his arms he paced the floor back and

forth; this motion so soothed the child that he slept. Fearing to disturb this gentle sleep, Oom Jan sat gingerly on the edge of a chair, still holding him. For two hours this son of the soil, a giant of over six feet, sat as still as death, until his granite joints were so cramped that he could not move if he wished to do so. His wife's effort to give him a cup of coffee was met by an angry scowl, Oom Jan gazing wrathfully at her, not daring to shake his head. Nature was this restored when Graham woke - the dreadful moaning had ceased and he was quite normal.
Louie thanked her patient friend with a warm handclasp as they retired for the night. It was impossible for her to find words to express her gratitude.

Farmers living in the Highveld or Middleveld of the Transvaal trekked to the Bushveld every winter, where they can experience warm sunny days, and where they can have plenty of feed for their animals. They would lock up their houses and trek with their servants and all their livestock, cows, horses, sheep, pigs, fowls, dogs and cats. The farm was left absolutely desolate during their absence. When the twins were nine months old, the family had their first experience of trekking to the Bushveld.

Louie found the servant question a great problem as she disliked having men in the house to do the work. "I have a nice surprise for you," said Jim one day after they had returned from the Bushveld.

"What is it? I do love surprises!"

"I'm sure you will like this on - it is a dear old kaffir woman."

"Jim, how exciting!"

"Yes, she has quite an exciting history. Her name is old 'Ayeh Diena' - she was sold on the Lichtenburg Market Square after one of those petty wars the Transvaal used to wage against the native tribes. Imagine, she was sold for ten pounds when she was about twelve years old and the condition was that she had to work for her master for twenty-one years! Mr Porter bought her and she served him faithfully for twenty-eight years. She married and has a large family. She is here with several of her sons and a couple of granddaughters. She only left her master because the Boer War broke up their home. As they lived not very far from here, she feels this is her own country and is anxious to settle here and for them all to work for us."

"How wonderful! Do let us go out, I am anxious to see the old woman."

"Never mind how ugly she is. If she's good, we'll love her."

She was good and Louie did grow to love her, for she served her well and faithfully all the time the family lived at Riverside.

"Come and look at my seventy-two trees," said Jim, as he met Louie coming out of the front door.

Together they strolled around the homestead.

"They are growing beautifully; how splendid it will be when we have their lovely shade," exclaimed Louie.

"Yes, I am very pleased with their growth; come along down to the orchard, seven hundred trees are growing there and getting on like a house on fire, and all the plantations I have sown with wattles are coming up like hairs on a dog's back. Of course, being in this area, surrounded by coal mines, trees would do well."

"I am so glad about that broad belt of wattles you have sown on the way to Witbank; it will be so

lovely driving amongst a mass of evergreen trees. But I am so impatient for the fruit trees to be full bearing."

"Well, it won't be more than a few years before you will have that pleasure," replied Jim.

"We must hurry back now, Jim, it's time for the children's supper. Oh! We have been having such fun with the twins, they don't know themselves."

"Whatever do you mean?" Jim asked.

"Well, when I lift Graham up to the mirror and say 'who's that?' he answers 'Leslie' and when I lift Leslie up and ask him the same question he says 'it's Graham'."

"How amusing! They are ridiculously alike. It is just as well Graham is wearing that chain around his neck. What do you say to going for a picnic tomorrow?"

"How lovely! Where shall we go?"

"Not very far, about halfway to Witbank. A deserted farm where there is a nice old garden, I think you will enjoy spending the day there."

"Indeed I shall, and so will the children."

"We'll all pack into the old Cape cart; I must have a boy to help me and you will want a nurse."

"What a blessing the cart is so big and roomy! It reminds me of the old cart at Plaat River, in which I drove twice a week to Tafelberg Hall for years and years to School."

"Yes, it is rather like your father's cart but my horses are very different."

"Dear old Bokkie and Stopper! They always got us there in the end, anyhow."

"Heavens! But what a pace to go at."

"After all, Jim, I do think it is a pity to be always in a hurry. We are so apt to lose the joy of the road, by the thought of our destination, both in travelling and living our lives; let us go a bit slow so as not to miss the joy that may be there. Life is so beautiful and we have so very much to be thankful for."

The next day dawned bright and clear, though very cold. The picnic was enjoyed by everyone. In the afternoon the horses were inspanned and the family packed in. Jim, Marcus and the native boy on the front seat, Louie, Marjory and the twins and the little nursemaid on the back seat. The horses behaved very badly, because Jim said they were cold, one horse would not pull and the other pulled too hard. Over went the cart!

Fortunately Jim saw what was going to happen and as it capsized, he leaped out and dashed for the horses' heads, holding them firmly and keeping them from bolting. This, of course, saved the family, who were scrambling about in the tent, struggling under the rugs, cushion, picnic basket and what not! As Jim stood in front of the horses, he saw everyone scramble out and reach a place of safety, except Marcus, who lay quite still with the front seat on his neck and his leg under the wheel. Calling to the native boy to take charge of the horses, Jim dashed round, lifted the wheel and called to Marcus. Louie had also seen Marcus and was able to help him up. He had been stunned, and but for a few scratches he was unhurt. Leslie was crying most bitterly; he was the only one making a noise, and enough noise to beat the band, said Jim.

“Why are you crying?” asked his mother, taking him into her arms. He held out his tiny foot, showing that his shoe was gone. A search was made for the shoe and when this was restored the child was happy once more.

With a great deal of trouble the cart was righted and the family packed in - no sooner had the journey begun again than Graham lifted his voice and wept. “What are you crying about? What’s the matter with you?” asked Jim.

The twins were eighteen months old at this time, and Graham’s answer to his father’s enquiry is hard to describe. He blew through his lips to imitate a horse and said “Hurt me….P-U-R-R-R hurt me.”

“Never mind, you poor little man. They won’t hurt you again. See how nicely they are trotting.”

All safely home at last and the children tucked in for the night. The peace and love of those long, delightful winter evenings were loved by Jim and Louie, as they sat before a glowing fire - he reading aloud and she knitting. One of the rules of the house was “No sewing in the evening.”

“Jim,” said Louie the next day, “the children seem quite upset as a result of yesterday’s shock, the cart turning over. Marcus is so limp and restless, he is on the sofa in the drawing room.”

“Just as well to keep him quiet. I expect he’ll be alright tomorrow.”

When Jim came in at sunset he found Louie busy with the preparations for the children’s supper. “Marcus is still lying on the sofa,” she said, “do go and cheer him up - there’s a lovely fire in the drawing room.”

“By Jove! I’m looking forward to getting in front of a fire, I am perished.” So saying, Jim went off.

“Well, old chap, you’ve had a nice lazy day lying here. Feeling better?”

“Yes, Dad.”

“I envy you this nice warm room. I’m as cold as ice,” said Jim, as he drew a chair as close to the fire as he cold and then leaned right over, almost with his hands in the flames. “Ah! This is lovely!” and then, happening to glance round, he noticed that the blind had not been drawn. He rose, crossed the room and as his hand touched the blind, there was the most terrific explosion.

Louie came rushing into the room. Jim was still standing with his hand on the undrawn blind, the whole room was strewn with bits of burning coal.

“Whatever’s happened?” asked Louie as she and Jim set to work removing the bits of burning coal.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Jim, “look where I was sitting. I got up to draw the blind and the explosion took place. Look! The whole of the back of the fireplace is blown out.”

“How awful! But what happened?” asked Louie, “I don’t understand what caused the explosion.”

“A dud cartridge apparently. One that did not explode in the mine thought fit to go off now.”

“Oh! How thankful I am that you are safe! What a mercy that you got up to draw that blind! I cannot bear to think what injury you would have received had you been in the chair when the cartridge exploded.”

“Well, don’t let us worry about what might have been! We are all safe and the only damage done is to the fireplace. I’ll be able to build that in again and you will never know the difference.

“How delightful it is to be looking forward to our trip to the Bushveld; the rest and peace and the holiday from housekeeping. One’s duties seem so much easier when in the open. It will be nice having Mother, Edith and Olive.”

“Isn’t Gertrude coming too?”

“Yes, with her five children; we shall have a happy crowd and I am particularly glad that our children will have the companionship of the other children.”

“Yes, I expect they should be having some of the corners rubbed off.”

“Oh no! Jim they are far too young for that.”

“I will drive down to our camping ground a few days before we trek, and build a hut for our family, because your mother with her two daughters must have our tent, and of course Gertrude is bringing her own tent.”

Louie was indeed a very busy person for the next few weeks, thinking and planning and making preparations for the day’s trek and the two months’ camping. There was no way of obtaining provisions once they were in camp. Every week a native would be sent on horseback, a distance of about fifty miles to Witbank to get the post - and would be able to bring some small item which he would carry in the saddle bag - otherwise they would have to do without things that were forgotten.

At last the day dawned and the wagon stood ready, packed with bedsteads, bedding, furniture, provisions and clothes for nine children and six grown-ups, besides provisions for two native servant boys for two months. The journey began in the very early hours of a winter morning because it was necessary to reach their destination before nightfall, as there was much settling in to do before dark.

The day was perfect, brilliant sunshine and no wind, truly a typical South African mid-winter day. The children, especially the five little visitors, whose lives were spent in a town, and who were having their first experience of a trek by an ox-wagon, were wild with excitement. It was a delightful journey; everybody was full of joyous anticipation of the coming holiday and camp life.

“What a lovely spot you have chosen,” said Louie as Jim helped her to alight. “Those mountains, these glorious big trees - how snug and sheltered it all looks.”

“Yes, and the water is handy, a beautiful stream runs along the foot of the mountains and down the valley you see to your right. I do think this spot would be hard to beat.”

“I had no idea anything so charming cold be found in the Bushveld. Come, I am so anxious to see our hut. Oh! Jim, it is a huge room! However did you do it?”

“It will be a room,” he said proudly, “when it has its roof. I planted two rows of young saplings twelve feet apart and drew the tops together to form the roof. When I have covered that roof with a buck-sail it will be complete. The sides and ends are thatched with elephant grass and this opening I have made for a window, see, you have a roller blind!”

“How lovely!” exclaimed Louie, “I see it is a sugar bag with a stick in it.”

“Yes, and when you want your window open, just roll up and tie it like this. The doorway has an old curtain which will hang across the opening. Look at these - you remember how mystified you were

about those baize curtains I made you pack? Well, just here in the middle of the room we are going to hang them, dividing this space into two rooms."

"Jim, how splendid, that will be our bedroom, this our living-room! It will make both rooms so cosy and nice and we can draw the curtains aside when we wish to. Oh!," continued Louie, with a deep sigh of contentment, "I think it is all perfect. I wish we could stay here for six months instead of two."

"You won't wish that when summer comes."

"No, I suppose not. I'm so pleased with all the arrangements you've made, you've thought of everything."

"I am glad you are satisfied. We must get busy now, I'll put up the bedsteads for you so that you can make the beds, while I fix the other tents."

NIGHTFALL:

"How quickly it gets dark," said Gertrude, "a couple of minutes ago the sun was shining and now - dark!"

"Yes, that is why I made such an early start, and why we've been working with top speed. It is miserable if it gets dark before you are settled - prowling about looking for things with a lantern is most unpleasant, and you never can find what you are looking for. What a beautiful night. Look at the starry heaven; can anything beat that?'

"What a glorious fire," said Olive, coming out of the tent she shared with her mother and sister. "It has turned quite cold! What a sudden change from the heat of the day. How nice to have a fire, and such a fire! What enormous logs!"

"I cannot bear a half-hearted fire at any time, but especially in the Bushveld," said Jim as he settled himself in a comfortable chair, which he had provided as he hated a camp stool. "The evening fire is one of my joys while we are in camp. I love piling on these great logs."

"Does this make you think of your days on the road when you did transport riding?" asked Gertrude, shading her face from the blaze.

"No indeed! We never experienced anything so luxurious and comfortable as this camp - or this fire."

"Please do not speak of those days, it makes me too miserable," said Louie. "I cannot bear to think of the hardships you endured and the thrashing that brute of a native gave you."

"Do tell us about it," came a chorus of voices.

"Well, wait until I take the children to bed. It does so upset me to hear you tell of that experience."

The story of the brutal thrashing Jim experienced at the hands of a native brought tears to Gertrude's eyes. Wiping them away impatiently, she stamped her foot. "I wish I had been there," she exclaimed, "I do believe I would have shot him!" (Gertrude was the proud possessor of a saloon rifle.)

"Oh! Gertrude," protested Olive, "how blood-thirsty you are! The thought of shooting a man!"

“I don’t think so,” replied Gertrude indignantly, “I would have been doing a service to mankind.”

“Stop arguing,” teased Jim, “and let me tell you about tomorrow’s programme. The first thing I must do is make our dwelling place safe.”

“SAFE - safe from what?” asked Gertrude.

“From fire. Bushveld fires are the dread of everyone who camps, and to prevent fire from burning us out we protect ourselves by burning a wide strip of grass right around the camp, a firebreak we call it. This is done by setting the grass alight, controlling the flames with wet sacks, and burning a wide strip around the camp. Should the grass catch alight some distance off, it will burn as far as our fire-belt. The children must be kept near the tents, out of the way of the workers and the flames. An accident might easily happen.”

“May we all come and watch?”

“Certainly, but I must warn you that it will be hot and unpleasant.”

The following morning, the holiday-makers, breathless with excitement and filled with foreboding at the thought of what would happen should Jim lose control of the flames; watched him as he and his two servants, equipped with buckets of water and wet bags with which they could control the leaping flames, set fire to the grass. Flying embers and smoke occasionally hid the workers, then they could be seen as they allowed the flames to creep in one direction, and when the greedy flames seemed to the watchers to beyond control, they would be promptly smothered by the application of the wet sacks.

At last the task was successfully accomplished and everybody gathered aorund the table where Mrs Flemmer had a family teapot, the contents of which were most refreshing after the morning’s experience.

“What are you doing, Dad?” asked Marjory a few days later, as she came upon Jim busy at work.

“This is going to be a surprise for Mother. You can all come and help if you like. Gather all the stones you can find and place them here; the more stones I have the better. I am building a solid round table of mud and stones for Mother to do the cooking on instead of the ground.”

When completed the table of mud and stones was a great success. Instead of bending over a fire on the ground, with heat, flames and smoke in one’s face, it was now possible to stand and attend to the cooking. The convenience and comfort Louie derived more than repaid Jim for his work.

The next piece of work was an oven. This was built in the shape of a wagon tent, with an opening in the front and a small opening in the back to enable the fire to draw. When required for baking, a fire was made in the oven, then all the coals were scraped out and the temperature tested. This was done by Louie inserting her hand whilst she counted to ten. If she could hold it for longer, the oven was too cool and if not so long, it was too hot. The bread, which had been set in pans to rise was placed in the oven and both the front opening and the hole at the back sealed for two hours. The bread baked in this way was always a roaring success.

“What are we going to do this evening? What about a game of bridge?” suggested Olive, as after the evening meal they all gathered round the fire.

“Oh, no! Not tonight. Let us talk,” pleaded Louie.

“Very well, you begin.”

“That is not the way to encourage conversation, Olive. I know, let each tell a true story. Mother, won’t you begin?”

“Oh, my dear, I cannot.”

“I am sure you can. Tell us something about your childhood.”

“You have heard so often all that I ever did. Perhaps I could tell you something about Father.”

“Yes, do, that would be lovely!”

“Louie, are you never going to grow up?” asked Jim.

“Not if by growing up you mean no more stories. Yes, Mother.”

“When your father was a little boy, one day his mother missed him. On going out into the street to look for him she was greatly distressed to see him at the top of a very high ladder reaching to the roof of one of the houses. The houses, you know, in Denmark are four or five storeys high, and there he was perched right at the top of the ladder,”
“Whatever did she do?”

“She hurried into the house and told her husband, who said ‘We must be careful not to frighten him. You go out and tell him how clever he is, tell him to stay up there because you want his daddy to see what a big boy he is to have climbed the ladder!’

When Dr Flemmer came out of the house, he called to his little son, saying he was coming up to join him. ‘Hold tight, hold tight.’ Soon the doctor was beside him. Taking him in his arms, he carried him down. On reaching the ground he received a sound whipping.”

“Oh! Poor little boy, what a shame,” said Olive, “I cannot bear children to be whipped.”
“That was most interesting. Can you remember something more of father’s boyhood?” asked Louie.

“Louie, you are insatiable,” said Jim.

Smiling at Louie, Mrs Flemmer said, “While your father was still three years of age, the doctor and his brother were walking in the garden one day, when they spied Ludvig playing in the water. You know there is sea everywhere in Denmark and the sea came almost to the garden gate. ‘Oh, dear,’ said the doctor, ‘I do not know how to cure Ludvig of his love of water. I am afraid we shall find him drowned one of these days.’ ‘I’ll soon cure him,’ said his uncle, and stepping through the gate, he seized the child and flung him far out into the sea.”

“Oh! What a dreadful thing to do,” exclaimed Louie.

“They watched, and as he came to the surface, what was their surprise to see the little fellow with a broad grin on his face. Yes, he was LAUGHING as he shook the water out of his eyes! His uncle had to wade in and rescue him, very disgusted at the failure of his lesson. ‘The little beggar thinks I’m playing with him and that this is part of the game,’ he said, carrying the child back to the house to his mother, while the doctor leaned against the garden gate, convulsed with laughter at his brother’s sorry plight.”

“What a dear little fellow he must have been, but I do think tossing a child into the water was a dangerous thing to do,” said Gertrude.

“They did so many strange things in those days,” said Mrs Flemmer, “but I think that Dr Flemmer’s way of teaching his children to swim was the strangest of all. He would take them out in a boat and when well out, would tie a rope around the child’s waist and let it over the side. That is how he taught all his children to swim, and he used to be very much amused when he overheard the fisher folk say, ‘There goes Dr Flemmer to drown his children.’”

“How amusing,” said Olive, ‘I remember Father teaching us to swim.”

“Yes, your father thought it necessary for everyone to be able to swim as so often a drowning accident could be avoided if people could only swim. Your grand-father, Mr Distin, saved his life on two occasions by being able to swim,” continued Mrs Flemmer, “once in a full river he was trying to cross, and another time in 1874 when there were such terrific rains and floods in the Colony, and we all expected the big dam at Tafelberg Hall to break.”

“How exciting!”

“There was danger that if the main wall broke the homestead would be washed away. My father, his sons and the servants spent all night at the dam; it had been arranged beforehand that should there be any sign of the wall breaking, the farm bell would be rung as an alarm. The wagons stood ready inspanned to convey the family to higher ground should it be necessary. We all went to bed fully dressed. My father was walking on the retaining wall; on the side away from the house when it broke and landed him in the swirling waters. He was, as I said, a strong swimmer and swam to safety, thankful that all the danger was past, as because of the breaking on the retaining wall, the pressure on the main wall was relieved. We, of course, knew nothing of his experience until the following morning.”

“How thrilling,” said Gertrude, “I thought farming was all fun; that one spent one’s life hunting, shooting and camping and just enjoying oneself. I should have hated that ducking at that time of night.”

“Come along to bed now,” said Jim, “I think we are all sleepy.”

The weather remained ideal; the days were warm, bright and sunny, the nights cold and starlit. Everybody was happy and so peace reigned in their midst, to the great delight of Louie.

Every day, after the midday meal, the occupants of the little camp would retire for the usual South African siesta - everybody except Jim; in fact he intensely disliked this habit and always found something of interest to occupy him.

“I am going for a very long walk this afternoon while you lazy people sleep, and don’t expect me back before tea.”

Louie was startled half an hour later by hearing his quick running footsteps.

“Whatever has happened?” she asked, as she rushed out of their hut to meet him.

“My dear, the worst! A veld fire! The wind is in this direction!”

“Oh! Jim, how dreadful!”

“Yes, rouse everybody, even the children. The fire is a good way behind those koppies, but it is coming on to us, it will come through that opening. We must make ourselves absolutely secure by widening our fire belt. Your mother, the younger children and the horses must remain in the very centre of that camp, beside that tree, and the rest must work.”

All through the long hot hours they carried water to where Jim, with the two native men, were setting alight the grass and beating out the flames with wet bags. Water splashed on their clothes and shoes, and the black burned grass clung to their damp garments. The heat was terrific. They were spurred on, however, to greater efforts in spite of their plight, when they could hear the roar of the oncoming fire! At last it reached the gap in the hills, as Jim had anticipated. It was indeed a fearsome sight and struck terror into the hearts of the onlookers as it rushed down the incline.

“Stand back! Stand right back, every one of you!” shouted Jim.

They watched as the fire roared through the pass, down the valley and so past the camp.

“I never want to go through another such experience,” said Gertrude, “it was dreadful! I am sure I’ll dream about it tonight.”

“See how exciting it was,” said Jim, laughing, “I am sure you cannot remember ever having had so much excitement in one afternoon. Besides, now you’ll have something to write home about.”

“Jim, that is just like you,” said Louie, “always looking on the bright or funny side of everything that happens.”

As the family and visitors gathered round the fire the following evening, Olive came towards them from Louie’s tent, saying, “Jim, I do think it was most ingenious of you to have made this bead frame for Louie’s school. Have you seen it Gertrude?”

“No, do let me see it.”

“Look, these are four pieces of plank nailed together to make the frame, wires upon which discs of wood have been threaded stretched across, the discs numbering 1 to 100.”

“What an excellent home-made bead frame!” exclaimed Gertrude.

“As Louie is teaching the children, it is up to me to give her as much help as I can. I believe they love playing with the bead frame and find that learning to count is quite easy.”

“Yes, Jim is most helpful. See this box of letters he has made from elephant grass - the straight letters are complete, stuck with pins, the round letters they build with these short pieces, cut for that purpose. It does make teaching so much easier if they are amused and can be interested. I also have a lovely pair of knitting needles which Jim made for me last year while we were camping. I knitted a huge shawl with them for a dear old Dutch lady friend of mine.”

“We are nearly as clever as the ‘Swiss Family Robinson’,” laughed Jim, “I am sure these good people are sick of hearing our doings. Louie, didn’t I see a letter from Christian amongst your post?”

“Yes, I nearly forgot to tell you. He does tell me something so amusing! He says they have had a bad time with locusts and his uncle, who had been out all day trying to save his garden from them came in hot, tired and angry and said ‘Why didn’t that rascally old Pharaoh let the Israelites go?

Confound him!'"

Louie's story caused great mirth amongst the group. When Gertrude was able to speak she said: "The dear old man! He must have been very angry!"

RIVERSIDE
PART II

The following year Jim and Louie with their four children trekked to the Bushveld alone. "I am glad to find our camping spot just as we left it last year," said Louie. "We shall always come back to this spot, year after year, year after year, always this same place, won't we?"

"Yes, I think we shall," answered Jim.

(But they never came again. This was their last visit to the Bushveld.)

They had been in camp about a week when one day as they sat at their midday meal Jim said, "You know how often I have written letters to different owners of farm, and to companies, about hiring farms for those men who have returned from St Helena or Bermuda; so many of these men have wanted a farm called 'Wolvervlei'. It will take me half an hour to ride over. I want to go this afternoon and have a look at the place."

"That will be interesting for you. To whom does it belong?"

"To the Transvaal Estates and Development Company."

"What time do you think you will get back?"

"Not much before sunset."

"I had a most interesting afternoon," said Jim on his return, "I rode over the farm and intend writing a full report on the property which I will send to the Manager of the Transvaal Estates and Development Company."

The following year Jim decided to remain home and not to trek to the Bushveld.

"I am sorry to disappoint you Louie; you do enjoy the camping, but it is going to take me all my time to prune our fruit trees, and there is a good deal which needs my attention on the farm - we cannot spare the time to be away."

"Never mind, we will have lovely evenings at the fireside, reading."

A few days later, Jim rode over to Vassall's farm and on his return called to Louie, "Come with me, I am taking my horse to water. I have had a most interesting afternoon."

"Jim, this sounds exciting."

"Ah! I thought you would be interested. Vassall, as you know, is interested in Theosophy. Well, he has a kindred spirit, a very clever man, staying with him. They are coming over to dinner tomorrow. This man, Daymon, knows four languages, is a wonderful musician and at one time intended making music his profession."

“What an interesting person! I am glad you have invited them to dinner as I would love to hear him play.”

“Oh! He’ll play alright if you ask him.”

“I most certainly shall. I hope they come early. I want time for music and talking.”

Sunday came - and the interesting visitor. He talked. He played. He and Vassall stayed for the afternoon, supper and the evening. How he played! Louie had never heard such music. Grieg, Listz, Chopin - and how he talked!

“I understand you know four languages,” said Louie, “in which of these languages do you think?”

“I am beyond thought,” answered Daymon unctuously, “I will lend you some of my books; I have the lives of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Alcot. Another author whom I would advise you to read is Ralph Waldo Trine. He says:
‘You can never tell what a thought may do
In bringing you hate or love,
For thoughts are things and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier dove.
They follow the law of the universe,
Each thing must create its kind,
They speed o’er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.’
Louie has always been grateful for this introduction to Trine as his book ‘In Tune with the Infinite’ has been helpful in many a trying hour.

Whenever Daymon visited Vassall, it was understood that they should spend Sunday together with Jim and Louie. They read the books he lent them. “Because,” as Louie said, “Knowledge is Power and though we have no intention of becoming Theosophists, we are anxious to learn all we can.”

“Jim you must come in to tea, do stop working. I want to tell you about my letter from Mother. She has made her plans. She and Edith are going to Bechuanaland to stay with Jack and his family for three months, and Olive is coming to us. Isn’t it lovely? I am looking forward to having her here. She is such a sweet girl and everybody’s favourite. In our family of six, I am sure everyone loves her best.”

“I am very glad she is coming to us. It will be nice for you to have her and will make up to you for missing your camping this year. We must try and get up to Witbank and visit some of our friends.”

“That would be nice! Do let us go as soon as possible while this fine weather lasts.”
Louie’s pleasurable anticipation of Olive’s arrival was fully justified. Fortunately the weather was perfect, bright winter sunshine, and Louie and Olive were able to take long, delightful walks and often accompanied Jim in his long tramps to work. Louie loved the evenings, when she and Olive would sit with their work before a glowing fire, while Jim read aloud.

A pleasant afternoon was spent visiting their friends in Witbank. On the return journey, Olive, who was in high spirits and full of fun said, “Do you remember the first time we visited our Scotch friend, when Marcus was four years old? She asked him how old he was. He told her and then she said, ‘And what’s your name?’ Do you remember his answer and how we laughed?”

“No,” said Jim, “tell us what he said.”

“He said, ‘I was born Rous, but my mother gave me the name of Marcus’. Wasn’t that funny? How could a child have worked out such an answer?”

Happy days for Louie with this dear sister, nine years her junior and still regarded as a child to be taken care of.

Daymon came! Olive was completely carried away by his teachings and became his most enthusiastic disciple. (Poor misguided child! Lost to her family for the last twenty years - no word of her has reached them in all that time, so they know not is she dead - or does she live?)

Louie studied her Bible as never before, that she might be able to meet Olive’s arguments. But alas! How futile it all was! Daymon had a wife and two children, and Olive went to his home the better to study Theosophy. Olive’s leaving her hurt Louie very much.

“The Olive Flemmer you knew is dead,” she declared, “If you will not receive my master, Louie, I will have nothing more to do with any of you.”

“But Olive,” protested Louie, “how can you treat Mother as you are doing? Since father’s death four years ago, you and she have shared the same room and you have been everything to her. Poor little Mother, with her snow white hair and her sad eyes - how she weeps over you! Oh, Olive! I cannot think how you can find it in your heart to leave her.”

Olive promptly quoted from St Matthew XIX verse 29 - ‘And everyone that have forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children or land, for My Name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.’

The re-incarnation of the soul was one of Daymon’s strong points - it was rather fascinating to be told you possessed a beautiful soul or an old soul. His influence over Olive was complete and she believed every word he said. He was a big strapping man of about six feet in height with black hair and beady black eyes, and a powerful personality.

Sad, distressing times were experienced where all had been so peaceful. There were arguments and pleadings, heartaches and misery, but Olive and Daymon stuck to their perverse faith.

Jim forbade Daymon the house and would have laid the same restriction on Olive, had it not been for Louie and her mother, whose love for the misguided girl remained unabated.

“Louie,” said Jim on day during December 1909, “you remember the farm ‘Wolvervlei’ in the Bushveld and how I rode over to inspect it one afternoon?”

“Yes, I remember quite well.”

“I sent my report to the Manager of the Transvaal Estates and Development Company and I have a letter here as a result of that report.”

“Jim, how exciting! Do tell me about it.”

“It appears the Company employs a Farm Inspector, and this post has been offered to me by the Directors, as they are pleased with the fullness and detail of my report. What do you think of that?”

“I think it will be very interesting but can’t quite grasp what it will mean.”

“It means of course, that I shall have to be away from home …….wait a moment…..” as Louie

was about to protest, “and let me finish before you say a word. For the next few months there is very little work doing on the farm. I can leave the Natives in charge. As you know, farming is not paying. On an undeveloped place like this there is nothing coming in and so much going out. We have a debt of £80 which worries me. This is my plan - that I take a house in East London for three months for you, the children, your mother and Edith and have a holiday at the seaside.”

“Jim, how lovely.”

“Your mother is wanting to return to the Colony for Christian’s wedding. Discuss your plans with her and make the necessary arrangements.”

“I do think it will be splendid for us all to be away from ‘Riverside’ for a time and this unhappy business about Olive. How excited the children will be when they hear about this trip to the sea! Shall I ever forget my first experience, our trip to the Kowie when I was five!”

“Was that the time poor old Jack was nearly drowned?”

“Yes, how wonderful it was of that little Hottentot maid to dash into the mighty ocean. I can see Jack’s little head, a speck away out on the waves, while all of us stood and watched. Oh! I think it was wonderful! Brave little Sannie. I wonder what became of her! Poor little mother, I do feel so sad for her to have this heartache which Olive’s religious mania has given her, as if her cup of sorrow had not already overflowed. To think that Olive, of all people, should add to her load of sorrow.”

“Don’t let us talk about it. I agree with you that it will be good for all of us to have a change of scene and atmosphere, and one never knows, perhaps Olive will have come to her senses by the time you get back.”

“Dear me,” sighed Louie as she sank back among the cushions in the railway carriage, “how thankful I am that we are off. I began to feel as if this day would never come. And to think we are actually on the train!”

“You have had a very busy time, so much to see and do. You must have a good rest during this holiday.”

“Ah! I shall, but think of it, in two hours we’ve got to change. What a beastly nuisance!”

“Don’t worry dear, Claude will be at Germiston to meet us and he will help us into the other carriage.”

“I can’t imagine Claude a man; it is five years since I saw him.”

“Is it really as long as that? You will see a change.”

“Oh! Claude,” said Louie, springing out of the carriage and throwing her arms round him, “how nice to see you. I should have known you anywhere though you are a man. What a blessing to have you help us; we do seem to have so much luggage and so many children!”

As Claude was in the act of handing the last of the children, Graham, into the train for East London, off it went, Graham remaining on the platform with Claude. Poor Louie!

“Mother, whatever shall we do? We can’t possible go without Graham, poor little bot, what are we going to do?”

Fortunately an official came along. “Madam,” he said, “we are only shunting.”

Oh! The relief! After some minutes they arrived at the platform to find Claude with Graham in his arms.

“He’s been a plucky little man; when I told him the train was coming back for him he was quite happy,” said Claude as he handed Graham over to his mother.

The journey was accomplished without any further excitement. After their arrival in East London the landlady said, “I want to be the first to show the children the sea. Come along my dears, come with me,” and she led them out on to the balcony. A few houses - and then the great and mighty ocean - one wonders what was passing in their little minds as they stood and gazed. It was a dull grey day, and it was almost impossible to tell where the sea ended and the sky began, a complete blending of the horizon. After a few moments Marcus spoke. “It looks like a piece of sky has fallen out.” The lady was charmed. “Nothing, no description could be prettier,” she said.
A few weeks later Louie called to the children, “Come in here. I want you to meet this lady. She used to teach me when I was a girl.”

“Oh, no, Mother!” said Marcus, “she looks much too young, she could not have taught you when you were a girl.”

Another heart was won!

“Louie,” said her old teacher, ‘send them away now because I want you to tell me about them. I am so interested to see you all; describe each one to me, I mean their tastes.”

“Their tastes?” said Louie, “well, well, we will start with Marcus, who is seven. He will never be a farmer which is of course a disappointment to his dad and me, but I have great faith in his future because he is always inventing things, always busy. He made a wonderful drinking arrangement for my chickens. I thought we were going to make our fortunes, but when Jim saw it he said, ‘Why it is an ordinary drinking fountain.” Neither Marcus nor I had ever heard of such a thing.

“Marjory is five - such a joy - an aunt of mine named her ‘Little Serena’ because she is never out of temper; she loves books but not dolls. I am sorry, as I loved my dolls so dearly!

“The twins are terrible little pickles - they were born farmers and really their worst troubles have been in their efforts to farm. They killed numbers of chickens in their anxiety to make them stay in the coop with the hen, and ducklings because they came off the water; they have had to be severely whipped.”

“Poor little chaps.”

“Jim always comes in at sunset and we devote ourselves to the children.”

“What a nice idea!”

“We got the idea from Longfellow.”

“From Longfellow?”

“Yes, and when Jim is tired he says, ‘I wish Longfellow had not written:

Between the dark and the daylight
As the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupation,
Which is known as the children's hour.'"
"How amusing! But a very nice idea."

"He talks to them when they are in bed and for a long time one or other of the twins, remembering their whipping, would say, 'Dad, we won't kill your ducks.'"

" The first Sunday after we arrived, Edith insisted on taking them to church. She gave them each threepence and told them they were not to talk. Of course, this was their first experience of town life - they had never been inside a church. When the plate came around they refused to part with their money. She whispered again and again, 'Put it in the plate!' The service was being held up, she got quite angry and said, 'You must put it in the plate, you are giving it to God!' Reluctantly they parted with their coins. After they returned I overheard one saying to the other, 'I don't like the guard in the Church, you give him a threepence and he doesn't give you anything. I like the guard in the tram, you give him a penny and he gives you a long ride!'"

"What amusing little boys - you should write a book about them!"

"Yes, I would love to collect all the funny sayings of the children and get someone to illustrate the book. It would be fun."

"What do you do about schooling?"

"When we are at home, I teach them, but I have been fortunate in finding a little private school almost next door. The twins go for one hour 9 - 10, and Marcus and Marjory for two hours. The other morning at 9.15 the twins came home. Written across their slate was 'The Twins say they are sleepy and hungry and tired! I can do nothing with them, so am sending them home.'"

"The little monkeys!"

"Their teacher is very nice, a kind woman with children of her own, and they are all very much entertained by the twins. In fact, she says no work is done by the rest of the school during the hour they are there! The other day she told them that if they found B for her she would give them each a bun. The next day, as soon as they came into the schoolroom they said, 'We'll find B for you if you'll give us a bun.' She explained that that could not happen every day. 'Well, we won't find B for you' - and they wouldn't."

"Funny little boys."

"We are very unhappy about Olive."

"Why, what has she done?"

"She has become an enthusiastic Theosophist, given up her home and her people. In a letter from my husband he tells me that she and the man she calls her master and teacher have disappeared! No one has the least idea what has become of them."

"I am very sorry. It is sad when religion is the cause of unhappiness at home."

"Indeed it is. No one knows what my poor little Mother is suffering! The cruel heartache caused by her having to give up her child. Olive has always been such a dear girl, a favourite with everybody.

She is completely mesmerised by this man, nothing we say has the least effect. She is determined to give her life over to the study of his teachings. It has been nice seeing you. Do come again!"

"Indeed I will, thanks very much; I have enjoyed the afternoon."

The three months holiday in East London was drawing to a close when one day Louie rushed into her mother's room in great excitement.

"Mother, I've got such a piece of news for you! You'll never guess."

"No, I'm no good at guessing."

"Part of my news is disappointing, but the other part is delightful. Jim has decided to carry on with his billet as Farm Inspector - he says £40 a month is not to be sneezed at - I am very sorry he cannot give it up, but agree that 'beggars can't be choosers'. Now for the exciting news. Jim has arranged to take Claude as a partner; he is to carry on the farming. It will be so nice having dear old Claude in the house; so much nicer than having a stranger or being alone. Jim has arranged with the Company that his headquarters will be in Riverside, his weekends and any spare time will be spent at home. He does his travelling by train when he can and for country work he has an American buckboard, four mules and a native boy."

"I am glad to think my dear Claude will be with us."

"Mother," said Marcus, as he came running into the room, "Our shoes have been mended, and we have brought them home. The shoemaker says when you are passing will you go in and see him!"

"What on earth can he want to see me for?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I'm curious. Come with me Marcus, and we'll run along and see him!"

Arrived at the cobbler's, Louie said, "My little son tells me you wish to see me."
"Oh! Madam it is good of you to come. As you know, I have been mending your children's shoes. When I asked one of them where you bought your shoes, they said, 'Dad makes them.' I can't believe them, that is why I asked the little boy to tell you I would be glad if you would just step in when you are passing. These shoes are hand-made and so well done, I told them I thought you got them from England, but they say, 'No, Dad made them.'"

"They are telling the truth," said Louie, laughing. "My husband has made all their shoes for the last five years. He makes the last for each child, and from a piece of leather for which he pays eight shillings, he makes four pairs of shoes. Each pair would cost twelve shillings were we to buy them, and they would not be nearly as strong."

"I am very interested and I congratulate your husband on his work."

"I'll tell him when I see him how much you admired his handiwork."

"I do indeed admire these shoes, they look anything but home-made with their neat little ankle strap, the brown button and nice little sole."

"We polish them with brown polish," said Louie, pleased that the old man should praise her husband's work. "I wonder why all home-made shoes are not made to this pattern. The ordinary veld-

schoen are so ugly; my husband could not bear to make them for the children, though the man who taught him how to make shoes only makes veldschoen for his own children."

"Riverside once more - home, sweet home - I do think the best part of a holiday is getting home," said Louie, to the amusement of the family group as they sat on the stoep one lovely May afternoon. "How strange it is to carry on without Jim; he is such a tower of strength and so resourceful. Whether the children are ill or anything goes wrong with my sewing machine, he is able to put things right and give advice. I wonder how long he will think it necessary to remain with the Company. He is kept very busy and finds great interest in his experiences. My poor Jim, he does love his home, and he has had so much of roughing it and knocking about. It is fortunate, however, that he was able to arrange for Riverside as his headquarters - though it is rather difficult - never knowing when he is arriving."

"Louie," said her aunt, who was visiting her, "you make me think of a verse in the Bible."

"Do I? How funny. Do tell me the verse."

" 'Ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even or midnight or at the cock crow in the morning.' While I have been with you during these last weeks, Jim has turned up at nearly all these different hours."

"Mother, mother," came a shout from the children, as they came running on to the stoep, "we see dad's spider coming down the road from Witbank."

"Now, what did I tell you? You never dreamed he would come this afternoon."

"No, but I am glad he is coming. Please see about the tea for me, he will be wanting a cup as soon as he gets in. The children and I will go and meet him."

"Dear me! It is lovely to be home and what a delicious cup of tea! Louie you will be interested to hear that while in Pretoria I called on a very old friend whom I have not seen for years and have arranged for her and her daughters to come and spend some weeks with you."

"How very nice."

"Yes, you will be missing Flossie when she leaves and they will come as soon as they hear from you, so make arrangements and don't let your visitors overlap; I like to think you have someone to keep you cheerful."

"Tell me what you have been doing. Have you had any exciting experiences?"

"Indeed I have. Last week I tried to cross the Crocodile River which was in flood; I had a friend with me and, of course my driver. The four mules plunged into the water and swam strongly, but we were being washed out of our course, so I made for an island I spotted about midstream and landed. Heavens! I never thought there were so many spiders, yes, spiders! - in the whole world. Every inch of that little island was covered with them. All sorts and sizes - you could not put your foot down without a crunch - phew! - it was horrible!"

"It must have been! And you do so hate spiders! What did you do?"

"I said, 'This is no place for me.' And we climbed into our vehicle and urged the mules back into the full river. However, we reached the opposite bank so were alright."

“It does seem a great risk, going into a full river. You remember our dear old friend who was in charge of the donkey transport while we were at ‘The Pyramids’ and how he drowned?

“Yes, poor old chap, but of course, having lately arrived from England he knew very little of the danger of our South African rivers.”

After a brief but happy weekend, Jim had to return to his work and a week later his old friend, with her three daughters, arrived from Pretoria to stay with Louie. One evening as Louie was lighting the candles, after the children had had their supper, they all crowded round her and four little voices were begging, ‘Please may I sleep in Mary’s room tonight?’ Mary was twelve and their heroine.

“You can’t all sleep in Mary’s room at once,” said their mother, “You may take it in turns. Marcus you may go tonight. Marjory your turn tomorrow night; then you, Graham; and Leslie, it will be your turn in four night’s time.”

When the fourth night came Mary took the lighted candle after the children’s early supper and marched off with Leslie. As she had done on each of the previous nights; she went to the mirror to do her hair and tidy up for supper. She glanced round and was surprised to see Leslie sitting in the middle of the bed. He had taken off his shoes but made no further effort to undress.

“Get undressed, Leslie,” said Mary, and continued brushing her hair.

The second time she looked round he was in the same position; again she admonished him to proceed with his undressing.

The third time she turned around she said, “Leslie, what is the matter with you, why don’t you get undressed?”

“Oh! Mary, I’ve never slept in a girl’s room before, and I don’t know what to do, and I forgot to ask Graham!” came a plaintive voice from a five year old boy.

Months, and then years, passed and Jim still kept his billet and Louie at Riverside still watched and waited for his arrival at all hours of the day and night.

Oom Jan sold his farm. Louie was very sad to lose those dear neighbours. Claude, who was married, had left Riverside and was manager on the neighbouring farm. Louie carried on the farming alone. For a whole year she had a very anxious and trying time with Leslie, who had caught an internal chill. One day Louie and Jim took him to Witbank to see a doctor, and as the spider drew up in front of the doctor’s house, Leslie said, “Oh! Mother, look at the doctor’s enema, isn’t it big?”

“There it is,” said Jim, laughing, as Louie looked round in amazement, “the hose-pipe hanging on the verandah post.”

For four months Leslie lay on his back, never allowed to sit up. He had a little wagon in which he lay, and the children used to drag it about wherever they were going to play. The sad and trying part of it all was that he had to be fed like a baby, boiled milk taken through a feeding cup every hour, no sweets or fruit. Poor little boy! He was good and patient as an angel. Jim nearly quarrelled with the doctor about the treatment, and had it not been for Jim’s common sense and determination, Leslie would never have made the recovery he did.

One day in 1912, when he arrived home for his weekend, Jim called excitedly to Louie, “Look at this, Messrs Hodder and Stoughton are offering a prize to each of the Colonies for a novel. You have been playing at writing, now you can get down to hard work and try for this prize.”

For weeks and months Louie wrote hard and, although she did not win the prize, she loved the occupation.

On another occasion, Jim said, “I won’t be home next weekend. I have worked out my itinerary, which takes me to Rustenburg, and I cannot be home for a fortnight.”

On Thursday afternoon Louie came into the sitting room where Edith was sitting sewing.

“I have had such a strange experience,” she said, “a queer feeling came over me; I looked at my watch at the time and found it was exactly 2.20, and with that feeling was borne on me that Jim is coming home on Saturday night.”

“But how can you possibly expect him when he said so emphatically he would not be home until the following week?”

“I don’t know; something must have happened. Anyhow I am going to send the spider to meet him on Saturday evening.”

When Claude and his wife heard what Louie intended doing they were much amused and walked over to ‘Riverside’ after supper to see the empty vehicle arrive from the station! As the sound of the wheels reached the ears of the occupants of the sitting room, they all rushed out, Edith saying, “Is he there - isn’t he there?”

“Hullo!” shouted Jim as he sprang up the steps.

“But Jim,” said Claude, “you said you could not be home before next week!”

“I know, but it turned out that the man who should have met me didn’t arrive so it was impossible to carry on. You got my wire of course?” turning to Louie.

“No.”

“But how did you some to send the trap to meet me?”

“I just guessed you would be home tonight.”

“Here is the wire,” said Edith, opening the postbag and sorting the letters, “May I open it?”

“Yes, do,” said Louie.

“Sent off from Rustenburg at 2.20 on ….let me see, what day was the 15th?….Yes, Thursday.” She looked at Louie, “ ‘Meet me Saturday evening, 7 p.m.’”

“Why do you people all seem so mysterious?” asked Jim irritably.

“Because,” said Edith, “Louie came to me on Thursday and said she had a queer feeling, so looked at her watch. It was 2.20 and then she knew you were coming.”

“That is rather a funny coincidence. I was not a bit surprised to see the trap, thinking of course, you had received the wire.”

Louie had several other interesting experiences of telepathy.

The winter of 1913 was a cruel one in the Transvaal; bitterly cold days and often sleet and snow. Louie, her mother and the children were alone at Riverside. Fortunately coal was plentiful as they could get as much discarded coal as they wanted, free, from Witbank. The fires were never allowed to go out in Louie's bedroom, the drawing room and the dining room.

"Jim," said Louie, during one of the weekends he was at home, "I have a feeling that Olive and Daymon are coming here. Please don't get so angry - I don't want them any more than you do; but I do want to discuss it - what am I to do?"

"I WILL NOT have them in my house," declared Jim emphatically.

"Yes, but if they come?"

"If they come, then they must go back to where they came from!"

"But how can they do that?"

"Whatever brings them here can take them away," said Jim in furious tones as he strode up and down the drawing room, "I will not have them in my house."

"I don't want them here either, but you, of all people, would not turn away a dog in this weather……"

"I have said that what brings them here must take them away!"

For the next few weeks Louie's thoughts were very sad and troubled. Why must life be so difficult?

"Come along, Mother," she said one afternoon, "it is not so cold now; the wind has dropped. Let us go out for a walk. We will walk up the Witbank road; if Jim should be coming from that direction, we won't miss him."

They walked to where they could see the road disappearing over the rise in the distance. Suddenly Louie stopped and caught her breath. "Mother!" she said, "I see two people WALKING. I believe they are Olive and Daymon! Let us stand here and watch." After several anxious moments, she said, "Oh! What a relief! I can see them quite plainly now; they are only two natives and are not even coming in this direction."

"I wonder where that poor child is," sighed Mrs Flemmer, "and whether she is happy or not!"

"Poor old Mother, it is very hard for you. But you must try not to be too sad, or worry; she chose the life and was old enough to know her own mind."

"That is so. But if only she had not met that man!"

A week later on Saturday morning, as Louie sat at her desk preparing her mail, the children came dashing in, greatly excited and saying, "here comes a man and a woman, WALKING. He has long hair."

Louie looked up to see Olive and Daymon standing in the front door. What a situation! Turning to Marcus she said, "Go and tell Grannie Aunt Olive is here."

As they gathered round the breakfast table, Louie nerved herself to say, "Neither Jim nor I wish to

have you in our house, so you cannot stay here."

A shadow of anger passed across Daymon's face. "When we reached Cape Town," he said, "I sold my watch and chain and with that money I bought our tickets to Witbank. We have had nothing since yesterday morning, not even a cup of coffee. We reached Witbank about midnight and sat in the waiting room until it was light enough for us to walk down." Taking a copper from his pocket, he flung it on to the table, saying, "That is all we have in the world."

Olive looked defiantly at her sister, daring her to turn out these two chosen of God. In the stillness, Louie felt that everyone must hear the quick thumping of her heart.
The grating of Daymon's chair, as he flung himself out of it and strode up and down the room, jarred on the overstrained nerves of the women. Louie looked across at that dear little Mother, her white face, pain in her sad blue eyes - but what could she do? Every time the dogs barked or the children came dashing in, her heart seemed to stop beating. Wasn't it Saturday - the day of all days that she might expect Jim? If he were to walk in now! Oh! Cruel fate to place her in so difficult a situation!

"We shall have to think of some plan," said Louie, trying to be brave and firm, "it must be clearly understood that YOU CANNOT STAY IN THIS HOUSE."

"We have found the Eternal City! I have chained Satan for a thousand years!" shouted Daymon in a frenzy of fanatical fervour. "We come with all the knowledge we have gained for your home, for you to be the first to receive the benefits we are able to confer. If Jim will not hear me speak, it is because he is a coward. I MUST, I SHALL be heard. I insist on a hearing, even a condemned criminal is allowed to speak. The message that I bring is that there must be no more souls born into the world! Sex, the greatest sin of condemnation, must be rooted out of our lives. If you do not listen to my words," turning fiercely to Louie, "you will be re-incarnated again and again, with the curse of wedlock on you."

"If the man is Jim Rous," said Louie stoutly, "I shall be perfectly happy."

At this Daymon grew furious and continued to launch his theories until Louie was surprised to find it was time to attend to the midday meal.

The cold was intense, a fine rain set in and so the miserable afternoon drew to a close. As they sat round the fire, Daymon said, "I have some furniture and a tent with Vassall. If you will allow us to camp for a fortnight - that is all I ask - a fortnight! - there will be such a cataclysm of nature at the end of that time as will prove my words to be true."

There was nothing for it but to let things stand.

As soon as Louie could escape to her room, she threw herself on her bed and sobbed her heart out. Then taking pen and ink, she sat beside her fire and wrote pages and pages to Jim. She wrote far into the night, telling him all that had happened and how she had considered allowing Olive and Daymon to camp on the farm for a fortnight.
Sunday dawned, cold, wet and miserable. Louie felt it was still impossible to make the move. And so the long hours of that miserable Sunday passed. During the afternoon she spoke to Olive, trying to persuade her that the man was mad.

"But Louie," said Olive, "can't you see the likeness to Christ? This is the Second Christ; he is the re-incarnated Christ!"

"Oh! Olive you poor child; you are completely mesmerised. Christ would not have a wife and chil-

dren, such as this man had!”

“That is the cloud spoken of in the Bible. Oh! Louie, don’t let such a thing mislead you.”

All the arguments in the world were useless. Louie was up betimes on Monday, determined that the move should be made as early as possible. She sent a man on horseback to Witbank with her letter to Jim, and ordered the other men to inspan the wagon and go over with Daymon to Vassall’s farm.

During the morning the man returned with the post and a wire. Louie had promised to spend some time with her niece in Ventersdorp and here was a wire saying that he baby had been born and would she come at once. It was a joy to get away - to be out of the house and far away from all connection with this difficult situation!

“Olive,” called Louie, “I have a wire telling me of the arrival of Lexie’s little girl. I must go to Ventersdorp at once. I cannot leave Mother here alone, so write a note to Daymon and tell him to return here with all the goods, and that I am leaving.”

Louie wired to Jim and he met her at Germiston. They travelled together to Johannesburg, where Louie had to spend the night before proceeding to Ventersdorp. They talked long and earnestly about the very difficult situation in which they found themselves. At last Louie said: “Jim, I must go to Lexie. The only thing to do is for you to go and turn them out; but what to do about Mother, she cannot be left alone!”
“I’ve got it,” said Jim, “there is a young fellow, Johns, who is anxious to learn farming. I have been corresponding with him as I decided that you must have someone to help you with the farming. I’ll send him a wire in the morning, telling him to come on Friday. I’ll take him back with me to Riverside and leave him to take care of your mother and the farm, and I’ll turn them out.”

As Louie sat in the train on her way to Ventersdorp, she was very grateful to the little baby who had been the means of taking her away from her troubles.

Jim arrived at Riverside with Johns on Saturday evening and after supper said, “Come along, Johns, I feel sure you will not mind being put to bed so early. I expect you are tired. I must have all the time possible for this talk I am in for. Goodnight. Oh! By the way, nothing this man can say will later my opinion or change my purpose, so we must get busy directly after breakfast, although it will be Sunday, and pitch their tent.”
Mrs Flemmer, Jim, Olive and Daymon gathered round the fire in the drawing room and the argument began.

“Now,” said Jim, “let’s have it. I am ready to listen to you.”

“That is all I want - a hearing,” said Daymon, with all the confidence in the world, fully believing that he would convert Jim and enlist his sympathy. “Give me a fortnight and there will be such a cataclysm of nature, and you and your family will be the first to share my discoveries. I have found the Eternal City! I have chained Satan for a thousand years! I am the re-incarnated Christ!”

Jim looked at Daymon’s flashing black eyes, his long black, wavy hair and beard, and he thought nothing could be further from his idea of Christ.

“Olive is my heavenly bride, she is the re-incarnation of Mary of Bethany. Ours is a spiritual union.”

“I think you are both mad,” interrupted Jim, “I am willing not only to give you a fortnight, I am going to give you a month. I will not go back on my wife - she said you might camp in the trees above the

fountain. Tomorrow we will pitch your tent and you may remain for one month, after that you get off my farm. I do not believe a word of anything you have said, and how you can carry on as you are doing, breaking the heart of this dear grey-haired lady……"

"What are tears or grey hair to ME; I cannot stop a soul in its flight," shouted Daymon, with all the fervour of the mad.

The next morning the wagon was at the door. As Jim met his little mother-in-law in the hall, he stopped her and said, "I feel like a murderer to see you so sad. Do not weep like this, you will make yourself ill. Sorry as I am for you, there was no other course open to me. I must turn them out."

"Jim, I know that you are doing what you consider right. Oh! My poor child, my poor child."

"Never mind. Give them all the food and provisions you can spare."

The camp was pitched. Jim returned to his work. Louie's ten days in Ventersdorp came to an end and she returned to Riverside. She and her mother always had a warm welcome for Olive whenever she arrived from the camp. Louie never ceased trying to influence her and so break the spell which Daymon had cast over her. The end of the month came.

"Louie," said Jim, as they sat and talked one Sunday evening, "I must leave early tomorrow. I have given my instructions to Johns; he must go up to the camp with the wagon, load up everything, and I have said he may take them anywhere within a radius of ten miles."

"I wonder where they will go," said Louie.

"I don't know and I don't care."

"Jim, please don't be angry."

"I am angry; the very thought of that man makes me furious, the rot he talks. Here his fortnight has gone, and now a month, and nothing has happened. He is mad - quite mad - I am sorry for Olive and very sorry for your mother."

"It is useless, Mrs Rous, I cannot get them to budge," said poor Johns in great distress as he returned from the camp on Monday morning. "I have told them that my instructions are to take them away, and they can no longer remain where they are, as the month Mr Rous granted them has passed, but they absolutely refuse to move."

"Oh! Well, this will mean more trouble, but of course neither you nor I can do anything. Don't worry, Mr Rous said he would be home next weekend. He will do what is necessary."

Although Louie saw Olive during the week, no mention was made of their term having expired.

On Jim's arrival the following Saturday afternoon, he said, "I left orders for that camp to be shifted, and I see they are still there!"

"Yes, Jim, your orders were carried out. Johns is an excellent young man and did his best to make them move, but they refused."

"We'll see about it tomorrow."

Again Sunday morning, and the wagon inspanned. “Tell the boys,” said Jim to Johns, “to go up to the camp. You and I will follow in the gig after breakfast.”

As the gig drove up to the camp Jim was furious to see one of his boys carrying water for Daymon, and the other chopping wood. “Stop that!” he roared in a fury, “Put down that bucket,” and flinging the reins to Johns he leaped out of the gig and began tearing up the tent pegs. As the tent trembled and collapsed, Daymon strode up to Jim, “You’ll go to hell,” he hissed in a passion.

“I don’t care,” said Jim, “as long as YOU are not there.” The goods were loaded in the wagon. “Now,” said Jim, “where do you want to go?”

“You can put us over your fence.”

“I’ll do nothing of the sort. This ground is in my care.”

“We will go to that group of trees.”

“I have nothing to say about that; the owner of the ground lives in Witbank. Johns, take the wagon to those trees, pitch the tent and when you have done what you can to settle them, come back.”

During the afternoon Olive saw the owner of the farm driving down from Witbank. She went into the middle of the road to stop him and ask permission to camp on his farm. He never stopped his horses and had she not stepped aside he would have driven over her. She returned to the camp and told Daymon of her experience. He realised that trouble lay ahead.

“We will walk over to Vassall’s farm,” he said.

Long before this Vassall had disassociated himself from Daymon, and as he saw them coming, he mounted his horse and rode up to Witbank. Olive and Daymon went into Vassall’s house and sat, with the lamp burning, waiting for what would happen next. About midnight the police arrived with a warrant for Daymon’s arrest.

Olive begged them to take her too, but they refused. She sat alone in that empty house until the morning dawned when she walked over to Riverside. Louie and her mother were greatly distressed to see the poor child but she wanted none of their sympathy.

“Please let me have a conveyance to take me to Witbank,” she pleaded.

“We insist that you have something to eat first. Have some breakfast while I order the boy to bring the trap round.”

Louie and her mother watched that dear, sweet girl as she settled herself in the trap beside Jim’s faithful native driver. Mrs Flemmer gazed lovingly at her youngest daughter. Olive made a lovely picture. In spite of the long night’s vigil, her complexion could only be described as ‘milk and roses’. Her large blue eyes were kind and trustful, fringed with long black lashes, the eyebrows dark and perfectly arched. Her hair was light brown, she wore it parted in the middle, lying smoothly on either side of her pure white brow, and braided in two long plaits which circled her hair like a crown. Her teeth were the joy of her dentists who always commented on them, and to whom she only went for cleaning and polishing; just a row of perfect pearls flashed between those rosy lips. When she was being measured by a tailor for a riding habit, he said, “Had she been one inch taller, hers would have been an ideal figure.”

Her beautiful hands, the delicate slender fingers with their long almond shaped nails, each with

its perfect half moon and pink palms, might have been considered the envy of any society queen. She was always considered the ‘flower of the flock’.

As she had been at Rocklands, the Girls High School for six years she had had every advantage! The gods had indeed been kind to her!!

She wrote to her mother during the following week, telling her that she had successfully rescued Daymon from the long arm of the Law, and that they had left Witbank.

During the next six months Mr Flemmer received about half a dozen letters from Olive and then came a letter in which she said - ‘Do not write until you have our new address ……’

The new address never came, and although Mrs Flemmer lived for another ten years, no word of, or from, Olive ever reached her.

RIVERSIDE
PART III

“A perfect night! It is almost as light as day!” exclaimed Jim as he sank into a comfortable chair in the midst of his family on the stoep at Riverside.

“The day is done, the darkness falls from the wings of Night, as a feather is wafted downwards from an eagle in his flight…..”

“Do go on.”

“You have heard it so often.”

“That’s why I love it. Sit very quietly children, and listen.”
“The day is done, and the darkness falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downwards from an Eagle in his flight.
I see the lights of the village gleam through the rain and mist,
A feeling of sadness comes o’er me, that my soul cannot resist;
A feeling of sadness and longing, that is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only as mist resembles rain.
Come, read to me some poem, some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling, and banish the thoughts of the day.
Not from the grand old masters, not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo through the corridors of time.
For, like the strains of martial music, their mighty thoughts suggest,
Life’s endless toil and endeavour; and tonight I long for rest.
Read from some humbler poet, whose song gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer, or tears from the eyelids start;
Who, through the long days of labour, and nights devoid of ease,
Still hear in his soul the music of wonderful melodies.
Such songs have power to quiet the restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction that follows after prayer.
Then read from the treasured volume the poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet the beauty of thy voice.
And the night shall be filled with music, and the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents like Arabs, and as silently steal away.”

For several minutes after Jim's voice had died away, not a sound broke the stillness.

"I am afraid," said Louie, "you are very weary of this life of travel and change."

"That is so. But 'it's a long lane that has no turning' and I believe I see the turn! You'll never guess what I did last week!"

"It sounds as if it is something very exciting! Please tell me, I can't guess."

"I sent in my resignation!"

"JIM!"

Jim was thoroughly enjoying the situation; he loved giving Louie these surprises.

"It seems to good to be true," said Louie, "to have you always at home instead of those dreadful Monday mornings when you have to go."

"For four years we have been carrying on, you alone, teaching the children, managing the farm and I running about the country. This is where it stops. You used to say that you could never be as brave as my mother; you thought you could never stay on a farm alone - yet, you have done it. You have been brave."

These words of praise filled Louie's heart with joy.

"I have not been afraid because I told Isaac that a woman with a revolver was one of the most dangerous things on earth; that if anyone were to knock on the front door, I would shoot without finding out who it was, or what they wanted. We have often watched the men on moonlight nights passing as far form the house as they possibly could, more frightened of me than I am of them!"

"I want to tell you of an interesting experience I had on this trip to Bechuanaland," said Jim. "Let the children stay, never mind about bed, they will be interested and I know they are longing to celebrate my resignation!

"The part through which I travelled lies on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. Salt and water are the two things people crave for. If you give a child a handful of salt, he is as pleased as a European child would be with a handful of sweets. The desert seems endless, just miles and miles of sand. I had to abandon my mules and substitute them for a pair of trotting oxen. We were getting very anxious about water as we travelled. My companion, a Mr James, said, 'We will soon reach a place where we will get water.' 'Impossible,' I said, 'in all this stretch of sand.' 'Wait and see,' he replied.

"As we reached a spot where there were a few scattered, miserable hovels, we stopped. 'Where is your water?' I asked. 'Wait a minute.' He called to an awful looking old hag and told her he wanted water.

"Taking a bucket, she walked off and we followed. Presently she squatted down in the sand. She drew two quills from her pocket, inserted the long one in the sand, and the short one in the corner of her mouth. The bucket was placed just below the short tube. She sucked vigorously at the long tube for several minutes, till I was surprised to see a slimy trickle of water drip from the shorter tube into the bucket. My companion laughed to see my look of surprise. 'She'll fill a bucket for half-a-crown,' he said. 'But how on earth does she do it?' I asked. 'I don't know,' he replied, 'I have offered her a big reward if she will tell me what she does. She is willing to show me, and I have

taken the tubes from her mouth, horrible as it may seem, while she was in the very act of drawing the water - but not a drop could I draw.'

"It is indeed one of the strangest sights I have ever seen. Not a drop of moisture anywhere, nothing but desert sand, and here she was, filling the bucket."

"Oh! Dad, I would not like to drink that water," said Marcus.

"No, I am sure you would not, my son. We did not DRINK it. We boiled it and made tea, which did not seem so bad, the animals drank it and very glad they were to have it, poor brutes!"

"Please tell us something more," begged Marjory.

"Right-o!" said Jim, "I'll tell you about James, who was most entertaining; he told me several amusing stories. He has lived in those desert parts all his life, is a wonderful shot and has no respect for law and order. He shoots a buck when he wants it, whether in or out of season, and I think he prefers Royal game to any other. He has a faithful old Hottentot, called Gert, who has been with him for many years. One day James came home with forbidden game; he and his wife had taken it to the dairy to cut up, when a policeman arrived at the homestead. 'Where are the baas and the missis?' he asked Gert. 'The baas is away and the missis is the dairy,' replied the old Hottentot. 'I'll just go down and see her.' 'Oh! No, no baas, you mustn't; the missis is having here bath in the dairy! Wait here and I'll send a message to her.' The old chap slipped down to the dairy. 'The policeman is here,' he whispered at the door,' I told him the missis is having a bath in the dairy and the baas is away from home. Baas must hide himself and the meat!'

"He returned to the house and presently the woman came out, her hair all wet and streaming down her back. The policeman was this completely taken in."

"Did he tell you anything else?" asked the enthusiastic Marcus.

"I am sure Dad is tired," said Louie.

"Who could be tired on such a night?" replied Jim. "How lovely it is sitting here, and seeing all this growth, how different from what it was ten years ago! To plant trees and change the face of the earth is one of life's joys and a man who has the opportunity of doing so, may feel he has not lived in vain. You children want another story about James?"

"Yes, please, we would love it," came in a chorus of voices.

"Well! The police in Vryburg got word that James had arrived home with a quantity of forbidden game. They were determined to catch him so laid their plans carefully. Two of them left Vryburg after dark as secretly as possible. They only travelled during the night, lying in hiding during the day, and resting their horses, hoping that by doing so no word of their journey would reach James.

"The last night came, and they arrived within a short distance of James' house. They found a good hiding place and lay down, meaning to arrest him at the crack of dawn. They were awakened during the early morning hours by old Gert saying, 'Here, baas, the missis has sent you a jug of coffee.'"

"Oh! What a sell for the poor policeman after all their trouble," said Leslie.

"Yes, it was indeed a sell, because if James knew they were there, he had plenty of time to dispose of the meat."

“Dad, how did he know?” asked Graham.

“Well, he didn’t give his secrets away, old man. Now I think you have had enough stories, so pop off to bed, and tomorrow night I’ll tell you another interesting experience I had on the edge of the desert.”

The children went off to bed, delighted at the thought of another story the following evening.

Sunday evening, and another beautiful night! Blue starry heaven, not a breath of wind to mar the perfect stillness.

“I thought you would have forgotten my promise,” said Jim.

“Oh! No, Dad, we’ve been looking forward to this evening.”

“More than if you had been going to a concert, I suppose. That’s what Mother used to say when we were reading an exciting book. Well, it is good to have something to look forward to, and a great thing to be enthusiastic. Always keep your enthusiasm - never grow stale. Now for the story:

“I came to a place called Matoto - right on the edge of the Kalahari Desert - that part of the world is most truly the land of Sun, Sand and Silence, and there I saw what you would least expect to find - an enormous and elaborate tombstone, a tall granite column, very much decorated and standing on a broad base. The inscription was carved on the base in black letters cut deep into the stone -and this is what I read:
Sacred to the Memory of the Revd Pierre Lamont, a man
of God who died on April 8th 1872 by the mad act of a
renegade Englishman - R.I.P.
“There were a couple of big kameel trees growing close at hand, and a little way off stood the ruins of a European dwelling; beyond that a Kaffir settlement consisting of several hundred huts. I was so curious about the tombstone with its queer inscription that I asked questions and was told a story of the Missionary and the renegade Englishman. We will call the Englishman John Bull; he must have been a John Bull to have done what he did.

“Well, it appears that in 1872, before Mother or I were born, John Bull fitted out a trading caravan in Beaufort West, which in those days was the rail head north of Cape Town, and started off on his adventurous trek. After travelling for about four hundred miles, which must have taken him many months, he arrived at Matoto. He was carrying all sorts of goods which he thought would attract the black man. As gunpowder was in great request, he carried a quantity, in fact, three barrels full; gunpowder being almost worth its weight in gold.

“When he arrived at Matoto, he had two disappointments, the first was that the Missionary was away from home - (you can imagine how much he would have enjoyed the company and conversation of a white man) - and the second was that there WAS a store at Matoto, run by the Missionary and his assistant.

“After resting his animals for a couple of days and doing a little trade with the natives, John Bull set off on his journey into the unknown. Two days later he arrived a place called Klitsini - I wonder which of you can pronounce that Kaffir word!”

“They all tried.

“The first syllable has more of a click - that’s better - well, to proceed.

“What was the astonishment of John Bull to see the Missionary, mounted on a huge, horned pack-ox, a sjambok in his hand, and followed by a cavalcade of about twenty men who, mounted on oxen and carrying assegais and kerries, all made straight for his wagon.

“The Missionary, a huge man, was flourishing his sjambok and saying, ‘You beastly Englishman, you insulted my wife! For this you will be thrashed!’ As soon as John Bull could make himself heard he said, ‘You must be mad to accuse me of insulting your wife; the only time I spoke to the woman was when I went to your store, to tell her of my departure, and your assistant was present during that interview.’ ‘That is a lie,’ shouted the infuriated Missionary, ‘A lie, and I will not be satisfied until I have thrashed you.’

“Both men became very angry and a hot argument followed. At last John Bull said, ‘I am willing to be tried in a Court of Justice. As the nearest English Court is at Beaufort West, four hundred miles away, I will submit to being tried by a Native Court, but I absolutely refuse to submit to a thrashing from you.’ ‘Very well,’ replied Lamont, ‘I will go on ahead and arrange for the native court. Ten of my men are being left in charge of you. They will be your escort.”

“On his arrival at Matoto, John Bull found the Court assembled, consisting of ten petty chiefs. The news that a white man was being tried by a Native Court had spread far and wide, with the result that hundreds of stalwart male natives were present to witness so unusual a sight, and to be in the ‘fun’ should anything exciting take place.
“The chairman was the head chief. He was an old man and huge, very slow and deliberate. The Missionary and his wife made their statements and their servants were called as witnesses. John Bull made his statement and his servant was called as his witness. Then proceedings started. After the third day…..”

“Dad, did they take THREE DAYS?” asked Marcus. The children were following the story with breathless interest.

“Yes, my son, three days!”

“But, whatever could they find to talk about for three days?”

“Ah! That’s just it - they have legal minds and could argue back and forth on the smallest point. As the third day was drawing to a close, the chairman stood up. With great dignity and pomp he delivered his verdict. He said, ‘This Council of Chiefs of Matoto has patiently listened to the charge against the Travelling-Stranger by the White-God-Man, and has given every consideration to the statements made by the various witnesses. This Council has come to the conclusion that the charge is false. We rule that the Stranger go free and that he shall receive compensation from the White-God-Man to the extent of two heifers, for the trouble and delay he has suffered in consequence of this false charge which has been brought against him I HAVE SPOKEN.’”

“Dad, I am so glad they are not going to punish poor old John Bull. What a nice Kaffir chief!”

“Wait a moment, little Marjory, the story is not finished yet. When the Missionary heard the finding of the Court, he flew into a violent passion, shouting and throwing his arms about. ‘I will not accept the decision of the Court,’ he shouted, ‘I am going to tie the Englishman to the wheel of his wagon and thrash him with my sjambok, and when I have done that, I give permission to you all to rob him. You may help yourselves to the goods from his wagon.’

“The old Chief held up his hand for silence and spoke: ‘You White-God-Man you came amongst us two years ago. We allowed you to stay and teach us a new teaching. You built the meeting house,

the house where you live, and also a house where you exchange white man's goods for goats and cattle. Every seventh day you have a meeting with our people, and you have gained much influence over their minds. For two years you have been teaching a teaching of forgiveness and goodwill. When there has been a difference amongst us, YOU have urged us to make peace and be friends, saying: 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath.' Then the old man turned to the setting sun, and throwing out his hand towards the West, he said: 'That is the third sun about to go down on YOUR wrath! We have listened to your story against this stranger and we find it false, so we have discharged him; yet your wrath continues - therefore, it would seem that your teachings are of the lips and not of the heart. We will have nothing more to do with this business, and we will now return to our homes!'

"The Council of ten withdrew, many of their followers accompanying them. The Missionary, upon whom the old Chief's wise words had had no effect, was still raging. Feeling that he had the support of a great number of his followers, he was determined to flog John Bull.

"After the Court had retired, John Bull went to his wagon and sat quietly on one of his barrels of gunpowder. The Missionary, who had worked himself into a frenzy of rage, and whose feelings were exciting his followers, with a yell of 'Seize him! Seize him!' sprang on to the wagon, followed by his men who swarmed up from every side. Just as they were about to lay hands on John Bull - what do you think he did?"

"Oh! Dad, we don't know! It is very exciting!" exclaimed the twins in one breath.

"Brave John Bull! He was not going to be thrashed by that despicable man, Missionary or no Missionary. He struck a match right into the gunpowder! What a terrific explosion! I feel as if bits of them must still be travelling!"

"Jim, how horrid!" exclaimed Louie.

"When the smoke and dust cleared, all that could be found of the wagon, the team of donkeys, the goods, John Bull, the Missionary and his followers, were bits of arms and legs and scraps of wagon."

"Poor old John Bull. I do feel sorry for him! Is that the end of the story, Dad?"

"Not quite. The tombstone, which does not tell a true tale, was erected to mark the spot, but the story will never be forgotten in these parts, and the tale is handed down from father to son. The Natives say the place is haunted; that on a moonlight night a wagon can be seen with a barrel of gunpowder on it and a man about to strike a match. They say that even now, after all these years, if a trader is being worried by natives refusing to keep off his wagon, he has only to pretend that he is going to strike a match, and they scatter to the four winds of heaven!"

"Thanks very much, Dad, it was a most interesting story. I wonder if the Missionary's wife was near enough to be blown up too! I suppose she was standing watching."
"I wonder! But history does not say. What I say is 'bedtime for all good little children'"
The silence, after the sound of the children's merry voices had died away, was broken by Jim's soft restful voice -
"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep

Too full for sound and foam
When that which drew from out of the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar."

Louie stood beside Jim in their bedroom as he washed his hands. He had arrived a few minutes earlier, had seen that the mules were fed and watered, and now was having a clean up.

"My resignation has been accepted."

"Jim I am glad. It will be such a comfort to have you always at home."

"The Manager has got the sack," said Jim, still busy with the soap.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Louie excitedly. "Why on earth has he been sacked? Who will be Manager now?"

"Yours truly," answered Jim in a calm voice.

"Are you teasing me, or do you really mean it, Jim?"

"I mean it."

"Do you mean to tell me you have been appointed Manager of the Transvaal Estates and Development Company, and you give me the news calmly while you are washing your hands!!"

Jim laughed. He loved springing surprises on Louie and enjoyed seeing her excitement.

"What does it mean?" she asked breathlessly.

"It means we will all go and live in Johannesburg."

"How splendid for the children's education, but I shall be very sorry to leave our nice comfortable home and our beautiful trees."

"Yes, it will be sad to give up this place, but I could not refuse such an offer."

"What will you do with Riverside?"

"I will either sell it or let it. In the meantime, I will leave the place in charge of a man I know. When I get back to Johannesburg I am going house hunting and next time I come, you must be prepared to return to Johannesburg with me, and help me decide on the house."

"This is really thrilling. I'm just longing to go and burst this bombshell on Mother and the children."

“Alright. Run away and have your fun. We’ll discuss the rest of the business after supper.”

“Of course, we’ll have to pack everything,” asked Louie as they sat on the stoep gazing into the starlight.

“Yes, everything. We will begin tomorrow. I’ll pack all the pictures and any other breakables - anything not in use - you will have a lot to do, and I would like you to be in Johannesburg settled, when I take over on December 1st.”

“Oh! dear,” said Louie, “What a wonderful adventure life is! How true it is that we know not what the day will bring forth. Little I dreamed when I woke this morning that before I slept again my head would be full of thoughts of Johannesburg and leaving Riverside. It seemed as if we would live here for ever and ever and ever!”

“Well,” said Jim, “my experience has been that life is full of changes. I never feel that what I am doing is going to keep on; it seems as if it is only a step to something else.”

“I am glad,” said Louie, “that we shall have the whole of the Christmas vacation to fix up about the children’s schools. To think of it - no more teaching!”

“I thought you loved teaching!”

“I do. But it is difficult to teach one’s own children and they are going beyond me. Marcus is eleven and should be doing much more than I can teach him.”

Busy weeks followed for Louie and her mother packing all the household goods - they were living in great discomfort.

“Mother,” said Marcus, “isn’t it funny? We never look at the pictures and yet, now they are gone we miss them. I try not to look at the bare walls; they worry me so, but I can’t help it. I shall be glad when we are in our new house in Johannesburg.”

“It won’t be long now before we are in our new home; you will like it. We have never lived in a double storey house before so that will be fun for you children. It is a very nice house. I am sure we shall be happy and you will enjoy going to school with lots of other boys. I am glad you won’t have to go to boarding school, which would have been necessary had we remained here.”

During that last week at Riverside, whenever Louie could spare the time, she wandered from one favourite spot to another, taking farewell of what she had grown to love very dearly. She strolled through the orchard, now in full bearing, remembering the time, eight years ago, when the planting of the trees meant so much to her and to Jim. In the corner of one of the wattle plantations, which grew quite near the homestead was a little arbour. Here Louie found a seat where she was completely hidden as she sat and dreamed of the past and the future. She felt she had come to a parting of the ways; that this move to Johannesburg was a turning point in her life. She who had always lived in the country, to be transplanted to a city - and Johannesburg, of which people said ‘it was London this side of the water’. Sometimes her thoughts were sad as she sat and dreamed during that long summer afternoon. “Life is truly a great adventure,” she thought, “I like to think of Life as a stringed instrument - and every string must be in tune -
‘Love took up the Harp of Life,
And smote on all the cords with might,
Smote the cord of self, which trembling
Passed in music out of sight.’

“I do think that little verse is full of beautiful thought ‘smote the cord of self!’ If only one could always remember these beautiful thoughts - how many happy afternoons we have spent in this little arbour! What lovely tea parties the dear children have had - Poor Darlings, how little they realise that the tea parties were part of their training, and that I was strict or lenient with a plan, that each might have a turn at being host! Pouring the tea, and oh! the thrill that little parcel was to the little host! It was a brainwave buying that big Christmas stocking! What I want most for our children is Happiness, happiness first and then success, for what would be the good of all the success in the world if one were not happy! Why don’t we all try to make each other happier and happier? How few happy faces one sees - it makes me sad to think there are so few happy people in the world. Oh! I do want my children to be happy. I remember an old friend of mine saying to me once ‘While your children are small your troubles are small’. Surely our children will never cause us TROUBLE! I could not bear it; I want to think of them as a blessing and a joy, no matter how big they are! How I wish they could always be my babies! Proud as I am to see them growing up, I can’t bear to think of losing them. I am so afraid that living in Johannesburg will break up my nest - and my little birds will fly away……” and Louie crooned softly to herself the little poem which Jim loved and often said to the children:
“What does little birdie say,
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother let me fly away.”
“Yes, my babies, my little birds, you will certainly fly away, and some day you will be where I am, thinking of your little birds and I shall be where mother is, old and grey, a grandmother perhaps, and so life passes and ‘the old order changeth giving place to the new’. I wonder whether I shall ever see Riverside again.”

Louie saw Riverside twenty-one years later. She found the homestead far more beautiful than she had ever pictured it; the trees magnificent, the plantations grown out of all recognition, but Jim’s beautiful orchard was a desert waste! Only six fruit trees remained of what was once a flourishing and fruitful garden.

JOHANNESBURG

“When you children return from school,” said Louie one morning at breakfast, after they had been living in Johannesburg for a year, “you will find my friend Mrs Wood, with me. You remember I told you she used to be our governess when I was a child at Plaat River. She is coming to spend a fortnight with us. I have not seen her for twenty-five years and am so looking forward to the meeting.”

“How you two will talk,” said Jim.

“I expect we shall.”

Mrs Wood and Louie spent a very happy fortnight together, there was so much of mutual interest in their lives; it seemed to Jim that they would never cease talking, and he took this opportunity of spending most of his evenings at the Chess Club, leaving Louie and her friend alone together as much as possible.

“Have you kept up your music and singing?” Mrs Wood asked one morning as they sat over their tea.

“Yes, I have had to, although I am so ignorant about music. I never had another music lesson after you left. If only you could have stayed a year or two longer! What a lot you have taught me! None of the children are musical, and Jim hates a gramophone, so the only music we have is what I give

them. Fortunately the family is not critical and most appreciative."

"Jim tells me you have been teaching the children yourself."

"Yes, I am thankful that I taught for six years before my marriage, so was able to do without a governess. I thought when we came to Johannesburg my teaching days were over, but alas! during the first term the children got measles - of course they had to be in quarantine for weeks, then a few weeks later Graham got scarlet fever - again quarantine - I had to teach them because they could not afford to lose a year as they are a year behind the average child."

"But why have you allowed that?"

"Because I have seen children doing brilliantly, taking their matriculation at fifteen or sixteen years of age, and that seems to mark the end of their brilliancy; they either go into a bank or in some way 'mark time' until they are old enough to go to College, or take up their life's work, and that to my mind is the undoing of them. Just at the time when they need their school life, and discipline to form their characters and get set in their ideas, they are on their own. Our children will not write their matriculation until they have turned eighteen, so you see they must be kept steadily at their work; and when they have written matriculation, they will know what their careers in life are to be."

"What are your boys going to do?"

"The twins of course, will farm; there has never been any doubt about that. They are born farmers, which pleases Jim very much. We don't know what Marcus is going to do. Jim has described the different professions in great detail to him, wishing him to make a choice. He is not attracted to law or survey, and when he listens to a description of the medical profession, he shudders and says 'Oh no Dad! I will never be a doctor - I should hate to see a lot of sick people, or to have to cut off a man's leg!' he thinks the most attractive of the professions is that of an architect. So we really don't know what he is going to do."

"What a change for you to be living in Johannesburg. Do you like it?"

"In some ways," answered Louie thoughtfully, "I find it interesting but I often long for the peace and quiet of the country, and I think that Jim would remain home now that he is the Manager, but alas! his business often takes him away. I cannot bear being alone with the children in this big house, in this great wicked city, not even when Mother is with me."

"Where is your Mother?" asked Mrs Wood, who had been very fond of Mrs Flemmer when she acted as governess in her house.

"She is in the Colony, staying with her different children."

After a few minutes silence, Mrs Wood said, "I must tell you an amusing story."

"Wait," said Louie, "I hear Jim's footsteps - he does love funny stories. Jim!" she called, "we are in the drawing room, come in here as soon as you've taken off your hat. Mrs Wood is going to tell us a funny story."

"Ah! That sounds interesting," said Jim, sinking into an armchair, "I hope Louie has not talked you into a headache!"

"Jim, for shame! You are a tease! I haven't done anything of the sort, have I Mrs Wood?"

“No, indeed; it is so interesting for me to meet Louie after all these years - when I think of the little girl I used to teach. It was when she had to wear that dreadful plaster-of-paris model - poor child!”

“Jim, Mrs Wood was the new governess who was asked if she did not think Louie ‘dreadfully fat’ and replied, ‘No, I thought what a straight back she had!’ Oh! how grateful I was to you for those words! I shall never forget my feelings as I waited to hear if you thought me ‘dreadfully fat’. Now for your story.”

“A friend of mine living in England was going to London for a day’s shopping. She had only a copper and a five pound note in her bag. When she was about to take her seat in the train, she decided she would like a newspaper, and not being able to attract the attention of the newsboy, she dashed out, leaving her handbag on the seat. She returned with her paper and off went the train.

“When she had finished reading, she opened her bag. Imagine her horror and consternation to find the five pound note gone! She looked across at the only other occupant of the carriage, a nice looking little lady! ‘You look a lady but you are a thief. You have stolen my five pounds,’ she thought.

“As the train rushed on she became more and more worried, she had not even a sixpence! What was she to do on here arrival in London? Presently the little lady rose and left the carriage, leaving her handbag on the seat. My friend sprang up, opened the bag, saw the five pound note, slipped into her own bag, closed both bags and sat down. The lady returned. To my friend’s relief she did not open her bag. They reached London and my friend did her shopping.

“In the evening, when her husband met her at the station he said, ‘Oh! my dear, I have been so worried about you all day!’ ‘Why in the world should you be worried about me?’ ‘Because you left the five pounds I gave you on your dressing table.’
When the laughter had died away, Louie said, “Jim, do tell Mrs Wood about the Jew who waited three days to see you!”

“That was rather amusing,” said Jim, “When I reached my office, after an absence of three days, my secretary informed me that a Jew had been waiting all that time to see me. I said, ‘Send him in,’ as I sat down in front of a huge pile of letters which had accumulated in my absence. The Jew explained that he wished to buy a certain farm; what his farming methods would be, and how he proposed to make money out of this purchase. He wanted my advice on the subject. The farm had nothing to do with my company so we were getting nothing out of the deal.

“My advice was ‘Don’t touch it.’ He started to explain and argue. I lost my temper, ‘Get the hell out of it,’ I shouted (excuse the language) I’ve got enough work waiting for me without wasting time on you.’

“He threw up his hands and said, ‘Please Mr Rous, please, I vill do anything vat you tell me. Dese Jews vat send me to you, dey believe on you like de Christians do on Jesus Christ.’”

They were all sad when Mrs Wood had to leave. She had proved herself a most interesting and entertaining visitor.

“I’ve got such a lovely surprise for you all,” said Jim one morning at breakfast, a few weeks before the June vacation.

“What is it, dad?” came a chorus of excited voices.

“I have arranged with a friend of mine for you to camp at Warmbaths for the holidays.”

“How lovely, oh! how lovely!” came from Louie as well as the children.

“I am glad you are all so keen. My friend is going to fix a tent which you will use as a living room, and you will have the use of one of the Company’s caravans which is being lent to you.”

“Jim, how lovely it will be, and it will be so nice for us to be out of town while you are away!”

“Yes, that is how I felt about it; I know you dislike being here alone.”

When Louie and her children arrived at Warmbaths by train, they were met by their friend and found that a nice spot had been selected, the tent pitched, and the caravan all ready for their occupation. The caravan was like a railway carriage on four wheels, only more roomy. At night it could be securely closed. The tables and the beds could be let down or fastened back, which gave plenty of room should one wish for space during the day.

There were hundreds and hundreds of tents, two thousand people were camping, anxious to benefit by bathing in the hot springs, and by drinking the water, which was said to have medicinal properties. Crowds of people came to the caravan to ask if it was part of the circus! The idea that they could think anything so funny amused the children.

Marcus was very ill for a few days with a bad attack of diarrhoea and during the time of his illness, Jim, far away in Sekuniland, dreamed he had arrived at Warmbaths and saw Marcus dead. This dream was so vivid that as soon as he could reach a telephone, Jim put through a long distance call to his Secretary in Johannesburg asking for news if his family, and was much relieved to hear that they were alright.

Jim, with a party of friends, had a very interesting time and rather an unusual experience: A very old Native was in charge of the two hundred beaters who had to drive the game for the hunters. The party decided to give the old man a present, so presented him with a shirt, a blanket and a quantity of tobacco. They were more than repaid, the old man’s gratitude was pathetic, and in the evening he conveyed his thanks in a most unique and unusual way.

Night fell, and the darkness lay on the earth like a pall, broken only by the bright stars above and the campfire. The fire had the effect of making everything look weird and grotesque - the stillness was occasionally broken by the screech of some night bird, or the call of some wild animal to its mate.

The group of five men sat round the fire, their tent a short distance off. Presently on the outskirts of the firelight could be seen the weird figure of the old man who had received the present. He was a tall, thin, gaunt old man, clad only in a red blanket which covered his trunk, leaving his long thin arms and bony legs exposed. A few scraggy hairs covered his head. His wrinkled forehead, deep-set eyes, large, beak-like nose and prominent chin gave him a most wizard-like appearance.

Finding a convenient antheap (this is a mound of earth, very common in the Transvaal, made by the working of ants) he mounted this improvised platform. Waving his long thin arms as though out of the air, he was invoking spirits, he chanted in his own language, in a deep, harmonious tone, ‘The Great White Man has been pleased to honour his servant and so, will the Spirits of the Night thank him? Thank him, oh! Spirits, thank him!’

There was a pause, and then two hundred voices, from a short distance round the camp, came on in full deep note in perfect harmony, ‘We thank Thee.’

Again, the old man chanted, again throwing out his arms. ‘Thank him again, oh Spirits, thank him again Oh Spirits of the Night!’

‘WE THANK THEE!’ came again from the bush in that deep harmonious tone. Had the performance been rehearsed, it could not have been more perfect. How the two hundred voices kept such perfect tone remained a mystery, the most perfectly conducted orchestra could not have performed more successfully.

The men round the campfire felt the blood stir in their veins and an uncanny feeling pass over them which sent a shiver up the spine.

“By Jove, that was weird and wonderful,” said Jim. “Wallie, did you ever expect such entertainment in the bush?”

“No, indeed, I could not have believed such an experience possible.”

Jim was an excellent shot. He was extraordinarily quick in all his movements and everything he did - always in the forefront. His companions decided to play a trick on him, and have some fun,

After a long day’s tramp, the men were glad to get back to camp and enjoy a rest before the evening meal; they lolled about, some reading, some talking. Presently the old man who was in charge of the beaters put his head into the tent -

“Kuddoo, baas, Kuddoo,” he whispered in a deep and thrilling voice.

In an instant every man was up, looking for his gun and prepared to rush out. Jim was the first out of the tent, and ready for action. The old man led the way. Though there is very little twilight in South Africa, there is a time between the dark and the daylight which we call twilight - it is not dark and yet difficult to see objects at any distance. After going some way into the bush the old man stopped. Pointing with his long finger he whispered, “There, baas, there - look his horns. Big Koodoo, baas, shoot!”

The uncertain light made it very difficult for Jim to be sure of the position of the animal. He could see the horns but would have to fire through the grass without being able to see the body of the beast. He hesitated …….

“Shoot! Baas shoot!” the old man urged excitedly, standing close to Jim and pointing. Jim fired. There was a roar of laughter from his companions.

“Ha! Ha!” they shouted, “We thought we’d get you! Those are a pair of horns fastened to a bush!”

Jim joined in the laughter against himself.

“But how did you know I would be the one to shoot at the horns without a body?” he asked.

“We did not have a doubt about that,” answered Wallie, still laughing, “you are always so quick, we knew you would be the first to be ready to shoot - the old man played up to the part splendidly, didn’t he?”

“Indeed he did, he was so keen I never had a suspicion of a practical joke being played on me.”

A few evenings later, as the friends were returning to camp, they observed a number of guinea fowl running along, their heads just visible above the long grass.

“Rous, I’d like to see you shoot one of those guinea fowl!”

Up went Jim’s gun and off went the head of a guinea fowl.

“That was a fluke,” said Wallie, “I bet you won’t do it again!”

Jim did it three times in succession.

“Splendid! By jove, you CAN shoot!”

Wallie’s voice was full of admiration for his friend’s achievement.

“Shoot! Shoot! Wallie,” urged Jim excitedly as he and his friend stood on an eminence and saw a large kuddoo on the crest of the hill across the valley a few days later.

“Ridiculous,” answered Wallie, “I could no more hit it than fly. You shoot!”

Up went Jim’s gun and down came the kuddoo.

“You’ve missed him,” said Wallie, as the men ran down the incline into the valley.

“I think not,” answered Jim, “I heard the bullet ‘tell’; there he lies, and what a beauty, what a magnificent pair of horns! You can have them, Wallie, I know how anxious you have been to secure a pair.”

“Thanks very much. I would be glad to have them.”

The beaters arrived and were very excited over the ‘kill’ doing what was necessary, cutting the poor animal’s throat - and then they were joined by the rest of the party.
“By Jove! Rouse, you’ve got a world’s record here!”

“Do you think so?” asked Jim, “They belong to Wallie, I’ve given him the horns.”

“Do you really think these horns are a world’s record?” asked Wallie.

“I am absolutely positive,” answered the authority on horns.

“If that is so, I am not going to take them - if they are a world’s record, Jim, you’ve got to keep them.”

“Nonsense,” said Jim, “I’ve given them to you.”

The friends argued long and heatedly, Jim hating to take what he had given to his friend and Wallie determined not to take so valuable a trophy from Jim. When the horns were measured, it was found that over the curve the measurement was seventy-two inches.

“By Jove,” said the authority on horns, ‘they are a world’s record and beat Selous’ horns by eight inches! He has held the world’s record all these years, the horns of his kuddoo measured sixty-four inches. You and Wallie are not going to argue any more. I am going to hold a court and our decision must be final,” said the ex-magistrate.

The Court unanimously decided the horns belonged to Jim and so the case was settled.

The wonderful kuddoo horns have been much admired. What pleased Jim very much was that they were the means of bringing him in touch with Mr John Millais, son of Sir John Millais. Millais read an account of the horns in a sporting paper and wrote to Jim offering him a hundred pounds as he wished to add the horns to his collection. Millais and Jim kept up a correspondence over a number of years and became great friends, thought they never met. They had much in common, both being sportsmen and interested in wild animal life.

The only time Jim contemplated parting with the kuddoo horns was when they were under offer to the late ex-President Roosevelt for a thousand pounds. Mr Roosevelt died before the deal was concluded, and so the horns remained in the Rous family, who are keen that they shall become a family heirloom, and be handed down from father to son.

“Jim,” said Wallie, a few evenings later, as the party sat round the campfire. “I have never come across anyone who could beat your shooting. How do you come to be such a good shot? I am sure you have been trained in a hard school. Tell me something of your experiences.”

Jim laughed, “When I was a small boy, many and many a time I shot a buck with the only remaining bullet, knowing that if I missed that buck my friend, a boy a couple of years my senior, would get a jolly good thrashing from his father. We took it in turns to shoot, off that one bullet - and I don’t think we ever missed.”

“I say! You little beggars had some pluck. Splendid training for you. Have you ever done any other interesting shooting?”

“Yes, while I was farming in the Colony at Tafelberg hall, I received a wire from my uncle asking me to send off some springbok in time to catch a steamer leaving Port Elizabeth for England. I’ll never forget that day! One of the worst dust-storms I’ve ever experienced, a howling North West wind, and to add to my misery I had a beastly headache.”

“Couldn’t you wait for the next day, in case the weather was fine, and your headache gone?”

“No, that was impossible, the buck had to leave by that evening’s train. I set out on horseback; of course, there are plenty of springbok on the farm - I rode towards some koppies and a good deal of growth - mimosa thorn trees - I saw a herd of buck - they were sheltering from the wind. I left my horse, climbed into the donga and crept along. My luck was in; as I was below wind, the buck had no idea of my presence. I awaited my opportunity and as the bunched, I fired. With that one shot I brought down four rams!”

“Great Scott! That was some shooting,” interrupted Wallie excitedly.

“It was bad luck in a way,” continued Jim, “as I only wanted two. I was alone, a headache and the awful day: I had to cut their throats, disembowel them and fasten them on to my horse - of course there was no room for me on his back, so I had to walk, leading the horse home.”

“You have had some interesting experiences. I believe you have travelled along the Kalahari - I expect you’ve met some queer people.”

“Some most interesting people,” Jim interrupted.

“Tell us; I like hearing of your experiences better than listening to your poetry - I say, you chaps, do you know that Jim recited poetry to me for two solid hours the other day when he and I were lying in wait for buck? How you can remember all that I can’t think. ‘Lasca’ was the one I liked best

- we'll get you to say it another time. Let's hear about some of these interesting people you've met in that God forsaken part of the world."

"I found Stumkie a most interesting man and I've never met anyone who understood and loved animals as he did, really it is impossible to make you fellows realise how he treated his animals. He and I had to do some riding together - we travelled at a jog-trot - he would never canter a horse - so you can imagine how much pleasure I got out of those rides, I, with my irritability and impatient temper! Instead of gettting a move on at our jog-trot - here he would let the horse graze! 'Stumkie!' I shouted at him, 'for goodness sake, man, come one - this is no time for the horse to be feeding.'

" 'Fossie,' says Stumkie to his horse, 'he's getting angry with us, Fossie, come now, you can't have any more grass - he'll be telling me to beat you if we don't hurry, and you know I could never do that.' We would trot along for a couple of hundred yards, and there was Fossie nibbling at the grass again! Strong language from me - and gentle remonstrances from Stumkie. Heavens! Wasn't I thankful when we could do our business on foot!

"One day the herd of cattle were brought up to the homestead and chased into the kraal. When we came to count them a young bull was missing. Stumkie was greatly puzzled, 'But I saw Zwartland outside the kraal as I was coming up from the house, where can he have got to?'

" 'It's no good puzzling over the disappearance of Zwartland,' I said, 'he must have gone back to the veld. Send a couple of men out to look for him.'

"He took my advice and we walked down to the house. Imagine how surprised we were to find Zwartland lying on the floor of the sitting-room, chewing the cud as happy as a king!"

"Well I never! How did you get him out?"

"Oh! Stumkie managed that alright," laughing at the recollection. "He talked to him - yes, just as he talks to his horse, as if they were people. 'Oh! I say, Zwartland, old boy, we can't have a bull in a china shop! Come now, this is no place for you, and here I've been looking for you and so worried, and you in my sitting-room all the time.'"

"What a very amusing man! Anything else to tell about him?"

"Well! He had the most extraordinary experience with a tiger. If it had not been Stumkie who told me I could not have believed the tale, but of course there were his missing teeth, and his three weeks in hospital to prove what he told us was true."

"Do tell us about it. It sounds like a thriller."

"Stumkie lived on a farm many, many miles beyond Vryburg, on the edge of the desert. He was having trouble with tigers killing his animals, so he and a couple of his native servants set out on horseback with their guns to track the tiger. They had followed his spoor for miles - it was almost sunset when Stumkie decided to turn for home and start out again the next morning; as he turned his horse he say the tiger lying in a bush! He fired! Missed! The tiger leapt on to the horse and started mauling Stumkie - they both fell off and the horse bolted!"

"Merciful Heaven! What a predicament to be in! and you mean to tell me that Stumkie is alive to tell the tale!"

"He's alive alright. The horse came trotting back to where the tiger was standing over Stumkie, the tiger left Stumkie and leaped on the horse's back, tearing at the saddle. The horse trotted off and

presently the tiger fell to the ground. Stumkie had his gun ready and as the tiger came towards him, fired, and missed! The two natives were some distance off, they also having bolted when the tiger first leaped on to Stumkie's horse. He shouted to them to come back and shoot the tiger.

"They turned their horses and came riding slowly back, and Stumkie set out to walk towards them, with the tiger walking beside him! When the men saw him, they turned, but Stumkie shouted out to them, saying he was no ghost or wizard, and that if they did not shoot the tiger, it would surely kill him. He ordered one of the men to bring his rifle, which was an excellent one, and after much persuasion from Stumkie and many qualms on the part of the native, the gun was at last handed to Stumkie as he and the tiger came strolling along side by side. Stumkie took it and placing it close to the head of the tiger, he fired. Of course he felt a brute, seeing the animal was walking so trustfully beside him - but there was nothing for it - as I said, he lost a couple of teeth, bitten out by the tiger, and lay in the Vryburg Hospital for several weeks as a result of the mauling he got."

"I do think your stories take a lot of beating," said Wallie.

Once more the family was reunited in their home in Johannesburg and many interesting evenings were spent as they told of their experiences. The children were wildly excited about the kuddoo head.

"What else did you shoot, Dad" asked Marcus one evening as they gathered round the fire.

"I only fired thirteen shots at big game."

"And how many did you kill?"

"I killed eleven, and nine of those were shot through the heart. But as I was saying, I was really on business, and I was very anxious for my friends to have all the sport possible. I am more sorry than I can say, that my friend Wallie did not get a pair of kuddoo horns. He is such a sport. He is far from well, yet never complains. When he is looking ghastly and I ask him how he is, he answers cheerfully, 'Oh! not too merry and bright!' and that is all he ever admits."

"Poor man," said Louie, her sympathy stirred at once, "I cannot bear to think of anyone suffering. Marcus do put some more coal on the fire."

"You remember James, the man I told you about who lives near the desert? Well, the Company has to wind up his affairs and I fear it will mean a lot of trouble; he is such a determined, headstrong beggar! I shall have to go down to Bechuanaland one of these days."

It seemed to Louie as if the bottom had fallen out of the world as she stood at the head of the stairs with a newspaper in her hand, waiting for Jim, who had risen with the lark in order to be able to play tennis before going to the Office.

"Jim," she called excitedly, "War! War!! War!!! Can you imagine anything more terrible?"

He seized the paper. Together they read…….

"I have been over to Pretoria," said Jim, a week later, "and have offered my services to Smuts."

"What did he say?" asked Louie breathlessly.

"He says he has plenty of men for the field; that I will be serving my country by carrying on the huge farming concern of the Transvaal Estates and Development Company, which is giving em-

ployment to hundreds, who are producing thousands of bags of mealies. He thinks it would not be easy to put another man in charge."

"How thankful I am that you do not have to go. I hope I should be brave if you did have to go, but what a relief to think you can serve your country though you are at home. War is cruel and beastly! We really should be able to settle disputes without fighting. Wouldn't it be funny if two men were walking down the street, began to argue and then to fight. Of course, I mean gentlemen - what a funny sight. This is the same thing, only on a larger scale! Somebody told me today it will all be over in three months. What do you think?"

"It is quite impossible to say. I must go to Bechuanaland next week."

For the next few weeks Johannesburg was in a fervour of excitement - The Foster Gang, the shooting by accident of a doctor, General de la Rey killed in the Johannesburg streets, the drowning of General Beyers. Poor Louie felt as though the world were going mad, and longed to be in some quiet place, away from all the unrest and excitement.

"Jim," said Louie, as she led the way into the dining room, where some refreshments had been prepared for him, "I am so glad to have you home, safe and sound."

"You nearly didn't!"

"What ever do you mean?"

"I didn't want you to know before I left for Bechuanaland that James had threatened to shoot me."

"Jim!"

"Yes, I knew it would worry you."

"Did the men in your office know about this threat?"

"Yes, they did their best to stop me going but, that, of course, was ridiculous. I had to attend to my business."

"Oh dear!" sighed Louie, sinking into a chair "tell me everything that happened."

"I had a lot of business to attend to and while far out in the wilds, miles and miles from anywhere, I made for a spot where I knew we would find water. We camped. The next morning poor old Isaac -" (Jim's faithful native driver and son of old Ayah Diena)

"Did he also know of your danger?" interrupted Louie.

"Yes, he came to my tent, 'Baas,' he whispered hardly able to speak, 'Baas James is camped on the other side of the water.'"

"Oh! Jim how awful."

"I dressed and walked over to his camp. He was standing at the side of his wagon, his great burly figure in rough corduroy breeches and khaki shirt, drinking a cup of coffee. 'Hullo old chap!' I said, slapping him on the shoulder, but careful not to spill his coffee, 'You've been out in the wilds for many months; I believe you must be longing for decent food. Come along to my tent and have a good civilised breakfast.'"

“Jim! How wonderful of you! And he came?”

“He came alright, and after giving him a slap-up breakfast, we had a heart to heart talk. I explained that the winding up of his affairs had nothing to do with me personally; that if he shot me there would only be another man in my place to carry on the winding up.”

“You made him see reason?”

“I did, and we parted the best of friends. Poor old James, he little knows how sorry I am for him!”

A few evenings later Louie was much alarmed by Jim’s appearance when he walked into the house.

“Whatever have you been doing?” she asked in distress.

“I was in the express, coming from Pretoria, and as the train was nearing Jeppe Station, some-one fired at it, right into the window of my carriage. The window was closed, the shot passed just above my head, splintering the glass and cutting my face like this, my hair is full of little bits of glass.”

“Heavens! What an escape you’ve had.”

The next morning Jim came home with the news that Stumkie had been killed. All through those months and years of War Louie’s heart was wrung by constantly hearing of the death of some friend or relative. Three years and still war!

“How would you like to spend a month in Cape Town, Louie,” asked Jim.

“I would love it,” promptly answered Louie.

“I thought so, well, we must think of some arrangement about the children and when that’s fixed up, we’ll be off. I am sick to death of office life and want to get back to farming.”

“Jim, how exciting.”

“We’ll go down and have a look at the fruit farms in the Western Province and see how we like the idea of growing fruit for a living!”

A wonderful month was spent in Cape Town, but fruit growing did not appeal to either Jim or Louie. However, the trip to Cape Town marked another turning point in their lives.

Tafelberg Hall was in the market; Jim’s aunt was most anxious that he should buy it.

“It has been in Louie’s family for nearly forty years, and in your family for twenty five years,” said the lady, “and Louie grew up in the neighbourhood and spent years at Tafelberg Hall at school, and you lived on the property for seven years - so I feel that you two are the ones who should be in possession of Tafelberg Hall.”

The necessary business was arranged, and, with a partner, the property was bought.

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CHAPTER VII
TAFELBERG HALL

As Jim was the Manager of the Transvaal Estates and Development Company, it was necessary that he should give three month's notice before he could be released from the responsible position he held.

The family had left the large house in which they had resided for two years, and had bought a property, a much smaller house but very comfortable, in which they had lived for nearly two years, when the children caught whooping cough, which meant they were out of school.

One day when Jim came home to dinner he said, "I've had a splendid offer for this house, a hundred pounds more than we paid for it, but as the would-be purchaser wants it in a fortnight's time I have turned down the offer."

"Oh! you mustn't do that," exclaimed Louie, "we can't refuse such a chance to sell!"

"But you can't possibly let them have the house in a fortnight's time!"

"Of course I can. We'll pack up and send everything to Tafelberg, the children and I will got to Vereeneging and stay with our friends Mr & Mrs Wilson, who have long wanted us to come, and as they have no children of their own and are on a farm, it will be an ideal arrangement for our whooping children."

"Splendid," said Jim, "You do show some spirit, and I am pleased to see your courage and energy. I'll phone the man as soon as I get back to the office, and tell him he can have the house. Unfortunately I have to go to Cape Town next week on business for the Company, which means that you will be alone for the final packing and getting away."

"Don't worry about that," said Louie, "if you will pack the pictures, I'll manage the rest."

On his return from office that evening, Jim called excitedly to Louie, "You will never guess whom I had in my office this afternoon as callers!"

"No, I can't imagine. Do tell me!"

"Mr & Mrs Wilson! They had read in some newspaper, not that I was 'dead' like Jack Robinson, but of our purchase of Tafelberg Hall, and came in to congratulate me. Mrs Wilson said sadly, 'I suppose there is no chance now of Mrs Rous and the children coming to spend their promised holiday with me.' 'Indeed,' I told her, 'that's just where you are making a mistake, she is arranging to come in a fortnight's time!' Mrs Wilson was delighted to hear this and says you must come as soon as you can and stay as long as possible! Isn't that most satisfactory?"

The end of the fortnight saw the whole house dismantled and the furniture packed. Louie and the children had been living in the greatest discomfort for several days. It was impossible for them to go to an Hotel or boarding house on account of the infection. The state of the dismantled house had a most depressing effect on Marcus. He lay on a little cane couch in front of the fire in the dining room, feeling too ill and unhappy to take an interest in anything.

A friend of Louie's, who lived almost next door, had been kind enough to suggest that she and the children spend their last night in Johannesburg in their house, and leave from there for Vereeniging.

“Mother,” said Marcus, “I feel too ill to get up! Please leave a lot of wood beside me and I will sleep here and keep the fire going all night. You and the kids go, but leave me here.”

“My dear Marcus, I’ll never do that,” said his mother, “I could not think of such a thing; to leave you, ill and alone in this empty house is not to be thought of. I’ll write a note to my friend and tell her you are feeling too ill to move, and I am afraid to take you out in this dreadful weather. It is most bitterly cold and it has begun to rain. You and I will stay here.”

Louie dispatched her note and a few minutes later her friend came dashing into the house.

“What an absurd idea!” she said with energy, “I will not allow you and Marcus to remain here. Let him lie on the couch, cover him up and let the two native boys carry him to my house.”

This was done. The two native men placed the couch in the passage, Marcus rose and walked into the dining room.

“Mother,” he said with a bright and happy smile, “I am perfectly well!” and so he was. The change from the dismantled house where he had been, to the bright and cheerful room had worked a miracle.

As Louie and her friend sat over the fire and chatted, after the children had been put to bed, the former remarked, “I have never in my life experienced such cold!”

“I shouldn’t be surprised if it snowed,” replied her friend.

“Oh, don’t suggest anything so dreadful!” replied Louie, “think of my journey with the children to-morrow.”

Louie’s consternation next morning as she looked through her bedroom window on to a white world, can be better imagined than described. She could not bear to trespass on the hospitality of her friends, nor could she face the thought of travelling with the children in such weather. When she told her host and hostess of her anxiety and worry, they were kindness itself and placed their home at her disposal.

After the third day, the weather cleared sufficiently for Louie and the children to make the journey.

To be on a farm was ideal for the children in every way. They were allowed perfect freedom except for two hours daily which were set aside for their lessons.

“What have you children been doing?” asked their mother one day as they came in.
“The weather is so bad, that I meant you to stay indoors.”

“We have been playing inside,” said Marcus, “playing in the empty house next door.”

“We’ve had such fun,” said Marjory, “Marcus has been making the electric bells ring.”

“Good Gracious!” exclaimed Mrs Wilson, turning round excitedly. “What is this you have been do-ing, and how did you do it?”

“I found the cells and filled them with water, now all the bells can ring.”

“Do you think you could put those bells into my house?” asked Mrs Wilson excitedly.

“Of course I could,” answered Marcus, “It’s quite easy.”

“Well, I’m going to ask Mr Wilson if we may remove them, and I’ll get you to do it after dinner.”

“I would love to do it,” said Marcus.

Having obtained Mr Wilson’s consent to the removal of the bells, they were successfully transferred, to the great pleasure and satisfaction of Mrs Wilson.

“I wonder,” she said to Marcus, “if you could be as helpful to me with the electric light, as you have been with the bells? I want an extension into my pantry. Do you think you could do it?”

“If Mr Wilson will give me the wire, the bulb and the fittings, I would love to do it for you.”

“Mother,” said the fourteen year old boy a little later, “Mr Wilson asked me where I learned about electricity. Wasn’t that funny? Because a person doesn’t learn about electricity or electric bells; you just know.”

When Jim arrived to spend the weekend, as he did on many occasions, Louie was pleased to see the twin’s pride in Marcus’ work as they showed their dad what had been accomplished. Jim, who was a severe critic, was equally proud, and could find no fault.

“I have bought you boys an airgun,” said Jim, “I want you to be good shots so keep count of the birds you shoot and give me the figures when next I come. I know Mr Wilson will be glad if you can destroy some of the little beggars which are eating his fruit.”

During the course of their visit, the children got into severe trouble with their hostess, which Louie thought was not altogether their fault. At eleven o’clock one morning a huge plate of buttered toast was produced, to the great delight of the children. “I don’t think you should have more than one piece each,” said their mother, “you will never be able to eat your dinner if you do.”

“Of course they will be able to eat their dinner,” said Mrs Wilson, “it’s hours before dinner time.”

The children thoroughly enjoyed their morning tea, then set out on their adventures. They were just in time to see a wagon drawn by four oxen leaving the yard. They dashed after it and the men in charge allowed them to climb up. After travelling for several miles, the wagon reached its destination. Here the children found a great deal to amuse and interest them and they played happily for hours.

As there was no sign of the children, although dinner had been delayed half an hour, Mr and Mrs Wilson and Louie sat down and ate it alone. Two o’clock came, and still no children. At four o’clock there was a rush of feet and eager voices were heard asking: “Is it dinner time?”

Mrs Wilson was very angry and gave them a severe scolding. However, she set before them a feast which they thoroughly enjoyed but which, she said, she did only for their mother’s sake!

The boys were kept very busy and interested in shooting birds, and looked forward eagerly to Jim’s visits, to give him their results.

Placing his hand on Marcus’ shoulder, Jim led the boy into the garden.

“Marcus,” he said, “why is it that you and Leslie have always shot more birds than Graham. Is he

such a bad shot?"

"No, Dad, it is because he gets so sorry for the little birds. He has a splendid chance to hit a bird, and just as he is going to shoot, he drops the gun and says, 'It's a hen, perhaps she is sitting on eggs, perhaps she has little ones in her nest, waiting for her to feed them.' And if it is a cock he says, 'If I kill it, perhaps the poor little hen will be waiting for her mate,' so of course there is nothing left for him to shoot, and it's only when we tell him that he's an idiot and make him shoot, that he does!"

"Dear old Graham, he has a very tender heart," said his Dad.

At last the long-looked for day arrived when the family were in the train on their way to Tafelberg. It was night when they reached the little wayside station. They found their partner and his wife waiting to receive them, with two carts which would convey them to the homestead, four miles off. Louie and Jim much appreciated the welcome they received from their very old friends, two gentlemen who lived in the neighbourhood.

The rush of memories which were hers as she stepped on to the platform were a mixture of joy and sorrow. Here it was she had arrived, when she was eight years old after her first train journey, in an open truck. From this little platform she came and went on her many journeys to and from Cradock and it was here that she arrived when Jim carried her off from Rocklands during the trouble with her eyes. She pictured the home of her childhood, which lay a mile beyond the station; turned and looked at the little church, whose outline could be distinctly seen in the bright moonlight. Her grandfather, Mr Distin, had given the plot of ground on which it stood, her father had worked hard for its erection and had been treasurer and churchwarden, and she herself had been organist for eight years before her marriage.

Memories! Memories!! Memories!!!

"How glad I am," said Louie, as they jogged along, that it is such a beautiful night and I can see the outline of the dear old mountain. I am longing to show the children all the interesting and beautiful spots. I love to think that they are going to run abut in the garden their great grandmother laid out and planted, where their Mother played as a child, and their grandmother before her."

"Come along, children," said Louie, the next morning, "I am longing to show you the gardens and all the familiar spots; this little bench is just midway on this very long walk. My grandfather had it specially made for his Mother."

"Isn't it wonderful that it has lasted all these years?" said Marcus.

"Yes, indeed it is; the old lady liked to sit here and rest during her walk. I can remember her quite well, she was such a dainty little lady, and very pretty, even in her old age, with bright rosy cheeks and snow white hair. She was very upright and always sat stiffly on her chair, never dreaming of reclining in an armchair. There is the spot where Dad stood attending to a clutch of ostrich chicks when Ida introduced us to one another. Now come and look at the fig trees."

"Mother! What a lot of names!" exclaimed the children, as they excitedly tried to decipher names and initials and dates on the fig trees.

"Look at this," said Louie, "in each case the whole name has been written. These were Ida's parents - Mary Distin, John Montague, 1870. I do appreciate the fact that Dad's cousin has kept these trees as the Distins left them; during the many years that he was here he has not allowed anyone to carve his or her name, so all the carving you see has been done by the Distin family, their

friends and relations. You children must carve your names; I am so proud to think they will be on these old trees. After dinner we will walk over to 'The Little Fountain'"

"Needn't we do any lessons?" asked Leslie.

"No dear, we are going to have three weeks' holiday as there is so much for us to see, and to do, that it is impossible to think of lessons at present. Dad and I have decided that we will not send you to boarding school until after the Christmas vacation. Marcus, you have to go into Standard VII, Marjory you Standard VI and you two Standard IV. We have five months in which to do a lot of hard work. I am afraid we shall have a lot of interruptions with visitors coming. An aunt of mine arrives next week. During Christmas and New Year there will be no work done, so we must settle down to work in real earnest after your three weeks' holiday."

In the afternoon the family walked over to the 'Little Fountain'. This had been a favourite picnic spot during all the years the Distins lived at Tafelberg. It lay a mile from the house and was an ideal spot in which to spend a day. As its name implied there was a fountain, a clear beautiful stream which trickled down between two koppies, hundreds of splendid mimosa thorn trees grew in rich profusion all down the valley. A great change had taken place during Jim and Louie's absence in the Transvaal; a wall had been built between the two koppies, making a huge dam on the upper side and below this wall was a smaller dam and the trees.

"Look at this water," said Jim as he turned a valve, "isn't it a glorious sight? This is an overflowing borehole; it was discovered by Mr Harry McLeod, who lives in Cradock."

"Dad, how did he discover it?" asked Graham.

"With a divining rod. These artesian wells are quite common in Australia, but I believe there are only five in South Africa, and we are lucky to have one of the five!"

"It is a lovely spot," said Marjory, "I do like all these trees and water. May we have a picnic here?"

"Yes, of course you may. Come now and look at an interesting spot and I will tell you something about it. This building used to be just two rooms, and when I was a child at school, we walked over here one afternoon with our governess and were chased by a vicious bull. We were glad to remember these rooms and made for them - we rushed in and closing the door, watched the infuriated animal as he bellowed and pawed the ground. It grew quite dark and still the bull had not forgotten that he had chased several frightened people into that house. When the family assembled round the table for supper, it was discovered that the governess and her charges had not returned from their walk. Everybody was much alarmed. Two of my uncles leaped on to their horses as soon as they were saddled, and made straight for this spot, knowing it was our favourite walk, and here they found us, the frightened children looking through the cracks in the wooden shutter and the bull still pawing the ground. They drove off the bull and escorted us home, where we arrived with ravenous appetites for our late supper!"

"What a good thing they missed you," said Marjory, "you might have stayed there all night."

"Yes, indeed we were very thankful to be rescued. It would have been too dreadful had we been kept prisoners all night."

The children were each given a horse of their own and their delight in their animals was pretty to see. Jim was most anxious that they should become expert in the handling of the horses so they were taught to groom, to feed and to saddle, as well as to ride them.

“They are very apt pupils,” said Jim, “and Marjory is as keen as the boys.”

“I don’t think Marjory should be treated exactly like the boys in this case,” said Louie.

“That is where you make a mistake,” said Jim, “It is essential for her to become absolutely familiar with her horse, and unless she handles him as she is doing, it is impossible for her to do so. I do think girls need a much broader bringing up than they get.”

During January Lily Ziervogel, now Mrs Shaw, the friend of Louie’s childhood, who saved her from falling in the well, arrived at Tafelberg, with her three children, and a very happy holiday was spent. There was much to amuse and entertain the children and the friends were never at a loss for topics of conversation - they found so much of interest in relating their various experiences.

“This is rather amusing,” said Jim, as with an open letter in his hand, he came into the drawing room where Lily and Louie sat with their work. “This letter is from a man I know in the Transvaal, and it is a letter of condolence: he says all our friends are very sad at the dreadful news they have heard - that is of the sad loss of my wife and two of my children.….”

“What an extraordinary letter!” exclaimed Louie.

“Yes, it appears you and the two children were in a boat on the dam, the boat turned turtle and you three drowned. He does not know whether the children who drowned were the two eldest or the twins, or a twin and on of the elder ones, and asks me to write and give him all the details.”

“Isn’t it strange,” said Louie, “how such rumours get about and we’ve not even got a boat!”

“This is the second time Louie has been reported dead,” said Jim.

“Is that so?” asked Lily with interest, “do tell me about the other time.”

“When the twins were about three years old, I happened to be in Pretoria, waiting for hours for a train, so made up my mind to pass the time by calling on a lady and her mother who were friends of ours. They behaved in such a peculiar manner that I could not refrain from asking them if anything was the matter. The younger woman then said how she had been trying for a whole month to write me a letter of sympathy, but had not been able to do so as words failed her when she thought of the poor little children, especially the twins. I asked her to explain herself as I had no idea what she was talking about. ‘I am talking about your wife’s death.’ ‘My wife’s death! Good Lord! She was perfectly well when I left home this morning.’

“The poor lady went on to explain that a gentleman from our neighbourhood had called on them a month previously and had informed them of the death of Mrs Rous! They had asked for details, which he could not supply, but was absolutely certain that it was Mrs James Cole Rous who had died.”

“I wonder how he could have got hold of such an extraordinary story! If I had been ill there might have been an explanation of such a rumour, but I have never known a day’s illness.”

“It is strange,” agreed Lily, “I have heard that a person who has been reported dead lives to a great age and is very lucky. You should live to a very great age and be particularly lucky, since you’ve twice been reported dead.”

‘Of course, I don’t know about living to a great age, but I certainly am lucky.”

At all times in her life Louie was much affected by the state of the weather. On many occasions Jim laughed at her because she would say, “Oh! it is such a perfectly glorious day, I simply cannot work! I must spend the time appreciating the good gifts of the gods!” another time she would say, “The day is too awful, I just don’t want to think about it, so I must have a nice book and just sit and read.”

Jim would say, “If my grandfather, the preacher Cole, could hear you, he would say, ‘It is good growing weather.’ No matter how bad the day was he would never allow anyone to criticise what God gave us!”

Boarding School: Fortunately for Louie, on the day that the big roomy Cape cart stood at the door, with the four little trunks strapped on behind, the afternoon was perfect. Had the weather been bad, it would have been more than she could possibly have borne. They drove to the station where they caught the train and arrived in Cradock after two hours. Here they spent a few days with Mrs Shaw before the children were taken to their various schools.

Louie found Cradock very much changed. Beautiful homes, gardens and streets lay beyond Frere Street, and stretched right up to the koppies. The old house in Frere Street was just the same, the same old railings between whose bars her head has stuck when she was a child. Her children were very interested in this and other old familiar spots which she was able to show them. It was a new Rocklands to which she took Marjory, a splendid pile of buildings lying right on the outskirts of town and far beyond Frere Street. Louie was very pleased to find so many of her old friends still living in Cradock, friends of her childhood, the little Dorothy who had read to her when she spent her days lying on a couch, now Mrs Storr Garlake and the mother of four children; Mr Metcalf who had been her parents’ greatest friend and who had given her a high chair when she was two years old. This linking with the past was full of thrills for Louie.

On Sunday afternoon Louie engaged a taxi and drove the three boys to the Boys’ School and Marjory to Rocklands, and on Monday morning she returned to Tafelberg by an early train. Her courage was taxed to the uttermost as through that long day she attended to various household duties and tried to be brave; but it was a sore trial as her heart ached for herself and her children, she knew how homesick they would be, how dreadful for them to be cooped up and have strict rules after the free farm life; how they would be missing their dogs and their horses and all the other interests which kept their little lives so busy and joyous. Her heart longed and yearned over them - if only she could hear the rush of their feet and the sound of their merry voices! The deathly stillness of the house seemed more than she could bear during that long, long afternoon.

The strain of the last few days was telling on her; she was not feeling well enough to go down to the shed, about a quarter of a mile off, where Jim was supervising the shearing of the sheep, and it was impossible for him to leave his work, even to join Louie in a cup of tea, and so she sat alone - utterly sad and miserable!

“Hullo,” exclaimed Jim as he came in at sunset to find Louie in tears, a most unusual sight. “Whatever is the matter, old lady?” he asked, sitting down beside her on the couch.

“I’m so sad about the children,” sobbed Louie.

“But, my dear, you should be glad that we are able to send them to school.”

“I know, and I am glad, but I do miss them so, and I know how their poor little hearts must be aching and how homesick they must be.”

“Never mind, we’ll go down and spend a weekend with them and that will cheer you all. Write and

tell them we'll come quite soon, and then when you see how jolly they are, you'll realise that you need not be sad for them. Think if they had to go to England, or even Cape Town!"

"Oh! I know, I could not have borne that."

"Well, cheer up and don't be sad any more. It is a pity we could not have spent the afternoon together. Tomorrow you must try and get down to the shed."

"You can't think," said Louie, "how sad the children were at the station when they parted with their dogs, and the dogs seemed to understand what was happening; they followed the train, Grundy and Gamble ran for miles! The children were very distressed, thinking they could not find their way home again!"

A few months later, as Jim and Louie were reading their post, Jim exclaimed, "Ah! Wonders will never cease! Of all the impossible things that could have happened! Here is a letter from Oom Jan, saying he is coming to see us!"

"You don't say so," exclaimed Louie, "I am glad, I think he is the dearest man I know."
"Yes," agreed Jim, "I have the greatest admiration and respect for him. It is sad that he has been so unfortunate in his sons."

"It is indeed very sad to think that he has lost three sons, all such promising boys, and Oom Jan was so devoted to each of them in turn. I am surprised that he can tear himself away from his baby boy, the consolation of his old age, and all the more precious having lost all his other boys. Isn't it strange, Jim, how often one sees families who are very keen about having boys, either have only girls or lose the boys when they do have them?"

"Yes, that is so when one comes to think of it. Poor Oom Jan, with his eight daughters!"

"I do hope this little chap grows up and is a comfort to him, in his old age."

"Judging from his letter, he spoils the little fellow alright. He says he carries him about wherever he goes and cannot bear him out of his sight."

A few days later Oom Jan arrived. It was several years since the friends had met, consequently they had much to talk about, as Oom Jan was a very poor correspondent. He could not speak or understand English, so Louie and Jim spoke only Afrikaans during his stay with them.

"I hope you had a pleasant journey, that you were able to sleep and had a good night?" asked Louie.

"Sleep in the train!" replied Oom Jan indignantly, "Louie, do you think I could come out of the Transvaal, take this long journey and waste my time sleeping? No, indeed! I sat on the little platform all night to see all that I possibly could see. We passed through ……(mentioning the number) stations between Johannesburg and Tafelberg."

"You don't mean to say you kept count of all the stations?" exclaimed Jim.

"Of course I did! I am so glad to find that when I return I will leave here by an early train so I will pass through the country during the day time, which I came through at night."

"That is so," said Jim, "Oom Jan, what would you have said, if during the Boer War, someone had told you that you would one day leave the Transvaal to visit an Englishman and his wife?"

I would have told them that they were stark, staring, raving mad," replied Oom Jan laughing, "I am sorry," he continued, "that the children are not here. I should have arranged my visit during their school holiday, but of course I did not think of that. I am very disappointed not to see them. You know I am hoping that one day your Marcus will marry my Maria!"

Jim and Louie exchanged glances, but smiled at Oom Jan as they did not wish hurt his feelings by showing how preposterous they thought his proposal.

"This is the first time in my life I've been out of the Transvaal or travelled so far by train. How glad I was when I reached Johannesburg Station to find a porter who spoke Afrikaans. I felt utterly lost in all that confusion of people and trains. However, this porter was most kind and helpful and put me in my carriage. It was very hard for me to leave my baby boy, but I had a great longing to see you two, your home, and the way you carry on sheep farming in the Karroo."

"Tell us about your little boy," said Louie.

"He is nearly three years old," said Oom Jan, greatly pleases to be on his favourite topic. "He is very clever, much more old fashioned than any of my other children at that age. He goes with me wherever I go; I carry him on my shoulder and he does love it! Sannie says I spoil him, but I don't care. I can't see why he should not do just as he likes, and no matter what he does, I could never bring myself to whip him."

"But, Oom Jan, you cannot let him grow up too naughty and spoilt," remonstrated Louie, "you know what Solomon said, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.'"

"Oh! but Louie, it would simply break my heart to whip him, he is such a darling, pretty little fellow."

"Does he look like any of your other children?"

"Yes, he looks like Maria."

"How well I remember what a pretty little thing she was when we first went to Riverside."

"Yes, she is the flower of my flock, that is why I am going to keep her for Marcus."

Happy days were spent by the three friends, walking through the gardens, driving over the veld; Oom Jan was a most entertaining and enthusiastic visitor. He was tremendously pleased when Jim took him on horseback, and he shot his first springbok.

"Louie," said Oom Jan, as they sat over the fire one evening, "I am very anxious to climb the mountain. Have you ever climbed it?"

"No, when I was a child, I promised my Father that I would not; he was so afraid of an accident - and then that climb was not to be thought of during the four years I suffered from my back, since then I have had no opportunity."

"Wouldn't you like to go up now?"

"Yes, I would, very much indeed."

"That's good," said Oom Jan, 'because Jim is quite willing to take me up, but I know he'll climb like a young springbok and expect me to keep up with him. That, of course, would be impossible, so

if you will come with us you will be doing me a great favour because he will have to go slow then, and I won't feel that it is only for my sake that he is doing so."

"I think yours is a very good idea, Oom Jan," said Jim, "I've long wanted Louie to climb the mountain and she will be so proud when she can say she has done it."

"What is the height?" asked Oom Jan.

"Nearly 2,000 feet - 1,800 to be exact; that is from the base to the summit. The top which is as flat as a table, is on the same level as Johannesburg, 6,000 feet above sea level. Can we arrange this climb for tomorrow?"

"Yes, certainly," said Louie, "Oom Jan hasn't many days left so we should go as soon as possible."

"I do think it is absurd for you to come all this way for one week! You simply must stay another week," said Jim.

"It is very kind of you and nothing would please me better; I have so enjoyed being in an Englishman's house and very interested indeed in your farming methods, so different from ours, but I told Sannie I would be home on Saturday and she will send the cart to meet me; besides, much as I have enjoyed my visit, I cannot stay away any longer from my little son. Oh my greatest blessing and the joy of my old age. I live in terror of something happening to him."

"Dear Oom Jan," said Louie soothingly, "you must not feel like that. I am sure he is going to grow up a fine strong boy and be a great comfort and joy to you when you are an old man."

"God grant that your words may be true!"

"There is one thing Jim must promise us before I undertake to go up the mountain, and that is that he won't stand on the edge of the cliffs."

"Oh! you old fussy wuzzy," laughed Jim.

"Oom Jan," said Louie, "it is no laughing matter. Do you know that on one occasion he was standing on the very edge of the mountain and suddenly a feeling of insecurity made him step back; as he did so, the whole side of the mountain on which he had been standing, went hurtling down, thousands of tons of stones and earth! Had he been on that spot a second longer, he would have been killed, nothing would have saved him."

"But here I am, perfectly sound in mind and limb!"

"Oh! Jim you really are hopeless. Do tell Oom Jan about the time when you shot the last tiger which was found in these parts."

"He'll only scold me if I do," laughed Jim, "We set a trap for the tiger, which was killing the lambs, not really a tiger, of course, but a South African leopard - the next morning when a couple of men and I went to the spot near Beeste Hoek, there was the animal caught by the foot, the dogs were barking at him, making him furious. There was a good deal of bush in my way so I decided to skirt round and get on to a ledge or rock facing the tiger. I climbed up, unfortunately the ledge was very narrow, and I was so placed that it was impossible for me to get away, the rock at my back being far too high for me to climb over, should I wish to do so. I had my gun ready when what was my astonishment to see that the tiger was free of the trap and coming at me! I was standing about six feet above the ground and four feet away from the tiger. As he reared up to strike me I shot him.

Down he fell - dead as a doornail!"

"Oom Jan, don't you think it was a terrible risk to take, to climb on to that narrow little ledge? But what makes me jealous is to think that Jim had one of the claws set in gold as a brooch and gave it to a lady friend of his!"

"Well, but this was long before we were engaged and The Little Dane was so unapproachable, so occupied with her teaching, I did not think I stood the ghost of a chance."

"Oh! Jim you dreadful old tease."

The next morning the mountaineers made an early start, but unfortunately they had not climbed half way when Jim's quick ear caught an unusual sound. "Stop!" he said, "and listen; it sounds as if someone is shouting to us."

Louie and Oom Jan took the opportunity of finding a convenient stone on which to sit and rest. Jim mounted a boulder and adjusted his field glasses.

"I see a man. He is running as if for dear life, waving his arms in our direction and shouting. You two wait here and I'll go down. When I am able to hear what his trouble is I'll shout to you."

They watched Jim as he leaped from stone to stone in his precipitous flight down the mountain-side.

"How like a springbok," said Oom Jan, "rather different from the pace at which he came up. I am glad that you were here to keep him from climbing too fast, and so prevent him being impatient with me."

When Jim was within shouting distance of the native, he called to him asking what was the trouble.

"Listen," said Louie, "Jim is going to tell us what the native says."

"He says," came Jim's voice in full, clear tones, "the baas is dead!" and away he went, leaping from boulder to boulder and in no time was out of sight.

"Dear me," said Oom Jan wiping his brow, "I thought that man was carrying bad news about my little son."

"Poor Oom Jan, I am glad you have not had bad news - but if our partner is dead it is very serious news for us, so we must return at once." So saying Louie turned and began the descent. It was very rough and difficult, far more difficult than it had been to climb up. Oom Jan was most kind and helpful. He was a big man, nearly six feet in height, and weighing about two hundred pounds. He had black hair, a moustache, and short little black beard turning grey, and very kind brown eyes.

Louie and Oom Jan had reached the garden when they met Jim coming to tell them what had happened.

"The silly nigger," he said, "lost his head, gave me an awful fright, as I know you must have had too - one of the men, a white man in charge of the thrashing machine had a fit - 'and he's not dead at all, said Jack Robinson' - I wish I could say this to you in Afrikaans, Oom Jan, but I can't; however, I'll try to explain it - Jack Robinson knocked at the door of his home after years of absence when his wife, who opened the door, and who had married during his long absence, said 'somebody told me that somebody said that somebody else had somewhere read in some newspaper

that you were dead!' 'I'm not dead at all,' said Jack Robinson."

Oom Jan had a ready wit and was much amused at the dilemma in which 'Jack Robinson's' wife found herself.

"It is no use trying to climb the mountain now," said Louie, "Let us go home and have tea and spend the rest of the afternoon chatting. Oom Jan must tell us some of his experiences."

"On one occasion when my wife and I were camping in the Bushveld," said Oom Jan as they sat over the tea cups, "I was mending a harness and she was busy making bread. I was dressed in trousers and shirt. I felt a queer sensation on my back; calling to her I asked her to see what it was. She came and looked and said 'It was all imagination on your part; there is nothing to be seen.' After a while I felt it again. 'I am sure there is a spider on my back, I feel something crawling.' Impatiently she left her work. She looked down on my back. 'Oh God!' she exclaimed in a dreadful tone of horror and alarm. It was enough for me; I seized hold of my shirt in the middle of my back, and with one wrench I tore it off and flung it from me; there I was with only the wristbands round my wrists. Imagine my surprise to find my wife laughing until the tears were streaming down her face; it had been a joke - she was only teasing me."

"She had the worst of the joke," said Louie, laughing, "as she had to mend your shirt."

"Didn't you have a quarrel with a Jew about some sheep?" asked Jim, "Louie your tea is so good - I'll have another cup please."

"Yes, I did and the result of that quarrel I'll carry to my dying day. Look at my finger."

He showed them the middle finger of his left hand; evidently the first joint had been broken, as he was unable to straighten it.

"What happened?" asked Jim.

"I took a hundred sheep to Witbank for sale. I bargained with a Jew and eventually sold them to him at ten shillings a head. They were driven into his kraal and we walked down to his shop to conclude the business by his giving me his cheque. He started arguing, saying he had bought the sheep at eight and sixpence per head. After a heated argument, in which neither of us would give in, he defied me to take my sheep out of his kraal. I felled him with one blow of my left hand and as I am left-handed, he was quite unprepared for my attack, especially as I was carrying a sjambok in my right hand. He went down like an ox. I left him lying unconscious on the floor of his shop, returned to the kraal and took possession of my sheep. What I did to damage my finger like this I don't know; but it is the result of the blow I gave the Jew. What I should like to do more than anything in the world is to come again and bring Sannie with me," remarked Oom Jan.

"Yes, do," said Louie, "and you must bring your little son too."

Poor Oom Jan! Six months after his return home, Louie and Jim received a most pathetic letter form him, telling them of the loss of the little chap he so much loved; he had died from croup.

Louie and Jim had a constant succession of callers as the neighbourhood was most friendly and sociable. People came for miles thought there were no cars in those days; at any rate not in that neighbourhood.

As they stood one afternoon and watched a cart load of visitors drive off, Louie turned to Jim and said, "Do you know that darling baby boy has some skin trouble. I am most terribly heartsore about

it. I simply can't bear to think of it. During the afternoon the irritation became so unbearable that his Mother undid his clothes and smeared salve all over him, and he kept saying 'B'ow on it Mommie, b'ow on it.'"

"Poor little chap," said Jim, "are they doing anything about it?"

"Oh yes, they have seen several doctors, but they don't seem to be able to cure him, poor little fellow. I simply could not bear it if it were my baby."

For the rest of that afternoon and evening that little child and his trouble were never out of Louie's thoughts; she lifted up her soul in the most earnest and heartfelt prayer, that something might be done for the child.

The next morning as Louie and Jim sat down to breakfast, Jim said, "I have had the most peculiar experience during the night, a dream, but it wasn't a dream, it was a vision. In this vision I went to a man whom I know to be a clever specialist; I can see him now as he sat, his elbows resting on the arms of his chair, the tips of this long, think white fingers pressed together. He had a thin, white, clever face, piercing blue eyes and large intellectual head. I described the child's trouble to him exactly as you told it to me; after a thoughtful pause he said, 'one of three things must happen - the child will die, go mad, or be cured, and surely it is best to cure him. This can be done by removing all his clothes and allowing him to play, naked, out of doors. The sun and the air will cure his trouble. His clothing must be left off gradually until at length he is in only one garment, and eventually this must be left of!'"

"What an extraordinary dream," said Louie with a feeling of jealousy, wishing she had had the dream, as she was the one who had prayed so earnestly for the child.

"It was most extraordinary," agreed Jim, "it was all so vivid - a vision - and so convincing that I am most anxious to tell the child's parents. I feel like driving over to their farm at once."

"I don't think we need do that, as we will meet the child's father on the train when we go up to Bloemfontein tomorrow night, and you'll have plenty of time then to tell him all about it."

"So I shall. I am glad you remembered that. I know that this treatment is going to cure him, and am most anxious for it to be tried as soon as possible."

As Louie, Jim and their friend were walking up to the Show Ground in Bloemfontein, the morning after their arrival in that town, Jim said: "Have you sent your wife a wire telling her to leave off the little chap's clothes?"

"No, no. Oh, no, no! I will wait until; I get home and explain it all to her, and of course we must consult our doctor before we do anything like that!"

Jim's enthusiasm received a sharp check. But he never ceased to argue, and to persuade the parents of the child at every opportunity which chance gave him, to try his open air cure. In 1918 people did not know so much about open air treatment, in South Africa at any rate, as they do now. Eighteen months elapsed before Jim's remedy was tried and during that time how thankful Louie was that he had had the vision and not she, as she would never have had the courage to argue as he did, nor could she have been so convincing.

"Come and show yourself to Dr Rous," said the child's mother six months after he had been wearing only one garment, as she led the little fellow, who was as brown as a berry, up to Jim. "He loves this garment, which he calls his 'clo!' and hates his clothes, so he is never properly dressed

except when he goes to town."

"You should not dress him even then," said Jim, patting the little fellow's back, "it is splendid to see him so well and strong and brown."

One day while Jim was still busy with the shearing, he managed to leave the shed during the morning, and walk up to the house and have tea with Louie.

"It is such a lovely day, I think I'll walk back with you to the shed and then I must come and prepare the Sunday dinner. We are going to have quite a crowd tomorrow. I am having the scrappiest dinner for you and me today."

"If that is so," said Jim, never missing an opportunity of teasing, "I hope we don't have any visitors."

"Oh! no, Jim, don't suggest such a thing - it is Saturday and already nearly twelve o'clock - I am going home to stuff the leg of venison for tomorrow."

"Louie returned to the house - she had everything prepared and was just about to stuff the leg of venison when the 'phone rang. "Yes, hullo! Tafelberg here, who's speaking?"

"This is the station master here," came the answer over the 'phone. "Your friends, four in number, are on their way up to you for lunch; they are in a car."

Louie banged down the receiver, flung off her apron, which she did not find for days - and ran - ran down the hill to the shed where Jim was working. "Oh Jim!" she exclaimed breathlessly, 'four grown-ups for dinner! What ever shall I do? They are coming by car and have already left the station! What can I do?"

"My dear, calm yourself; there is only one thing to do; go back as fast as you can, stuff the leg, and put it in the oven, we must have it for dinner. Give them coffee and rusks as soon as they arrive, that will help to pass the time and keep them from being too hungry - we can't have dinner before two o'clock. I'll come as soon as ever I can," Jim called after poor Louie as she dashed back to the kitchen, where she worked at lightning speed.

The venison was in the oven as well as some pastry when the car drew up at the front door. This episode was one of the greatest dilemmas Louie ever experienced in her housekeeping; and it was only a for a few minutes that she was in a perfect 'doodar' as her friend would say. Dinner was served at two o'clock and everybody thoroughly enjoyed the repast, and the visitors never knew what and anxious few minutes the little housekeeper had experienced.

"It reminds me," said Louie, as she and Jim sat over the fire in the evening, talking of the day's experience, "of an aunt of mine. Her husband had been given a message, which was that her brother, his wife, child and nurse and their two visitors were coming to dinner! The husband forgot to deliver the message and what was Auntie's consternation to see a carriage full of people arrive just about twelve o'clock!"

"Whatever did she do?"

"She was the most resourceful person I've ever heard of! You'll never guess what she did! Of course on a farm we are at such a disadvantage. We can't ring up the butcher and order a few pounds of sausages or chops - we just have to manage. Well - Auntie saw her guests comfortably settled, then dashing into the yard with a couple of servants, she caught three fowls, poured a

tablespoon of vinegar down each of their throats (she says this has the effect of making them tender) wrung their necks, plucked them and had them in the oven before you could say 'Jack Robinson". As her visitors were late people, she knew it would be nothing unusual for them to have dinner at three o'clock, and in the meantime she did as we did, served coffee and rusks."

"Were the fowls eatable?"

"Indeed they were! Most delicious! As tender as could be and everybody thoroughly enjoyed their dinner, not guessing for one moment that she had been taken by surprise, so you can imagine how well everything passed off. Poor, dear old Auntie! An amusing incident in her home was told me by another of my aunts:

"They had a governess called Miss Truby, teaching the little boys, the youngest used to say grace. After the meal his aunt called Ivan to her, he was five years old, and asked him to repeat the grace very slowly. He said, 'Please God, make Miss Truby thankful for what we are about to receive,' instead of 'us truly'. For months he had been saying 'Miss Truby'! Wasn't that funny?"

Not only did Louie and Jim have the pleasure of their friends visiting them, they also had many of their relations. An Aunt of Jim's, his sister Winnie, Louie's mother, her brothers Jack, Christian, Claude and their families; also Edith and her family were welcome visitors at Tafelberg Hall and it gave Louie the greatest pleasure to entertain them.

"I believe you were farming for some years in Bechuanaland, Jack. How did you like it?" asked Jim, on the occasion when Jack spent a few days with them.

"I was very interested but, unfortunately I did not have my own farm. I was working for a man in Johannesburg who knew nothing about farming. On one occasion there was a great boom in artichokes; he sent me bags and bags, with orders to plant. I wrote him saying it was impossible to undertake the planting as the sheep were lambing. He sent me a wire, 'stop lambing, plant artichokes'!!"

"Oh! dear," said Jim, between peals of laughter, in which everyone joined, "It is hopeless having to work for people who do not understand the position! I expect you are glad you are out of it."

"Yes, indeed."

In 1918 Louie and Jim were much alarmed on hearing graphic stories of tragic and sudden deaths throughout the country, and immediately wired the Secretary of the Cradock School Board to send their children home at once. This action was justified as in a few weeks the schools were closed, and the Influenza Epidemic raged throughout the country. For the five following months Louie's schoolroom was again occupied and her responsibilities with regard to teaching, which she hoped she had finally relinquished when the children went to boarding school, were attacked with vigour and energy, as she was determined that they should not fail to pass their various standards. Her labour and ambition were fully justified.

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CHAPTER VIII
STRADBROKE

During the following year it was agreed by Jim and his partner to dissolve the partnership and divide the farm.

“The only way to make a perfectly fair division, “ said Jim, “is to follow the President Kruger’s method. When two brothers came to him with the property their father had left them, and which they were determined to divide as they could not agree, he said:’ one of you must divide the land, and the other one must choose.’”

President Kruger’s method was followed. Jim divided the farm and the partner chose. It fell to the lot of Jim and Louie to make their home at the Little Fountain; they changed the name to Stradbroke, as Jim wished to perpetuate a connecting link with the home of his ancestors in England.

The three boys were taken from the Cradock School and sent to Cape Town to the South African College. Marjory was sent to the Collegiate School in Port Elizabeth.

“It is nice to think, “ said Louie, “that though the children are much further from us, you agree that we must have them home for all the holiday, which means to see them four times a year. I think it is so essential to keep in touch with them during their growing years - our influence must count for so much in their lives.”

“This is where I want the tennis court,” said Jim, as he and Louie strolled about the bare and barren ground which surrounded their house at Stradbroke - one row of mimosa thorn trees running along the valley, not far from the house, was all they had in the shape of trees, and very thankful they were to have those beautiful natural trees.
“I am giving you a man who will be entirely at your service; you will be able to plant trees, make paths and lay out garden beds to your heart’s content.”

“That will be nice. I am glad that there are no remains of an old garden. That I have all this space in which to do just as I like. I have such schemes for laying it all out, and am longing to begin. I do hope I shall be a successful gardener! I really know nothing about the subject; hitherto I have felt that the growing of our children occupied all my time, and I had none to spare for other flowers.”

Louie became a very enthusiastic gardener, and found great pleasure in the laying out of the grounds. On several occasions she was much moved by receiving high praise for her flowers. The regrets that she had felt at giving up her Grandmother’s gardens were completely banished in the joy of her new home.

The house, a stone building, was large and roomy, with a wide verandah on three sides, below the verandah was a terrace, on which grew masses of geraniums, verbena, heliotropes and carnation, making a lovely splash of colour. Not far from the house stood the little building where Louie and her companions took refuge when chased by the bull in those far-off school days.

On the South side of the house, at a little distance, was a narrow building in which were Jim’s office and a bedroom for each of the three boys, with a bathroom. Running along the whole length of this building, at the back, lay the garage.

“This is very interesting, “ said Jim as he sat down beside Louie where she lay in a lounge chair on the verandah, “I have a letter from Mr John Millais, he tells me that his friend the Maharajah of Kuch is in England. It appears that this Indian Prince is anxious to introduce our springboks to his country; he wants them on this own Estate and though he has tried for the last two years to get them from South Africa, he has not been successful. Millais has given him my name and address, telling him to write to me, and saying that if it can be done, it will be done if I undertake to do the job, some praise, isn’t it? He wants twenty tame springboks, rather a tall order.”

“Twenty tame springboks!” exclaimed Louie, “Where in the world are you going to get hold of

twenty tame springboks?"

"I am sure I don't know, but I think there must be lots of farmers who will have one, or perhaps two tame ones about their homesteads, they do make such pretty little pets!"

"Yes, I remember the two Marcus caught when we first came to Tafelberg. What a pity the children have not a few now!"

"I'll put an advertisement in the 'Farmers Weekly,' offering £5 a time. I hope I'll be able to collect twenty. I'll assemble them here."

"It will mean a lot of work for you, and how will you send them off?"

"In crates. I'll have four crates made and put five buck into each one."

"I do hope you'll be successful, and that the Maharajah will receive the twenty buck safely. What a glorious afternoon it is ! Just good to be alive; that is why I am so idle! Just sitting and enjoying this beautiful view and our garden. It is coming on apace, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, we are well rewarded for our efforts."

A week later Jim received a telegram from the manager of the Koffiefontein Mine in the Orange Free State. "This is splendid," he said, reading it aloud to Louie, " 'we can supply twenty tame springbok' - isn't that good news? I shall have to cancel the offers I have had. It will be so much easier to have them all on one spot, and be able to send them off from there. I wonder how they come to have so many tame springbok! I'll go up to Koffiefontein, see them, and arrange about crates and shipment."

When Jim arrived at Koffiefontein a few weeks later, he was much interested to find that one of the men on the mine was devoted to animals, that he had caught a couple of young buck ten years previously and these had increased, and from time to time others had been caught and placed in the enclosure.

"Now we have about forty and have been very much worried because this camp is too small to hold so many. We would not bring ourselves to kill them, and when we saw your advertisement we were pleased to find such a nice way out of our difficulties. We will make the crates and carry out your instructions about shipping them."

"They are wonderfully tame," said Jim, as he watched a beautiful little buck eat out of the gentleman's hand, and even his pocket, "They are not at all disturbed by our being in their midst like this. I did not think it was possible for buck to become so tame! And I don't think anything could have been more fortunate for the Maharajah's enterprise; this is a wonderful opportunity of filling his order!"

Four crates were made and five buck put into each, but unfortunately, before the train reached Durban five of the buck had killed themselves in their efforts to regain their freedom; two died on the boat, one was born. At Bombay the Maharajah himself met the boat, fourteen springbok were landed and placed in the Botanical Gardens where they were allowed to rest a few days before continuing their journey to Kuch. Several more buck were born and the Maharajah was much pleased with his undertaking.

A few months later Jim received the most enthusiastic letter of thanks from the Maharajah in which he said he was sending a small present hoping in some way to show his appreciation of what Jim

had done. “This is a silver tea service” read Jim, “made by my own people from the silver produced from my mines.”

“Jim,” said Louie in great excitement as they unpacked the parcel, holding up the teapot, “just look at this! Could you ever imagine anything more beautiful? I love this white silver! And this darling wee elephant which makes the handle to the lid. I would like to take it off and wear it as a pendant! Look, the handle is a huge lizard.”

“Yes,” said Jim, “and there is an ivory ring at each end to act as an insulator, no need to worry about a holder for fear of burning your hand. On each side of the teapot is a different hunting scene, the spout in his trunk, look at his enormous ears.”

“What a beautiful sugar basin and milk jug, “ said Louie glowing with enthusiasm, “also with hunting scenes, and see the milk will flow out of the elephant’s mouth this time, instead of his trunk as the tea does. It is truly a Royal gift. You must write him a most enthusiastic letter, Jim, and try to give him some idea of how much we appreciate his magnificent present.”

Unfortunately, the following year, when His Highness was away from home, a large hayrick caught fire in the vicinity of the enclosure where the buck lives, and instead of those in charge opening the gate to release the poor little animals, they neglected to do so, with the result that they were all burned to death.

“Jim, I would like to send Marjory a wire, she begins writing her examinations tomorrow.”
“Yes, do.”
“I have been trying to think of something appropriate to say, please make a suggestion!”
Jim had plenty of suggestions which were all turned down by Louie, as she did not consider they met the case; some were too flippant, others too serious.
“I know, I have it! Listen: ‘courage, dear heart, and success is yours.’”
“Very nice indeed. Shall I send if off for you?” asked Jim.

“Please do.”

A few days later Louie, with an open letter in her hand, set out to look for Jim and found him in the garden, pruning trees.

“Do come off your perch,” she said, “come and sit on this branch beside me while I read Marjory’s letter to you, it is so amusing. She says ‘Thank you very much for the telegram, which I wore in my shoe all though the examination, because ‘if my heart went down to my boots’ it would read the message and return to its proper place!’”

“Funny little girl, “ said Jim, “I do hope she is successful!”

“Poor children, I do wish there were no such things as examinations. How well I remember how I suffered when I wrote an examination!”

Weeks, months, years rolled on. The two elder children had passed on to the universities. Jim and Louie’s lives were very calm and happy and the joy and pride of their home a mutual interest. Their evening reading had been resumed and their pleasure in their children’s successes, as Louie said ‘filled their cup of happiness to overflowing.’

To Jim life was very full; to have another opportunity of planting trees and so changing the whole face of the landscape, gave him the greatest satisfaction. He would say “If a man has made one person happy, and been able to plant trees, he has not lived in vain.”

To Louie the children seemed to be growing up as fast as the trees. Many happy holidays were spent, in which bathing, tennis and riding filled the time, making it pass all too quickly.

On one occasion the household, for a fortnight, numbered nineteen. Men and girls from the South African University - Marcus' friends, and men and girls from Rhodes University - Marjory's friends, made up the happy party. Louie felt it to be one of the most enjoyable and interesting holidays she had ever spent. She much appreciated the kind thought of her young guests in sending her an album containing snaps taken during the holiday, each snap described by a witty or amusing remark.

"Louie," said Jim, when he found her in the garden picking a basket of flowers, "I have just heard that I am to attend the 'Farmers Congress' in Port Elizabeth - You know I was secundus, the principal cannot go, so of course, I must. It is a pity it has been left so late, I doubt whether I shall get accommodation. I have wired the proprietor of the Grand Hotel booking a room. I suppose I'll be stuck in some little dark hole at the back of the building, in which there won't be room to 'swing a cat!'"

"What a shame!" said Louie, "I should like to have gone with you but would not think of running the risk of being so uncomfortable."

"That's exactly how I feel about it!"

"Oh, well! We won't worry ; you must go alone and I'll stay at home and do such a lot of work in the garden. Look at my beautiful basket of flowers. Do you know the story of the pansy, and why the Germans call it 'Stiefmütterchen'(Little Stepmother)?"

"No, I didn't know there was story - tell me." said Jim, who was always much interested in nature.

"It is quite an interesting story which I only heard yesterday from a visitor. Unfortunately, I have to pick the little flower to pieces as I tell it," said Louie, as she selected a fine specimen from her basket of flowers:

"This petal here is the mother," removing the large petal in front, "see how gaudily she is dressed; these smaller petals on each side of her are her two daughters; they are also dressed in highly decorated frocks, now we come to the two petals at the back - they are the two step children, and so are always in the plainest of clothes. Here we have the old father - Can you see the old man sitting with his feet in a tub? He is evidently having a footbath - he has a lace collar, very fine and beautiful. I have great difficulty in seeing the old man, but my friend said it was as plain as the nose on your face."

"How very amusing and interesting. I never realised before that in every case the two petals at the back are always plain."

"Poor stepmothers! They do have a bad time! Isn't the garden pretty? Look at all these Shirley poppies and the rose garden is a beautiful sight and repaying us for trenching the ground. Let us walk round and enjoy the labours of our hands. I am so glad I persuaded you, so much against your will too, to plant those orange trees!"

"Yes," said Jim, "I am glad I was not obstinate enough to hold out against your wishes; they are in such an excellent spot - so well sheltered: they are going to be a great success and pleasure, especially to you who love oranges even if they are sour!"

The morning after Jim's arrival in Port Elizabeth, as he entered the dining room of the hotel, he saw a friend and immediately made for his table. This friend was a man who was extremely fond of practical jokes and did not mind what trouble he took, and never spared himself to carry out a joke, so Jim's nickname for his was 'Joker'.
"Imagine my surprise," said Jim, as he sat down beside him and proceeded to unfold his napkin, "on my arrival last night to be shown into a large double room. Had I known I was going to occupy such comfortable quarters, I certainly would have brought my wife with me; we were afraid there would be no accommodation."

"By Jove, you are in luck," said Joker, "I have a poky little single room at the back of the building."

As the Congress was most important, they men were kept very busy, only escaping for meals and getting back to the hotel late at night. One night, Jim, leaving a group of his friends on the stoep, went to his room which was situated a few paces down a passage leading off the stoep. He opened his bedroom door switched on the light. His horror and dismay at the sight which met his gaze almost caused him to shout aloud. A woman in his bed! He quickly switched off the light, closed the door, and strode up and down the passage, much agitated and annoyed.

After a few minutes he came to the conclusion that he had been moved to another room and that the proprietor had forgotten to inform him of the fact- "or have I mistaken the number of my room. No, it is number 30 alright. They must have moved me, I'll just have a look and make sure." Opening the door and turning on the light he had a good look at the room. - "There stands my suitcase, those are my pyjamas hanging over the back of that chair, all amongst her beautiful silk lingerie. - Those are my humble hair brushes amongst her aids to beauty - she must have had too many cocktails and mistaken this room for hers. I'll go and get the Proprietor to come and turn her out."

He glanced at the bed, a large woman, he back turned towards him, long red curly hair streaming over the pillow, escaping from a most elaborate boudoir cap. An open book lay on the pillow, she had evidently been reading.

Again Jim switched off the light, and closing the door, he made his way to the Office. Here he found a young boy, the proprietor's son. He told the youth of his dilemma. "I can't do anything, I assure you Mr. Rous; and my parents have gone to bed."

"Go and fetch them out, they must come and attend to this woman."

"That is impossible, they both have very bad colds. I could not possibly disturb them."

Jim returned to the stoep, and glad he was to find that the party had not retired. He called to he friend, Joker, and taking him aside said, "Man, there's a woman in my bed."

"What's this? What's this?" asked one of the men of their party as he joined Jim.

"There's a woman in my bed," repeated Jim.

"Well, what are you grumbling about? I'm sixty and such a thing has never happened to me."

"Oh! stop it man," exclaimed Jim impatiently, feeling his temper decidedly irritated, "I'm a respectable married man and don't want any of your nonsense."

Roars of laughter from the men.

Jim crossed to where the ladies were sitting. "I appeal to you ladies. There is a woman in my bed

and there is no one who can help me but you. Please go in and wake her, she must have got into the wrong room."

"Certainly we'll help you," and the ladies rose with alacrity.

Jim led the way, opening the door, switching on the light and standing outside while the ladies passed in, followed by their husbands and Joker. Jim remained in the passage. The minutes passed and the noise which he expected to hear from the woman being awakened did not reach him, so he also walked in. Great was his surprise to see the party walking round and round the bed examining the occupant from every angle, and giving way to exclamations of admiration and surprise. "It is indeed a work of art," exclaimed one of the ladies.

In a flash Jim realised that a practical joke had been played on him, and that the figure in the bed was nothing but a dummy!

"If I had not been in your company all day, Joker, I would have suspected you of being at the bottom of this joke!"

"Of course, I've been with you the whole day, "said Joker with the most innocent expression in the world.

Amidst much laughter and joking, and Jim's puzzled question of "I wonder who could have played this joke on me!" the dummy was removed and Jim's room cleared of all the exquisite and elaborate articles of a woman's toilet.

The next morning as the friends sat at breakfast and Jim was still puzzling as to the originator of the joke, his friend said, "Jim, I could not resist playing that trick on you. Your being so pleased with your double room put the idea into my head, and when I passed the barber's shop and saw that gorgeous wig of red curly hair, the whole plan flashed into my mind!"

"It was jolly well done, " said Jim, in tones of admiration and laughing heartily. "I was completely taken in - never doubting for one moment that some woman had had too many cocktails and had got into my room by mistake."

"Jim," said Louie, coming into the lounge one day after his return home and where he sat reading his paper, I've just heard such a sweet story about those darling little girls, Peggy and Joan.

"Come and sit here and tell it to me," said Jim, flinging his paper on to the floor.

"Why will men always throw their papers on to the floor?"

"The floor's such a nice convenient place," said Jim laughing, "tell me your story."

"Peggy, as you know is five years old and has straight hair. Well, the other day Peggy said to her Mother 'Please curl my hair so as to make it pretty like Joan's.' 'No darling,' said her Mother, your straight hair suits your face, and Joan's curls suit her face.' A few days later the two girls were watching their aunt who was washing her hair. She had heard of Peggy's ambition with regard to her hair, so thought she would take the opportunity of bringing home the lesson and said 'You see I have straight hair like Peggy's because it suits my face.'

"'Yes, Auntie,' said Peggy, 'You know God knows what kind of hair suits us best, that's why He gave me, and you, straight hair, and Joan curly hair.' Then Joan said looking up with her lovely big blue eyes and face of a little angel, 'Yes Auntie, and He knows how nice Grandpa looks without

any hair at all, so he lets the wind blow it all away.'

"Wasn't that perfectly sweet?" asked Louie, much moved by the pretty story.
"It was indeed," said Jim, "fancy a little thing of three finding a reason for Grandpa's baldness!"

Jim set off early one cold winter morning to join in a hunt for a jackal which had been killing some of the Stradbroke sheep, and which was suspected of having taken cover in the range of mountains running along the southern boundary of the farm. The farmers in the neighbourhood had come together to help Jim to destroy this most destructive of wild animals. The men with their guns were stationed at various points of vantage on the range of mountains. A number of natives were divided into two sections, and each section given half the mountain as their beat. They had to yell and shout and bang on empty tins and make 'the devil's own row' Jim told them, to try an frighten the jackal from his place of hiding.

Jim had been given an ideal spot. Here he lay in the warm winter sunshine amongst bushes and scattered rocks on the mountainside. He was dressed in khaki so it was impossible for any one to detect his presence. After several hours' patient waiting he was rewarded by the arrival of a troop of baboons and watched their human antics with keen interest. A female baboon with a young one in her arms was walking about and saying in her language, "Look at my pretty baby! Look at my fine baby!" A group gathered round her, evidently admiring her offspring as there was much chattering, but presently a mischievous young male pinched the little one! Up went the Mother's hand and she gave him a sound box on the ear! He went off howling and she with all the actions of a human mother proceeded to comfort her baby.

Presently a conceited young male came walking along in all the pride of his young manhood, showing off what a fine fellow he was, and evidently saying, "Look at me, you chaps, just you watch how I walk and how I am going to climb that fence!" With one bound he was over, and from the other side turned round waiting for the applause he thought his action merited. His companions took no notice of him; however, an old male thought it worth while to try and take the youngster down a peg or two, so with the greatest deliberation in the world he walked saying "Who cares what you do - this is how I climb a fence, "and with the same deliberate actions he climbed up the one side and down the other!

After a while a very big old male sat down close to Jim, not six feet away. He was very busy lifting stones and eating insects. Presently he sat back and began scratching himself and looking for fleas. Jim said in a deep voice, "Try a little Keatings old chap."
The old fellow lifted his head and looked right into Jim's eyes. He gave the most awful yell which sounded to Jim for all the world like, "Oh, Got ! the enemy, my children run for your lives! The enemy is on us." Yelling and shouting he bounded over the fence and in a few moments had had a good look round and finding everything serene, no enemy in sight, resumed their various occupations; some gambolling about, others looking for insects, but all saying "Oh! he's just a silly old fool. Don't take any notice of him. He's balmy. "

Jim felt it was too bad to have the old baboon so misjudged and he determined to give the 'Know alls' a severe lesson for daring to criticise their wise, old man. He leaped up, yelling and shouting, waving his arms frantically, and had the satisfaction of feeling his punishment had been most effective, for with screams of terror the whole troop rushed headlong down the mountain side (not stopping to climb the fence) and disappeared in the distance.

Jim thoroughly enjoyed the day and would not have missed his encounter with the baboons for anything - even though the jackal was not seen.

On reaching home he sat over the fire and gave Louie a most graphic description of his experi-

ences.

“How the children will enjoy hearing this most amusing story,” said Louie, “I remember how interested they were in watching the baboons in the Johannesburg Zoo.”

“I thought of your encounter with that big old male baboon, when we first came to Tafelberg,” said Jim.

“Yes, that was horrid - I was terrified.”

“It was clever of you,” said Jim, “ to pretend your stick was a gun and frighten him off like that. They can become very dangerous when they have been thrown out of the pack, as evidently this one had been. Luckily we managed to kill him the next day; he was getting too cheeky coming down to the homestead like that. How excited the children were and so proud of their dogs helping to kill the monster.”

“Leslie used to treasure the skin and a couple of his enormous teeth, “ said Louie.

“Flossie, I have just received a letter from Jim, “said Louie the day after her arrival in Maritzburg, where she was visiting her aunt, with whom she had meant to spend a month. “Let us sit down on this couch, I want to read you what he says, ‘The Governor General and Princess Alice are going to be at Schoombie in the White Train, Mrs. Southey is arranging a springbok hunt. On Thursday afternoon they will be in Middelburg, where a tea will be given in their honour and everybody will have the opportunity of shaking hands with them. The day following, Good Friday April 18th, there will be a service in our little church at Tafelberg Station, at which they will be present. As soon as I heard this Programme I jumped into my car and went over to see Mr Southey and suggested to him that instead of the Royal Visitors going all the way back to Schoombie, thirty-six miles, in the heat of the day, they should come to us, to Stradbroke to luncheon. He thinks it is an excellent idea and is writing to the Secretary of The Earl of Athlone informing him of this suggestion. As soon as I have a reply I will let you know; knowing you as I do, I feel sure you will return immediately did you think there was a chance of entertaining Royalty!’”

“Oh! Louie, you can’t possibly think of going home, you’ve only just arrived,” said Flossie in distress, “and you promised to stay a month. I have so been looking forward to your visit.”

“But Flossie, I can always come to Natal, whereas it is only once in a lifetime that I have the opportunity of having Princess Alice in my house!”

“I can’t bear to have you go; I do hope the Secretary says they can’t go to lunch with you!”

Two days later Louie received a letter from Jim in which he said “Mr Southey has wired me to the effect that nothing can be done about the Royal visit until after their arrival at Schoombie; as this will leave you no time for your preparations to receive them, we will give up the idea, so don’t spoil your holiday.”

“Oh, I am so glad, “exclaimed Flossie, joyously, “Now you won’t go.”

“It is sweet of you to want to keep me, but I am determined to go. I will leave tomorrow night. Even if there is only one chance in a hundred of their coming, I would not miss it. I shall reach home on Tuesday morning, which will give me three days for my preparations.”

“But how can you think of making preparations when everything is so uncertain, and you might have all your trouble for nothing.”

“That does not worry me at all. Even if my labours are wasted I would feel honoured to have made preparations for a Princess!”

“You are a little loyalist,” said Flossie, “For that reason I suppose it is a waste of breath trying to persuade you to stay.”

On Tuesday morning, as Jim helped Louie out of the train at Tafelberg Station, he said, “Until yesterday afternoon when I received your wire, I had no idea you were coming. I sent you a wire yesterday morning telling you not to come as it all seems so difficult to arrange, but of course you had left the night before - I am glad you left before receiving my wire.”

“Flossie tried to keep me - but Jim, it is not to be thought of, even your wire would not have stopped me from coming; this is a chance of a lifetime and I am simply thrilled at the thought that we might have the Royal Visitors with us on Friday. Of course we will go to Middelburg on Thursday to the tea. I will take a large bunch of my beautiful carnations to Princess Alice.”

Thursday came. Louie said as she settled herself in the car, “Everything is ready. I have told the servants that if they hear the hooter as we are returning home this afternoon, they must know that it means that the ‘King’ and ‘Queen’ are coming to dinner with us tomorrow.”

“That was a good idea, “said Jim laughing, “because ‘King’ and ‘Queen’ are the only words that would convey the unusual and important situation to their minds.”
The Industrial Hall at the Show Ground in Middelburg was most tastefully decorated, and the whole floor space covered with dainty tea tables, on which glistened exquisite silver and valuable old china. After the tea, the Royal Party stood on a platform outside the building and shook hands with the inhabitants of Middelburg. Louie presented her bunch of carnations which was much admired by the Princess; and this opportunity was taken to ask about the luncheon the next day. As soon as Princess Alice heard what was being discussed, she said “Oh! I would love it. But please let it be very quiet.”

The little church of St Laurence at Tafelberg Station was crowded on Good Friday morning. After the service the Royal Party stood outside. Introductions were made, and they chatted and shook hands with everyone in the most friendly way, winning the heart of every member of that community.

As Princess Alice alighted from the motor car when it drew up at Stradbroke, she exclaimed excitedly, “Cherry pie, Cherry pie!” and both she and the Earl buried their faces in the fragrant blossoms, and each wore a few sprigs of heliotrope which were fastened to Princess Alice’s frock and the Earl’s buttonhole. Glancing round the Princess said, Oh! this is where you grow your beautiful carnations!”

When the Royal ladies returned to the lounge from Louie’s bedroom, Princess Alice said, “We’ve been such a long time because we’ve been looking at your boy’s photographs. What a sportsman he must be!”

“Oh! those are the twins,” said Louie.

“Twins,” exclaimed the Princess, “have you got twins? Are they alike?”

“Yes,” answered Louie, “I starved one for a whole day when they were babies, and overfed the other!”

The Princess laughed and said, “Tell me more about them.”

One story followed after another, the Princess being a most enthusiastic and interested listener. Louie found it the easiest thing in the world to talk to her, she was so charming, so sweet and so natural.

“Are they still so much alike?” she asked.

“Yes; when they were playing in a cricket match in Cape Town, where they are at school, Graham had been in and batted, and when Leslie went in, the Captain of the opposition team stopped the game and remonstrated, saying that it was not ‘cricket’ for one man to bat twice!”

“How very amusing,” said the Princess and Louie felt that were she to tell her every story she could remember about the twins she would still be interested.

“Yesterday,” the Princess said, “we were shown over the Grootfontein School of Agriculture. I was very interested in an apparatus made for checking the laying of the hens. After the hen has laid the egg, she goes out at a different door from the one by which she came in, and finds herself in another yard.”

“If she didn’t lay an egg, what happens then?” asked Louie.

“I don’t know, I’m sure, I never thought of that!”

“When my daughter was a little girl, “said Louie, “she asked ‘does a hen lay an egg because she wants to or because she must?’”

This story much amused the Princess and she laughed most heartily. As the party of ten sat down to the luncheon table, that awkward silence which is often experienced at such a time was broken by the Earl asking Louie as he helped himself to butter, “Do you keep Jerseys?”

“No,” replied Louie, “Airedales - Oh! I mean Ayrshires!” she corrected herself amidst roars of laughter from everyone of the party. And the Earl said, “I thought you had very funny Airdales!” Renewed laughter!

Louie did not feel at all sorry for the mistake she had made, as it completely broke the ice, and thereafter the luncheon passed off most happily, amidst a buzz of conversation and laughter.

After an hour’s rest in Louie’s room, Her Royal Highness was most interested to see Jim’s sheep dog working a flock of sheep, and she visited the artesian well, strolled through the grounds, climbed a koppie to view a reservoir and the big dam. She was charmed with the huge sheet of water and said, “You should certainly have a boat.”

During the afternoon Louie had an opportunity of asking the Lady in waiting if there was anything she could do for the Princess. “Oh, no, she does not require anything; she says you are a marvellous hostess.”

“How sweet and charming of her! Isn’t there anything she needs in the train?”
“Yes, if we could have something in which to put flowers. For instance, she received a beautiful bouquet of carnations……”

“I gave them to her.”

“Did you really? I must tell her.”

“She knows, “ said Louie.

“Are you sure she knows?”

“Yes, as soon as she arrived, after admiring the cherry pie, she said ‘Oh! This is where you grow your beautiful carnations.’”

“Isn’t she wonderful!” exclaimed the lady in tones of the deepest admiration.

Jim found the time spent with the Earl most interesting. He was interested in the working of the sheep dog, and in the artesian well, and was much attracted by a splash of colour, masses of flowers at the end of a long path in Louie’s garden. As they walked at the side of a pond and Jim was saying that he had introduced a large number of fish, a huge carp the size and thickness of a man’s arm, raised itself out of the water making a perfect picture - The Earl was delighted!

A special page was kept in the Visitors’’ Book on which only the three distinguished signatures appeared.

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FOOTNOTES

Maria van der Spuy was born at the Cape on 18th October 1758. Her grandfather was Melt van der Spuy born in Rotterdam who arrived at the Cape for the first time in 1707 in the employ of the Dutch East India Company. He died a wealthy man in 1734

Caroline Matilda was ‘married off’ at age 15 to the 16 year old King Christian VII and a dowry of £100 000 was paid to the British Crown. When she went to Denmark after a proxy marriage in London it was the first time they had met although he had seen a painting of her

Toger Abo (the ‘von’ was added to the name in South Africa) was aged 23 and in the Danish Navy when he met Struensee and was promoted to ‘generaladjutant’ by him. It is unlikely that he would have been given a private apartment

It is generally accepted that the second child of Caroline Matilda, Louise, was fathered by Struensee-see Caroline Matilda-Queen of Denmark 1751-1775 by Hester W. Chapman

Celle near Hanover

In 1772 Toger Abo was arrested along with all Struensee supporters who were suspected of plotting with Struensee. After an enquiry Toger Abo was aquitted of all charges but banished from Denmark for 2 years

Toger Abo went to Amsterdam where he joined the Dutch East India Company [DEIC]. He made several voyages to the East and 1781 was promoted by the Dutch to Captain of the India Seas. He returned to Denmark in about 1785 and re-entered the Danish Navy as ‘kaptajnlojtnant’. He never achieved the rank of Admiral although highly regarded. It is presumed that his involvment in the ‘Struensee Affair’ counted against him

He had probably met Maria on one of his trips to the East. He arrived in Cape Town in 1781 as Captain of the DEIC ship Het hof ter Linde and they married on 12th February 1781. It is likely that

he left her there and continued on his voyage to Batavia. He returned permanently to Copenhagen in 1785

There is no factual basis for this statement. Their son Christain Johannes Abo was born on the 27th October 1787. He was christened at the Holmens Naval Church in Copenhagen and no royalty are recorded among the new-born's sponsors

These 'Obligations' were in fact Danish Government Bonds or debentures. Denmark was in a financial crisis at this time and was effectively insolvent

There is no factual basis for this legend. Louise Dorothea Naested 1793-1823 was a descendant of Mikkel Naested born about 1670. Her father Hans Michael Naested was a very wealthy man who owned a large house in Copenhagen

Betty Camilla Augusta Abo 1816-1896 future wife of Dr. Christian August Flemmer

If Christian Johannes Abo, husband of Louise Naested left Denmark in 1816 as seems likely, she died in 1823-seven years later

Her mother in law was Maria Abo [van der Spuy] who died in 1830 seven years after Louise

Betty was about 7 when her mother died. At that time she went to live with her mother's sister Charlotte Henriette Naested who was married to the Lutheran minister Andreas Hansen Kjeldberg. The daughter refered to was Methea Sophia Kjeldberg born 1820

Hans Christian Flemmer 1771-1847

Ridder af Danebrog translated to Knight of the Danish Flag

A silver tax was imposed because of a crisis in the Danish economy and silver had to be handed over or land was confiscated

Christian August Flemmer 1816-1896

Toger von Abo 1813-1879 married his cousin Methea Sophie Kjelberg on this visit and took her back to Cradock

There were in fact 4 sons and 3 daughters

Port Elizabeth was quite a well established although very rough and ready town by 1853, but they may well have stayed in a tent near the beach on arrival

There were already many doctors in the Cape Colony by this time, and there had been at least one doctor in Cradock since 1847

Anna Distin 1849-1924

Christian Ludvig Flemmer 1839-1903

26. John Sweet Distin was a very progressive and successful farmer. The 1886 Cape of Good Hope Official Handbook describes the farm Tafelberg Hall as being 22 800 acres in extent with wire fencing of 50-60 miles

The Mr. Flemmer referred to in this section is Christian Ludvig Flemmer 1839-1903 also referred to in the text as Ludvig

Dr Christian August Flemmer died aged 57 on 11th January 1870 on the farm Ruightervlei District Steynsburg

Toger von Abo died Cradock 9th April 1879

Christian Augustus Flemmer 1870-1874

Selina Camilla Flemmer born 4th December 1871

Anna Louise Flemmer born Cradock 28th January 1874

James Cooper Rous died 1876 (SA Archives: TAB MHG 0/544 1876) married Alexa Susan Cole died 1892 SA Archives (TAB MHG 0/7107 1892)

Martha Winifred married John James Frean (SA Archives TAB 3129/41 1941)

Christian Ludvig and Anna Flemmer (Distin)

In 2003 the street numbers for this property were 632/633 Frere St

John Distin Flemmer born 4th August 1875

Christian Ludvig Flemmer born 25th January 1878

The Basuto War 1879/80 sometimes referred to as the Moirose Campaign. At this time Christian Ludvig Flemmer was aged 40

William Flemmer born 6th September 1879 died 19th June 1881

Christian was about 3 at this time

Edith Selina Flemmer born 1st June 1881 at Cradock and Olive Flemmer born 8th November 1882 at Cradock

Arthur Claude Flemmer born 21st July 1884 at Cradock

Mary Distin & John Montague's children, Anne Selina Montague April 27, 1872: Ruby Mabel Montague February 15, 1874: Ida Violet Montague May 17, 1876

Betty Camilla Augusta Flemmer (Abo) died 19th September 1896 aged 80. Anna was 22 at the time

As she was born in 1874 the engagement would have been in 1898

The Boer ultimatum to London expired on 10th October 1899, and the war broke out the next day

Page 288 "Twice Captured" Lord Rosslyn. He handed me 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'! As he did so , he whispered quickly, "Page 100," and then he was attended to by the doctor, and went away, I wondered at my curious visitor, and immediately opened the book. For a long time I could see nothing, but on looking closely at the page he had mentioned and the one following, I noticed little dots

over some of the letters. I guessed that this was a message of some importance, and I immediately set to work to decipher it. The following is how it read:- “I have it on authentic information that General Cronje buried two big guns and a large quantity of ammunition under the graves of his dead. The guns are in the long grave pointing east and west. Two Waggon-loads (sic) of ammunition have been buried between Kroonstad and Winburg by burghers. Please communicate from Ernest Distin, Intelligence Department under Captain Lawrence, General French’s column.”

The wedding of her Anna Betty Camilla Gilfillan daughter of Charlotte Flemmer and Edward Gilfillan, to Launcelot M Harison (note spelling) on 5th February 1902 at St Peter’s Cradock (according to the paper it was the 5th not 3rd)

The ‘Danish uncle and aunt’ referred to were Hans Michael Naested and his wife Camilla Henriette Flemmer, who had married in Cradock 42 years before (1860)

Martha Winifred Rous married John James Frean SA Archives TAB 3129/41

born January 09, 1903

died in Cradock October 14, 1903

born August 26, 1904

October 30, 1905

Up to today January 2003 no trace has been found of Olive Flemmer. Rumour has it that she married Henri de Roosen, but no record can be found.

October 18, 1910 Arthur Claude Flemmer married Millicent Constance Kerr

St Lawrence Anglican Church. In the 1890’s John Sweet Distin donated part of his farm for the church to be built. There were no stone masons and JSD brought two by the names of Miles and Barter from Scotland and with the help of the community the Church was built. It was consecrated by Bishop Webb of Grahamstown on the 15th February 1894.

Lillian Martha Shaw born Ziervogel married Robert William Thomas Shaw died 1950 TAB MHG Ref 227/50

Johnny Van Ryneveld

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