FUN ON THE VELD
Leonard Flemming
FUN ON THE VELD

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THE ORANGE FREE STATE

The Orange Free State is the name given to a piece of land in South Africa by the early Dutch settlers. What it really is free from is not recorded. Its principal industry is farming. There is your own farm – and many thousands of other farms. These others are for you to move to with your stock from time to time.

Every year large quantities of grain are sown, and every seven years or so large crops are reaped. Some farmers do all the sowing themselves – others have arbeiders to plough and sow on the half-share system. It’s about the only thing the Free State ever does by halves. For all that, ploughing on the halves is really ploughing on the doubles. That is to say, the arbeider gets double his legitimate share of a crop unless you build a house on the land and live in it during the growing period of the crop. Otherwise the double always comes off. What an arbeider can’t make out of you in daylight, he’ll make out of you at night.

One of the principal assets of the Free State are its ‘fonteins’. The early discoverers of the country must simply have fallen into them at every step – today the inhabitants are looking for these ‘fonteins’ and
can’t find them. I know a man whose farm is called Vierfontein, whose sole water-supply depends upon a windpump. Seventy-five percent of the farms are ‘fonteins’, with a prefix, generally denoting the number of ‘fonteins’ upon it.

Farming in the Orange Free State is of a mixed sort. Borers and cut-worms mix up with the mealies – lice and hail with the wheat, and so on. Many farmers build dams, and occasionally rain falls and wets them inside.

The Free State will one day be an ideal farming country; at present it has a few drawbacks. Amongst these may be mentioned drought, late and early frosts, hail, scab, woolly aphids, plain aphids, pot-clay, locusts and politics.

The history of the Free State shows it to be a country always full of trouble. There has been trouble in the past. There is trouble at present, and there will be trouble in the future. There are many difficult problems to solve, amongst the most important of which are: How to popularize the trackless tram, the definition and width of roads, town servants, and the cut-worm. There are a few other minor problems, but these are not of much account, and at present stand down for the more important questions. When solutions for these diverse problems are being demonstrated by their respective adherents, the Free State, particularly that part nearest Basutoland, will be a splendid place to
get away from – if you are quick enough.

The Free State, as a health resort, should be largely advertised. You can’t beat it for sheer downright health. No nasty mud, no wet feet, no damp. The dry bulb at the Free State Observatory registers 0.95 (that’s within 0.5 degrees of bursting point) eleven months out of the twelve. No precious health-giving forces from the soil and atmosphere are wasted on crops – all are reserved for the human race – nearly every one of whom is full of health. The Free State for perfect quiet. Five thousand feet above sea level – the nasty, incessant noise of the sea is never heard – the horrid hooting of steamers, the ugly sight of wobbly ships under full sail, are unknown. You can see more land and less scenery in the Free State than in any other country in the world.

In summer the cattle live on grass – in mid-winter they live in the hope of summer coming soon. Sometimes the summer doesn’t and many cattle die. Often the cattle fall down dongas and ant-bear holes while looking for food in them. This looking for food is the principal cause of sore eyes in the cattle, which, however, can be cured by squirting something into them (into the eyes – not into the cattle). In the spring the ewes have lambs and then throw them away. To make the ewe take her lamb, she is tied up and some fine salt rubbed on the lamb’s back. The ewe then pays the lamb a great deal of attention, licking the salt, and when let loose very often chases
the lamb to death.

The tourist who expects to glide idly in a boat down the Orange River, plucking oranges on the way, will be disappointed. Orange, in this case, merely means the colour of the water. Oranges, however, can be bought from the Greeks. An orange, in Dutch, is a lemon.

If you fall into a Free State river your clothes get covered with dust – but you can pick yourself up, brush your clothes with your hands, and then walk down the river bed till you see a place where you can get out. There are many roads in the Free State – sometimes eight or nine can be seen side by side, all going to the same place. This is very puzzling if you are driving at night, for if there are, say, eight roads side by side, seven of them have something wrong with them farther on.

There are crowds of arbeiders in the Free State – generally all going to the Transvaal. A few of them, however, stop and work on farms in the Free State. An arbeider gets from ten shillings to fifteen shillings a month at first; afterwards he gets, as a rule, one pound or three months. There are 942 ways in which he can obtain this.

Of course, it is a well known fact that all the dogs in the Free State are called ‘Voetsek’, and that when you call them they run away.

There is a great deal of valuable matter under the soil in the Free State, such as diamonds, coal,
ironstone, oil, pot-clay and water. Boring machines are employed to drill for water and find large quantities of ironstone. Prospecting parties, on the other hand, drilling for oil, find very good water. When put into bottles it is difficult to tell it from paraffin. There will be an enormous demand for pot-clay when the Government start clay-pot factories, and it is perhaps due to the possibility of the early initiation of this industry that thousands of men are holding on to their land.
The idea of keeping fowls never occurred to me until a day came when I couldn’t buy any eggs.

I wanted one; to test the strength of the brine with. You know the dodge – if the egg floats the brine is all right, if it sinks it isn’t. I didn’t know a potato was just as good, so I stopped work for one day and sent out eleven of my arbeiders in different directions to buy eggs for me. Had they all been successful I should have gone insolvent – as it was they all returned eggless, but full of hope for the morrow. They evidently were keen to continue the search. I wasn’t – one day was quite enough, and they all seemed disappointed when I said so.

But it struck me that I’d better invest in some fowls, and hearing that the kitchen-girl’s mother’s brother’s aunt had a few to dispose of, I bought half a dozen.

I immediately made nests for them, and after a happy night’s repose in which I dreamt I had soup-plates full of eggs, I spent the next day watching the fowls, to see if any of them went into the nests. One or two of them went really very close, but only one looked in.
This sort of thing went on for months – the fowls would go everywhere but to the nests; it really seemed as if they were afraid. I eventually moved the nests to where I saw the fowls mostly gathered together, and after I had done this they all fed just where the nests had been before.

Of course I know animals can have their little jokes – like the humorous lamb that pretends he’s going to live and then dies – but this was really silly.

I felt very cross, naturally, for I was anxious to have some eggs in the house, and I had vowed not to buy any now that I had got fowls.

And it seemed as if every fowl in the world except mine was laying.

I asked people’s advice – and everybody told me something different.

I tried all the advices at once. To have given them all a separate trial would have taken many years.

What I was told to try I did.

It killed some of the fowls immediately – and it had the opposite effect on others; that is to say, made them run about livelier than ever – looking for a place to die in, I suppose.

Still no eggs.

I was delighted one morning to find three hens burrowing in the cabbage-bed in the garden – the cabbages had been up just a week – the hens were, I thought, making nests themselves. I was very sorry for the cabbages, for I had spent some time watering
them each evening, but I was jolly keen on getting an egg.

They didn’t lay that day – but tried the turnips and tomatoes the same week.

Then one of them died – with the rake – it was the lightest thing handy to throw.

Funnily enough, when I opened the fowl, I found it full of eggs. I believe it would have laid the next morning. However, it was dead, and couldn’t. The survivors lived their little lives serenely day after day. I think they must have been of a breed that doesn’t cackle, for the only sound I heard from any of the fowls was from the one at which I threw the rake.

However, I persevered. I felt I’d started poultry breeding and I meant to continue. Only they wouldn’t breed.

I bought a book on poultry, and the next day bought a sack of ‘egg food’, highly recommended.

In the book I read that some fowls lay 290 eggs a year. In the sack I found a collection of stuff that I could have collected myself from the floor of the shed where my grain is stored.

Also in the book I read that you give fowls hot dinners and cold lunches and all that sort of thing. Regular epicures, these fowls. There was a lot about ‘Minorcas’ in it, too, which I thought was a tropical fruit, until I discovered it to be a breed of fowl. I’m sorry to say the book wasn’t much help to me.
Why the hen did it I do not know, but one morning, with a tremendous amount of cackling and noise, it laid an egg. At first I couldn’t believe it – thought it was a false alarm; but no, there was actually an egg in the nest. I ate it for supper the same evening, the most expensive supper I’ve ever eaten. The cost of that egg, reckoning all I’d spent in getting it, mealies, egg food, bran mashes, hot dinners, cold lunches, sulphur, bluestone, etc. etc., worked out to £5 11s. 3d.

After supper I discovered that £5 11s. 3d. would have bought me over two hundred and twenty dozen eggs – enough to have lasted me for years – and all I had got was one egg!

The hen laid again the next day, but cackled so much that the sporting instinct was aroused in my terrier, who chased and then ate it.

I ate the others, and gave up poultry breeding; but I bought a cock, just to crow in the mornings.
SONG OF THE PARAFFIN LAMP

This is the song of the Paraffin Lamp
And the light that you see in the dark and the damp,
The speck that you make for when lost in the night –
This is the song of the Paraffin Light.

I am the lamp, that burns the paraffin,
Neatly constructed, most beautiful to see;
Enough to show you what I might have been
If they had made a better job of me.

If you are lost upon the veld at dark,
I am the distant gleam that kills suspense;
I am your goal, and I who make you bark
Your shins upon some intervening fence.

I have a glass, which never breaks until
You haven’t got a spare one for its place;
I am the lamp you always have to fill
Just as you’ve dressed, and washed your hands and face.

I am the lamp you always have to wipe,
I was invented chiefly as a joke;
Who would have thought, when you had lit your pipe,
I, too, could keep you company – and smoke?

I am the smell you notice in the air,
I am a grave for little things that fly;
And he, of insect powder fame, I swear,
Can’t claim so many murdered moths as I.

I am a joke which you take seriously,
’Tisn’t my fault I don’t do all that’s right;
I’ve done my best for years to make you see
I’m a good joke – but such a feeble light.
When I had read *My Life and Work*, by Henry Ford, the world’s richest man, I put the book down simply astounded at the extraordinary similarity between his life and work and mine.

They are identical – with the one exception that Ford, I believe, has more money than I have. But I am going through my account books again, and if I find that I have made a mistake I will add a footnote.

An interesting quotation from Henry Ford’s book – and Henry Ford, by the way, was brought up to be a farmer – is this:

> It was life on the farm that drove me to devising ways and means to better transportation.

Henry Ford, too, you see, wanted to clear out now and again from his farm – quickly. Tired with walking away from it – or running away from it – he sets about inventing something quicker than the wagon to get as far away from it in the quickest time possible.

With consummate tact he says nothing about the price of cattle, *geelsiekte*, the khaki bush, and the
filling in of the Agricultural Census Form A.F. № 33. Simply he wanted to get away. He goes on to say that:

My earliest recollection is that considering the results there was too much work on the place.

That is both my earliest and latest recollection. When I read this I looked at the beginning of the book again to see if by any chance he had not started in the Orange Free State. But no. He was in Canada. My staff, however, with apparently the same discrimination as that of the staff at the Ford works, have always carefully nursed their energies on every possible occasion – in fact I believe mine do it best. He goes on:

Twenty-five days a year is all that it ought to take a man to get his living out of the soil.

He hits the nail bang on the head again, you see. Twenty-five days is just about all the days in which you’ve got the remotest hope of ever getting a living out of the soil.

All the rest of the year, if he manages efficiently, the farmer ought to be free to do what he pleases.

So it is – or so he does. When the twenty-five days have dried up you can do just whatever you like – it will make absolutely no difference.

At first Henry Ford started making watches. He
made at one time as many as 300 watches – after years of striving.

After years of striving I got 300 bundles of oats here once.

Henry Ford thought he could bring down the price of watches to so low a figure that he might start in the watch trade. But he decided against that particular form of industry.

Oat merchants at most times, I found, could bring down the price of oats to so low a figure that I soon decided against that particular form of industry and went in for white kidney beans.

The chapter on the regularity and the method of employees might have been written on this very farm. As soon as there is anything wrong with a bit of the differential, or the carburettor, or the crank shaft, along comes one of Henry Ford’s employees and points it out to him.

As soon as I have come in to dinner or to read the post one of my employees tells me there is something wrong with something that wasn’t yesterday. Never have any of my staff failed me in this, not even on Sundays. And, like Henry Ford’s staff, they show the same pleasure, the same keenness, to tell me as often as they can about anything that has gone wrong.

Henry Ford employs many men who have only one arm or one leg. Here I beat him easily. Some of my staff haven’t even got a head. Some only have
legs solely for my old trousers. Some are in a perennially comatose state.

Henry Ford says:

If the farmer would work with machinery for two hours a day he would get his crop from the soil and have all the rest of the time for other productive work.

That’s precisely what happens here. Two hours is just about the limit of time any machine goes. The rest of the time is about the most productive in language I know of.

But it is the business side of Ford’s life that most particularly resembles mine; especially in the filing and keeping of letters and correspondence. My files are just like Henry Ford’s. All the ‘A’s’ go into the ‘A’ compartment, all the ‘B’s’ into the ‘B’ compartment, and so on.

In fact I have four files – all alphabetically arranged from A to Z. They are on the floor of my writing-room, open, like a fan, or semi-compressed concertina, around my desk – two on one side, two on the other.

Sometimes an S or a W letter may fall off the desk into the K or B compartment underneath, and is not quite so readily found when I want it, but on the whole I can generally put my hand on what I am looking for. Suppose, for instance, I want to refer to a letter I had from the bank a few weeks ago. I know
that the file on the left-hand side of the desk, near the bottle of tapeworm remedy, is for letters of not more than a month old. The second file is for letters six months old. (Accounts, by the way, I do not put into these files. I impale them upon a nail. I have a small, square piece of wood with a nail sticking up in the centre of it, and all the accounts go on to this. At first I used a four-inch nail, but now I have two nine-inch ones.)

Henry Ford may be a little more up to date, but at least we have something like system in common.

I want to refer to a letter from the bank that arrived a few weeks ago. I pull out all the letters from the ‘B’ compartment of file No 1 on the left. I glance at those about barley, biltong, bananas, barmaids, Boer oats, and eventually hit on the one from the bank.

I want to refer to a letter from the postmaster of a fortnight ago. I take out all the letters in the ‘P’ compartment. I find the prize list for a cigarette competition, a piece of poetry I have enjoyed, my passport, the price of the last pair of pyjamas I bought, and then the letter from the postmaster.

Sometimes in putting these back I may, in my hurry, inadvertently put them into the ‘Q’ compartment, but ‘Q’ never has anything in it – except letters from Queens – so I can soon spot that mistake.

Altogether it is a peculiar coincidence the sameness of the Ford system and mine – I am just going to have a good look through my account books.
I have been right through my account books, and I find that I have £4 7s. 3d. in the bank – there must be something wrong somewhere – Ford’s worth over six hundred million pounds.
The first day I saw Phippes he came out of a stone building on his farm with two buckets of separated milk in his hands, and after I had outspanned he asked me if I would mind going over to the pig-runs first and we could then go up to the house and have some tea.

We talked about a few common topics of the day – locusts, strikes, the first frosts and the recent rain – and that was the last we talked of anything of the outside world during the whole time I was there.

He was building a new piggery. We passed pig-run after pig-run, chock-a-block with pigs of every age, from a day to several years, and for the next half-hour or so he talked ‘pigs’ with an enthusiasm that fairly swept me off my feet.

‘See this lot here,’ he said, pointing to a run that contained about two dozen, ‘aren’t they beauties?’

‘Beauties,’ I agreed.

‘See that little chap over there – no, that chap there,’ seeing me look at a small boy carrying pig-food. I saw about seventeen pigs all alike fighting over a used-up pumpkin. ‘You’d never think he was the same pig if you’d seen him three months ago.’
I wish I had spotted which pig he had pointed out. As it was, I could only stare at the ever-moving mass surging around the used-up pumpkin. Perhaps I was looking at the right pig sometimes.

It appears that this particular pig had hovered between life and death for many days, and he had sat up with it for nights on end, succouring it. It put a new value on pigs to me. He told me all about its convalescence and recovery, and in the same breath he said, ‘Come and have a look at the boar. This boar –’ he went on, and we moved over to a frightful-looking sort of a thing.

I didn’t know people kept things like this. It looked to me like the kind of beast African hunters meet in jungles. A nasty brute it was. And then he told me all about it. It had come from England, and when I said, ‘Good heavens,’ he asked, ‘What do you mean?’ I replied that I meant I never thought they’d ever be able to get a thing like that half a mile from its lair, let alone 5000 miles in a steamer.

He waxed enthusiastic about this boar for a long while, very flushed with pride, and then he took me by the arm, walked round a corner, and said, ‘Here are the new litter – aren’t they magnificent?’

‘Magnificent,’ I agreed, ‘and all their eyes open, too.’

But he was already telling me about their characters. Apparently they were all different, although they looked all the same.
I have forgotten how many litters there were, but one of them must have been his favourite, for a note of love had come into his voice as he repeated several times, ‘Only nine days old!’ One could almost see the exclamation marks.

Obviously I had to say something other than, ‘By Jove!’ which I had said now about three hundred and fifty times.

‘Only nine days old? – Marvellous. They look about nine years, don’t they? I mean their faces. Very worldly looking some of them, aren’t they? One would never think they were babies, only nine days old. By Jove! If I had only known I’d have brought some nuts or something with me to give them.’

My little speech was fatal. He detected an enthusiasm in it which was never there and proceeded to tell me the life history of every single one of these pigs. I never heard anything like it in my life. Perhaps he does it like palm-reading; I don’t know. And when he had finished telling me about these particular pigs he described other breeds of pigs and told me their faults and where they failed as compared with his own particular breed.

We passed more pig-runs; there seemed to be miles of them all full of pigs, and he knew every one of them individually. He spoke about every run and every pig, and went into complete details about bacon production, food values, balanced rations, and market prices.
At last we went towards the house, but he was still talking pigs on the way, and he told me his great ambition was to have sufficient pigs one day that would eat, among other things, a thousand bags of mealies in a year.

‘A bag of mealies costs so much. Now, fed to pigs, they would bring in so much,’ and so on. On his face was the glow – in his eyes was the joy – that one only sees as a rule on the face of an artist in front of a picture which he thinks beautiful.

We reached the house and I was introduced to his wife. She did all his books for him, pug books, accounts of hams and litters and pedigrees and pigs’ birthdays. He went to get some tobacco and she discussed pigs with me, and then he came back and they told each other the details of the one that took first prize at the show.

At last I had to leave – the sun was getting low – very low – and just as I was getting into my cart his seven-year-old son came up and said, ‘Daddy, can’t I show the gentleman my little pigs?’
— VI —

TO A TIN OF BULLY BEEF

Beef, in yon tin, a word or two with you,
Long years have you and I been firmest friends,
But now, we go our ways, we say ‘adieu’,
For, from today, O Beef, our friendship ends.

Oft, on the scorching veld, when I would eat,
Starved, in a whole day’s fight with Brother Boer,
Gladly I welcomed you, my tin of meat,
How full you used to make me in the war!

When you were scarce and we, a hungry lot,
The fights and scrums for you we can’t forget;
When you were plentiful, and smokes were not,
How oft I swopped you for a cigarette.

To you, and those who made you, comes the grief
Of knowing the demand for you has slacked,
And just because, O wondrous tin of beef
Some enterprising fellow saw you packed.

A rose, we’re told, will always smell as sweet
By any other name it might possess;
But our poor cousins, tinned, and labelled ‘Meat’,
Is hardly what was meant by that, I guess.

One wonders, now that things are shown up,
O shattered idol of a fond belief,
How oft a cat or some inquiring pup
Fell in your works and left – as Beef.

One wonders now (we know from what we’ve read
Your name of Beef was but a term generic)
Whether poor Billy died of what they said,
Or whether it was not you – tinned up enteric.

We, O my Beef, dislike a Beef that sins,
And now of hidden mysteries they tell,
You are not Beef – but other things in tins,
And so, my so-called Beef, we say farewell.
When we backvelders have our game of cricket, we go to the field, one may say, straight from the plough.

What cricket is in us we brought to the country years ago from the second or first eleven of our old school in England.

With the handle of a bat in our hands we are a little bit ‘out of it’ – the plough handle is what we are familiar with – and yet when you get hold of your bat there is some latent instinct lurking away in the background of the memory that prevents one making an absolute fool of oneself. For all that, you feel ‘out of it’, and when you stand up to face the first delivery from the young enthusiast of a distant dorp, who has for years attempted to bring to perfection some patent ‘googlies’, you wish that you had had a little practice before you went in to meet him.

As a great lover of the finest outdoor game in the world, it seemed to me more than a little hard luck to go to the wickets in a match – you will only play four or five in the year – and because the bat is a strange thing in your hands get out for a ‘blob’. This
after you have travelled about thirty odd miles by road for a game, and dreamt for weeks of making a big score.

So before the season had commenced, and some months previous to the first match I would play in, I decided to squeeze into the daily strenuous work of the farm twenty minutes’ cricket practice.

Let me stand at the wickets, I said to myself, for twenty minutes every day for a month or two, and surely when I play in a match I shall feel very much at home; at any rate, the fact of having to hit at a ball will not terrorize me.

My nearest cricket enthusiast lives half a day’s journey from my estate, and it was rather too much to expect to get my daily practice with any help from him.

More than anything I wanted to be bowled at, and bowled at regularly and well, and good bowlers do not grow in profusion on farms in the middle of the O.F.S.

Poor in bowlers, then, but rich in enthusiasm, I determined to make an experiment. I have a large staff of trusty and faithful arbeiders, and though I knew that none of them had ever seen a cricket match, much less handled a bat or ball, I determined to single out the most active of the bunch and get him to throw, or, if he could manage it, bowl at me every day until I felt the old confidence, or supposed confidence, returning to my long-neglected ‘cricket
muscles’ and the little ‘cricket cell’ of the crowded brain.

His name is Hendriks. When I first broached the subject of his bowling to me his face expanded, a row of very white teeth showed up against a jet-black face, and his eyes fairly twinkled with merriment.

He was, at the time, modest enough to say that he did not think he would be able to do what I wanted, and seeing that he had never in his life had a cricket ball in his hands, I was not surprised.

But he was very willing to try, and I was very willing to show him how, so I got the ball and an empty paraffin-tin, and took my pupil down to a very hard threshing-floor some fifty yards from the house.

This threshing-floor is surrounded by wire-netting four feet high, to keep the fowls and larger stock from eating grain that the floor sees about once in seven years, and it seemed a very useful enclosure now to knock a ball about in.

I put the paraffin-tin up, measured out the twenty-two yards, drew the creases, explained that one foot must be behind the line before the ball leaves the hand and as a guide sent down a few overs, more or less on the mark, and told Hendriks to ‘have a shot at it’ himself, just as I had done.

He was rather inclined to throw, which he did well, but he showed ambition and a certain amount
of initiative, and when I found him getting somewhat into the ‘hang of it’, I told him to practise for a few days by himself, and as soon as I thought he was even a little efficient I would don the pads one day and ‘have a whack’.

He enjoyed this pastime beyond words, and the next day invited his three-year-old brother and six-year-old sister to stand some way behind the paraffin-tin with a large wool-sack and stop the ball.

Sometimes in my lunch-hour, while I was having my smoke, I could hear the paraffin-tin being bashed about, and occasionally, when I looked out of the window after a particularly lengthy cannonade, I would see the tin turning somersaults, and two tiny figures running hard after a ball that had jumped the netting and whizzed away for some few miles behind.

I began practising on the Sunday; I could have a couple of hours, I thought. With the pads on and bat in my hand, I, for the first time, faced my bowler.

I had some little difficulty in explaining to him what ‘centre and leg’ was, and after he had grasped the situation and given it to me, I got him to hold the bat where I had made the mark, and went up to the bowler’s end to see how near he had managed to get to ‘centre and leg’. I was delighted to find his eye true, and that he had given it to me within a fraction of an inch.

Thinking that it would repay him for his past (and
future) efforts, and at the same time make me play carefully, I promised Hendriks threepence every time he hit the tin with the ball. His pleasure at my proposition was immense, and there was a gleam of expectant fortune in his eye.

I have seen this same gleam in my own race, but never with such pronounced anticipation as on this occasion.

I was making ‘the block’ a little more distinct with the bat, when I heard a swift whizzing sound, and then with a crash saw the paraffin-tin spinning round some yards from its original position.

To this day, I am sure Hendriks thinks that I have done him out of threepence, but I mildly suggested that it would be much more satisfactory for us both if he waited until I looked at him before he bowled. Hendriks understood, and waited, and with his first ball knocked the paraffin-tin about one yard and a half away. I think it was the fastest ball I had ever seen in my life – not that I saw very much of it at all, but it came like lightning, a perfect length, and got the tin bang in the centre. I could see that, by the dent the ball had made.

It was a most extraordinary half-hour’s practice – for me and for Hendriks. I know at the end of it I owed Hendriks three and threepence. Hendriks had never before earned so much money in such a short space of time – I had never been bowled so often either.
The next day’s practice was not quite so remunerative to Hendriks – I began to understand him a little better, but for all that he managed to get the ball past the bat into the paraffin-tin fairly often.

Pay an *arbeider* well and you’ll get any amount of good work out of him; consequently, I was getting, after a few weeks, some of the best bowling I had ever had, and, moreover, at a less extravagant outlay than at first, for, as I say, I began to understand Hendriks and his method better each day. This by no means disheartened him. Rather did it help to make him keener – so keen, in fact, that often when I had to leave the farm and Hendriks was given a spade with which to dig the garden, I would return to find Hendriks still digging the garden, but a paraffin-tin close by with a very different shape from that I had last seen it with, told me that Hendriks had not worked all the time with a spade. And every time I went away I returned to find a paraffin-tin with its shape completely altered – and Hendriks digging hard in the garden.

Hendriks was secretly perfecting other methods of earning threepences – but never a word did he say about it, nor did he ever let me think that he had any interest in anything but the garden. ‘Dis cabbage, he look very sick, Baas,’ or, ‘Weeds very plenty much, Baas,’ were the kind of remarks I would get from Hendriks, with his heart in the ball and the tin all the while.
For about a fortnight I had no time to practise. Hendriks had, I know, for I was away a good deal, and one Sunday when I said, ‘You can come and bowl at me a bit, Hendriks,’ Hendriks merely said, ‘Yes, Baas,’ aloud, and, ‘You got bloomin’ poor chance,’ inwardly.

That Sunday Hendriks bowled me twenty-one times in half an hour. He bowled the most terrific breaks I have ever played against. He bowled leg-breaks, he bowled off-breaks, he bowled ‘googlies’, and he ‘swerved’. He altered his pace and he altered his action, and altogether he gave me the most astonishing half-hour’s cricket any man ever had. The garden may have suffered in that fortnight, but Hendriks had become a marvel.

I haven’t told him that there is a big future for him as a cricketer and ‘plenty much money’ attached to it. He digs my garden well (when I am not away), and is very content with his salary, ten sheep a year, but I know I have got one of the best bowlers in the world.
THE SETTLER AND THE SHOW

It is Bloemfontein Agricultural Show time. I have sold twenty-nine old ewes, two calves and ten bags of mealies. I have bought a new cheque-book and am prepared for the fray. My newest old suit has been aired and ironed and pressed and examined in every sort of light, the weevil have been brushed out of it, and shirts and collars have been sent to town to be done up.

It is Bloemfontein Show time, and all South Africa and I are going. I shall be there two – possibly three – days. I shall meet crowds of old friends there, some of whom I owe money to – none of whom shall be paid at this time, and none of whom owes any money to me. (That is one of the many puzzles of my life so far, how it comes about that I always owe money and nobody ever owes me any – at least, not much.)

It is Bloemfontein Show time. The anticipation of it is half its charm. I shall dine with friends and surrounded by friends, sitting at spotlessly clean tables. Fleet-footed waiters will bring me lots of food. They will bring me more food than I can eat if I like to ask for it. They will bring me wine and they
will bring me whisky – for two days, perhaps three. I will sign for these. It will give my old ewes and mealies a better chance of panning out, and be good practice for the time I start on the cheque-book. I shall buy expensive cigarettes – not because they are expensive, but because the cigarettes I like best are expensive. For 363 days in the year I go without the things I like best – now for two days, perhaps three, I shall have the best of everything. The fact that my old ewes and mealies may not pan out does not trouble me in the least.

I shall go up to the show ground and come back from the show ground in taxis. I shall pay the chauffeur three shillings each time with as much sang-froid as though I had millions of two-shilling pieces. My pockets will have lots of money in them, and for two or three days I shall live at the rate of about £10 000 a year.

Up at the show ground I shall see the best stock in South Africa. I shall bar entering into discussions on pigs, for I am only a judge of a pig when it is in the form of bacon; but in the horse and cattle section I shall, of course, pick holes in the prize-winners.

I shall go round the machinery section and look at everything. And not one of the stallholders there will know, until I go away, whether I want a £1000 pumping plant or not. My old ewes and my mealies have given me the right to ask any number of questions I like, about any particular machine or
implement I cannot possibly buy.

Down-town, before dinner, my friends and I will endeavour to get within earshot of a perspiring barman. Bulls’ knees are being discussed, as of yore, and percentages of butter-fat, hackneys, Frieslands, and robust wool, have innumerable advocates. Struggling through this animated crowd, I reach the precincts of the perspiring barman and give him an order that costs the best part of a whole ewe. Somebody spends an old ewe on us, and then we change and have dinner. After the theatre we are back at the hotel. Waiters, not quite so fleet-footed as they were earlier in the day, attend to our wants, and bulls’ knees are again discussed.

I have a bed made up on the keyboard of a piano somewhere, and wend my way to it. There are three other beds in the same room, at present unoccupied. The occupants of these arrive at different intervals between 1.30 and 3.30 a.m., and I am just falling asleep when coffee comes in.

On the morning of my departure I shall just go forth with my new cheque-book and pay accounts which I have overlooked since last show time. As cheque after cheque is signed and paid away I cannot calculate how my old ewes, calves and mealies are panning out, nor do I try to do so. I have dropped a line to my bank manager saying that I may possibly overdraw my account by a few pounds but intend selling some more old ewes as soon as I
get back, and for the moment I am a Rothschild.

I return to my hotel and start packing. I sort my shirts, socks, ties, collars, etc., out from the other men’s, and find that my portmanteau, which contains not one more article than it arrived with, will not meet by inches. I make it meet.

I pay my account – ‘accommodation and cards’ – spending a fearful number of old ewes in the process. I also convert a whole ewe into half-crowns (not many half-crowns in an old ewe), shillings, and sixpences, and these are given away – the final stars of a dying rocket, as it were – at short intervals on the short journey from my room to the compartment on the train.

I get a sixteenth part of a seat in this, and half-way home, when I am asked for my ticket, I remember it is in my waistcoat in my portmanteau.

I arrive home at sundown. Everything seems very quiet and still and peaceful, after the rush and hurry and noise of the past few days.

Hendriks greets me with the same old story of the plough having broken. But I am used to that now. John wants some tobacco and his wages.

I count the sheep and find three missing. Someone else has had lots of food during Bloemfontein Show time.

At half-past seven Griet brings in the remains of a two-week-old ham, some bread and butter and tea, which somehow fall a bit flat.
But one doesn’t mind these things – it has been Bloemfontein Show time – and now one buries oneself for another three hundred and sixty-two days, when a new generation of future old ewes will have sprung up.
This is a little romance – a romance of letters – in which Ebenezer Snoops and myself played the principal parts.

Ebenezer Snoops was one of those chaps who had formed himself into a company. I don’t know how men do this, but I wish I did, for all the men I know who form themselves into a company have quite a heap of money. I haven’t the least idea what a heap of money is like, for I’ve never seen one except a pile of imitation sovereigns at a waxwork exhibition; but, apart from it being pretty useful, it must be a jolly pleasant thing to look at.

Ebenezer Snoops was really Ebenezer Snoops and Co., or I should perhaps say that Ebenezer Snoops and Co. was really and merely Ebenezer Snoops.

Ebenezer Snoops (in conjunction with the Co.) sold agricultural implements, and he made his first appeal to me in a newspaper. I was dependent upon agriculture in the Free State as a means of unburdening myself of the large supply of cash that I hadn’t got; and amongst the crowds of people who were after it was this Snoops.

Meeting Snoops, as I did, in cold print always,
seemed to me a little romantic. This printed appeal (for which I think he paid a deal of money) was in connexion with a plough. Snoops told me (in print) that it was the very plough I wanted. This was quite right. He also told me it was cheap. This was a lie. And he went on to say that it did better work than any other plough on the market. This proved Snoops to be a hard-working, persevering sort of chap, for there are nearly one thousand different ploughs on the market, and Snoops must have had a fearful time trying all these to find out where his came in. But his perseverance was rewarded, you see, for it turned out that Snoops’s plough was the very best of them all. At least, he said so. I wrote to Snoops – without any introduction whatever. I called him a ‘dear sir’, and thus began the little romance between us.

Looking back now at those days, I divide this romance into three separate periods. There was the penny stamp period, the ha’penny stamp period, and a reversion to the penny stamp again, though this time in less jubilant circumstances. I wrote to Snoops – I called him a ‘dear sir’. I told him I had seen his advertisement in the *Backvelder’s Gazette* and I would be glad if he would give me all particulars of his plough, etc. etc., I signed my full name after a declaration of faithfulness, and the letter was posted, with one to a pal, asking him if he could lend me £10 to enable me to repay a chap I had borrowed £120 from a month or two before.
Snoops replied by return of post, and I took a
tremendous fancy to him at once. He seemed a most
awfully decent chap. He wrote a very friendly letter,
and sent me a book as well, full of pictures and
descriptions of implements; this was sent with his
compliments, which I thought awfully nice of him.
The letter was sent with expressions that almost
bordered the domain of love. My hurriedly written
inquiry about his plough he had not only considered
a favour, but one that he esteemed greatly. He went
on to point out to me the great advantages of the
plough, and, further, it seemed that all he desired to
complete his happiness was to await my any
command and to give me always and for ever his
very best services and attention. The entire letter was
a frank avowal of his interest in me and my future –
a most awfully friendly letter, and I can remember
looking at the back of it to see if by chance he had
not written further to say that I could have one of his
ploughs, and a wind-mill, too, if I liked, for nothing.

I felt now that not to purchase this plough from a
man who was professedly one of my best friends
would hurt his feelings very much, so I wrote and
told him I would be very glad if he would send me
the plough to Backveld Siding, and to show that I
was keen to do business with him and pay cash
when I could, I ordered at the same time a sixpenny
oil-can for my bicycle and enclosed the sixpence in
stamps. And in a jocular spirit, feeling now that he
was quite an old friend, I asked him if he had ever noticed that his name, spelt backwards read ‘spoons’.

I had a very nice letter in reply – a letter of thanks and good wishes – and stating that both the plough and the oil-can for my bicycle would go forward by that day’s train, etc. etc., and enclosed in the letter was a piece of printed paper with the words: ‘To 1 World’s Best Plough – £16 10s.’ just hurriedly scribbled on it. There was no mention of my little discovery in his name.

By the same post I got the £10 I had asked for from my pal, to pay back the chap I had borrowed £10 from before, and it struck me that I might divide the amount and send the chap £5 and Snoops £5, with letters to both to the effect that the balance would be sent by the end of the month, while I, as usual, would hope that before the end of the month the balance would drop from the skies and enable me to carry out my desire.

After this there came what I call the ha’penny stamp period between Snoops and myself – Snoops using the ha’penny stamps on envelopes from time to time – I merely receiving them.

In the envelopes I always found the same printed form with, first, the words: ‘To Balance on 1 World’s Best Plough £11 10s.’ thereon, and afterwards – and always, merely ‘To account rendered £11 10s.’

I missed the enthusiastic avowals of friendship that
had originally been given me, and though I was no longer his ‘dear sir’, the regular arrival of these printed forms showed at least that Snoops had not quite lost all interest in me.

After many months of this sort of thing – the balance as yet not having dropped from the skies – my feelings towards Snoops changed considerably. I hardly know how to account for this change, for Snoops had not done anything to me or spoken a harsh word, yet I must admit that all my jolly nice feelings towards him vanished completely, and I found myself beginning to dislike him intensely. Then I used a penny stamp in an attempt to get on better terms again. I happened to be writing several letters to several people, full of explanations about money and full of hope for the future, and I thought Snoops might just as well have one. He, too, replied with a penny stamp. The letter was one of regret (which showed a certain amount of friendly spirit still), but there was at the same time a mild intimation that he had waited some time for a settlement. I knew this, of course.

It was then that Snoops severed every friendly tie that ever had been between us. It appeared he was very pally with a postmaster, and he got this postmaster to write me a really horrid letter, in which, as far as I could make out, I was ‘to be drawn upon’ for the outstanding balance. Precisely how this was to be accomplished the letter did not state – it was
sufficiently plain to make me realize that I had to find £11 10s. pretty quickly.

I was naturally very furious with Snoops. To have vowed, as he practically did, eternal love and friendship for me, and then a few months afterwards to turn round to the opposite extreme like this, injured my sensitive nature to a very great degree, and I at once borrowed the money from a pal and sent it to Snoops in a huff, just to show him what I thought of him. I, of course, did not deign to reply to his pal the postmaster.

But what I want to know is, why did Snoops gush so at first? I hate gushers now. Why, instead of writing of my ‘esteemed favours – awaiting my further valued commands – the promptest and very best attention, etc. etc.’, why didn’t he tell the honest and naked truth and say he’d got my order, that he was really in a bit of a funk about executing it, but that he would do so on second thoughts, knowing that he could always fall back upon the postmaster to enable him to get the money? Perhaps he thought I knew this. Just between ourselves, I did.
A JESSOP ON THE VELD

You will read elsewhere in this book of my bowler, Hendriks – one of the best bowlers in the world. His art with the ball, after he understood what was required of him, was superb. His alteration of pace, his monotonous, regular, never-varying action, his extraordinary ‘googlies’, his one swift ball that left the hand like a rifle bullet, his ‘slows’ with a foot break on them – they were great.

It astonished me hugely at the time, but, after all, perhaps his performances with a ball were natural. Hendriks’s ancestors possibly did great things with coconuts in trees once, and though there are neither coconuts nor trees on the veld, I have a suspicion that a ball in Hendriks’s hands aroused some latent instinct in him.

Perhaps I was wrong to put a bat into Hendriks’s hands. When you have a perfect bowler of the raw, rough material such as Hendriks, why arouse his curiosity in another department of the game? I should not have thought of giving him a bat had it not been that I got very tired of bowling for practice at an undefended paraffin-tin; and the frequency with which I knocked this over made me imagine
things – that I was ‘hot stuff’ with a ball, was one. That solitary tin on the threshing-floor that I used as a cricket pitch, had to be defended – it was simply ridiculous imagining that I could bowl out an entire eleven in half an hour because I managed to get the tin plump in the middle five out of six. There must be a bat in front of the tin, and Hendriks, who had never handled one in all his life, was the only individual in this vast expanse of veld to hold it.

It looked a toy in his huge hands. I must say that I had often wondered what Hendriks, with a bit of training, would do to a half volley to leg. I found out.

He wouldn’t wear pads – and he only wears boots on cold, frosty mornings. Padless and bootless, then, he stood at the wicket huddled up in an ungainly attitude over the absurdly small-looking bat. He grinned – one huge smile, his white teeth showing out distinctly against his jet-black face – and he said he was ready.

As I was the only man Hendriks had ever seen bat, it was but natural he should try to copy his ‘Baas’. His ‘Baas’ usually played carefully for an over or two, and Hendriks tried to do like-wise. But he was hopelessly at sea; he didn’t seem to have the remotest idea of how to handle the bat at all. I bowled him four times in succession, and his display disappointed me. That a bowler like Hendriks should be such an absolute ‘rabbit’ with the bat
seemed impossible.

I remember in my second over sending down a swift ball. It pitched on a small stone and struck Hendriks just on the temple. The ball dropped at his feet. Hendriks picked it up and rolled it back to me, with a grin. I would have been in hospital for a month had it hit me.

The next week came the revelation – to both Hendriks and myself. No more careful play for Hendriks. Fancy strokes were abandoned, attempted late cuts (generally ten seconds too late) only meant my bowling him, and efforts at leg glides merely meant stinging whacks on the shins. Hendriks must have thought over things and have decided to adopt other tactics.

Other tactics! Great Scott! I’ve never seen such hitting in my life as I saw during the next half-hour. Hendriks’s upbringing had taught him that sticks were for hitting with – whether it was a man’s head or a ball – and hit he did. My first ball was sent clean out of my boundary fence – a six any day – and the second followed suit. Real hitting, too – no half-heartedness about it: ball clean in the middle of the bat, and several feet of raw strength behind it.

But Hendriks was only feeling his way, as it were. Caution was thrown to the winds. No smile appeared on that dark face; Hendriks was in deadly earnest. Leg breaks, off breaks, swift balls – all were treated alike.
Shoulders well open, bat well up in the air, and with a terrific swing, Hendriks lifted my very best balls sky high for six every time. I calculated that in two overs he made about sixty runs – the hardest, cleanest hitting you have ever seen. A good length ball he’d turn into an easy half volley by springing right out of his ground and pulling it away into some adjacent kopje a couple of hundred yards away.

No science, no skill with it all. Just an eye as keen as a hawk, a tremendous reach, and plenty of brute strength. He never missed – never by any chance; and though I’ve seen Jessop and Fender and Trott, I reckon Hendriks streets ahead of them. I gaze at him with profound admiration but say very little. Hendriks, at his price – ten sheep per annum – is a bargain. But he is quite content, and his mealie land, that Mrs. Hendriks keeps in order for him, is, I think, after half an hour’s cricket, his next best joy in life.
TO A DOUBLE FURROW PLOUGH

The day when first I met you, I remember well enough,
You were outside a winkel door on show,
Surrounded by your single friends and things for grinding stuff
No man has ever yet been known to grow;
You had your paint and I my quids, and quids and man must part;
I pulled your lever, saw your limbs untwine,
Went in the shop and paid for you, and put you on a cart
And took you home, and knew that you were mine.

You looked so clean, so spick and span, it really seemed a sin
To work with you or even soil a share,
And had I known what I know now, I would have put you in
A nice glass case and always kept you there;
If I had only done this then and shown you as a freak,
Expatiating on your snares and wiles,
It would have paid me better far, than following you each week,
And walking in the year some thousand miles.

Your clever lever, once so smooth, does nothing else but jamb,
Pinching my fingers fifty times a day,
And fifty times a day I choke the ever ready damn
And other words I feel I have to say.
If you would only go alone, wound up, say, like a clock,
There’d certainly be things that you could do;
We’d wind you up and go to town, or make you herd the stock,
Oxen, you know, are chiefly kept for you.

What do you give us in return, what profit do we make?
Never a grain to make a chap rejoice!
Think of the shares – ten bob a time, you regularly break,
And all the grease I’ve used to stop your voice.
Month after month, year after year, the same old silly game,
Ploughing until the centuries roll by;
And though I never get a crop, I plough on just the same,
But if you ask I’m hanged if I know why.
Send cattle away to North Polefontein for feed, 217 days without rain in these parts having made feeding for stock a bit dry. Should like to accompany cattle, but am afraid shock to horse will be fatal. Must let Hendriks take them on foot. Wonder how many head will do the journey safely. Pity if they died, as I’ve begun to reckon they were mine – they’re really Government cattle lent to me, I getting a quarter of the increase. Most extra-ordinary thing not to have had one calf in twenty months. Must get vet. to come and look at cows.

Hendriks wants some of his wages. Have £1 4s. 9d. left. Had reckoned it was mine, but remember it is all that is left of a loan I had from Government. All the same to Hendriks, however.

John comes before breakfast to say that the small spring – my sole water supply – has dried up at last. Curse John, who gives me a month’s notice. Tell him that he and Mrs. John and all the little Johns can go now if they like. Regret this step in a way. After all, John couldn’t help spring drying up; still, he needn’t have grinned, need he?
Vet. looks in; suggests my getting bull. Getting on for breakfast. Think I’ll have a bath. Remember there’s no water to drink, much less to bath in. Glad I didn’t squeeze sponge out entirely yesterday; still wet enough to rub over my face.

Don’t exactly like crushed wheat for breakfast, but it’s better than nothing. Had reckoned wheat was mine. It’s really seed supplied by Government to be paid for in sixty instalments, extending over a period of thirty years. Still, can’t sow it; might just as well eat it.

No milk or butter. Cut slices of fat off last ham and have them melted down. When cold and spread on bread not at all unlike the butter Van Krügermann brought me when he wanted to borrow my wagon.

What the deuce am I going to do for water? Send kitchen-girl to Venter’s Spruit, one and a half miles away, to fetch a bucketful. Girl not absolutely hilarious about it.

Wonder if Government will advance me loan if I build small enclosure for a rain-gauge with Government fencing material. Am afraid not. Shall build enclosure all the same. Every farm should have rain-gauges; forget whether you can measure dew with them. Fancy you can. Must have been an inquisitive Johnny who invented rain-gauges. Wonder who he was. He had a pretty wit.

Sun fearfully hot, so chuck job. Decide to finish making small pipe-rack begun last March. Find girl
has used it to light fire with that morning. Says she thought it was an old piece of plank the pups had been biting.

Decide to have a decent dinner for a change. Open a tin of sardines. Just sitting down to it when Von Lombard and two S.A.C.* chaps turn up. Quickly dirty a plate and cup before they come in, so that I can pretend I’ve had dinner and give tin of sardines better chance of going round.

S.A.C. chaps and Von Lombard have grub. Sardines pan out three apiece and one over. I sit with the air of one who has had a tremendous blow-out, though feel damned hungry. Marvellous to see Von Lombard put two sardines into his mouth at once. Must think I catch ’em in nets. And this is the last tin.

Wonder what I shall eat when visitors have gone. Government wheat, I suppose. Wish they’d supplied seed potatoes as well. Haven’t eaten a spud for nine months, with the exception of two helpings I had at last cricket lunch.

S.A.C. chaps apparently think Von Lombard great friend of mine, and direct a rippling conversation in Afrikaans towards him. S.A.C. Afrikaans might be worse, but – not much. Von L. very bewildered. S.A.C. really relating smart capture by them of unruly Basutho. Von L., I fancy, imagines they are getting on to him about his gun licence. Thanks to this, tin of sardines lasts half an hour.

* South African Constabulary.
Visitors go at three o’clock, Von Lombard taking bar of soap and half-pound of coffee on the Government loan principle – to be returned within thirty years, if he doesn’t forget. Had reckoned soap was mine, but suddenly recollect it’s the last of two bars from case supplied free for killing locusts, by Government. Wonder what really is mine. Beginning to think this is a sort of depot for Government goods.

Feel beastly hungry. Open a packet of butter-scotch received in Christmas case from England. Must get some more tinned goods. ‘Rust-resisting wheat’ excellent, no doubt, but one is apt to weary of it after nine months. Moreover, its rust-resisting powers not fully appreciated by eating it.

Wonder what store will give me credit. Can’t think of one in a fifty-mile radius where I haven’t got a large account already. Shall go to ‘Boojum’s’ Winkel, order quite a lot of stuff, then discover I’ve left my cheque-book at home (cheque-book been home now for seventeen months and not been used yet). He knew my cousin’s wife’s brother in England. Tremendous bond of friendship, this. Good enough for absolutely unlimited credit.

Have great feed at tea-time. With the help of a little flour convert sardine which Von Lombard left into ‘fish-ball’ and fry it. Quite good, though I can realize a secretary bird’s feeling expecting a snake for dinner and only finding an ant. Seven o’clock. Feel
fagged out with day’s work. Must get to bed. Have horrible dream: result of heavy supper. Dream Government really own my life, but have lent it me on condition I pay instalments regularly. Instalment due, and I don’t know how to raise it. Quite a relief to wake up, although it is in the middle of a drought, and only crushed-up wheat for breakfast.
'The secret of success in married life,' says a recent paper, ‘is to reveal some new trait in your character from time to time.’

Having a few spare moments the other morning, waiting for a cheque which did not arrive, I spent the time writing a little pamphlet entitled *Marriage Made Easier*.

I cannot quote it all here – it takes up a lot of space, and moreover I hope to sell it for tuppence a copy in the streets one day when further cheques I expect do not turn up.

I saw the idea of this secret of success in married life immediately. It’s a sort of don’t-be-yourself-all-at-once kind of scheme; reveal some fresh side of your nature every now and again.

My pamphlet makes the whole thing clear. If this chapter doesn’t I will sell you the pamphlet.

We will suppose that you have become married. The first thing to do is to map out a plan of campaign. It is best done with a paper and pencil. Put down the little surprises you are going to spring upon your wife from time to time, and allocate them to different years. Don’t crowd the first years too
full. This is a most important point. If you are a young married couple and you expect to live another fifty years, arrange your list of little surprises and new traits to spread over, say, thirty years at least.

After that it doesn’t matter much – you can play tiddleywinks or knit socks. But plan out a programme to last about thirty years – that is, if your wife is still alive. There are a whole lot of things that you can do, or be, or think, or pretend, that will appear to be new traits, and so write these carefully down on your list.

Now I would recommend that for six months – or if you can, spin it out for a year – that you make little quotations from standard authors frequently – something intelligent yet appropriate. Your wife will be delighted to see how well-read you are. If at breakfast your boiled egg is not nice, do not say that it is bad. Say something new, like ‘it is very good in parts’ or ‘you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.’ Or if your wife has had some difficulty and feels hopeless about it, bring in the ‘it’s a long worm that has no turning’ remark and buck her up a bit.

Wives must be cheered up; after all, she’s your wife – she needs it.

When the quotation era begins to pall a little, try something else. Buy a piccolo and a three-penny book on how to play it. Learn to play it in your office or on the bus. Then one evening, when your wife is...
watching you, put your hand in your breast pocket and say, ‘I’ve got a little surprise for you, dear.’

She will think you are only going to give her a diamond necklace, and to her great surprise you pull out your piccolo and play a little tune.

Don’t take any notice of the expression on your wife’s face. Remember you have taken her by surprise, and do not be discouraged by what might seem to be a little lack of enthusiasm; a surprise like this takes some getting used to, and the sound may seem perhaps a trifle shrill in a small room. Play another tune another day in your study with the door closed – if you have a study; if not, in the bathroom, and put a blanket over the piccolo and play some tender love song that you both liked when you were engaged.

Whatever happens, it’s a new little trait.

All this time you might be secretly perfecting conjuring tricks. Practise in the Tube – or go out into the country with a pack of cards, some rabbits, and a top hat.

Then one evening, throwing a pack of cards carelessly upon the table at home, say, ‘I’ll show you a little trick, dear.’

Of course, if you can do so skilfully, lead the conversation up to the subject of cards first; ‘In Memoriam’ cards is a good start.

Ask her to take a card. If she wants to know what for, don’t give the trick away – ask her again. Keep
on asking her – don’t give in. Then tell her to look at it and put it in the pack again. Shuffle the pack as the book explained and very neatly bring her card to the top and then say seriously, ‘Do you mind telling me how many spots your card had?’ She will say she does not know, and when you say you told her to look at it, do not show any chagrin – it doesn’t matter – you can change it into a rabbit.

If your wife is ill and the servant is well enough to give notice, tell your wife that you will see to her breakfast yourself. Bring it to her in the bedroom, cheerily – in some novel way. I know a man who gave his wife quite a surprise by coming into the room with a piece of buttered bread in his hand, the plate under his arm, the egg in his pocket and the spoon in his ear.

Say to her tenderly, ‘Carissima mia.’ Open the egg for her – smell it – say, ‘Buenno nuovi’ – show her you are a scholar. Study the Reparations problem, learn the Treaty of Versailles by heart and explain it in detail to your wife.

Put a bee-hive near the window flowers. Generate your own honey; learn to yodel – yodel sometimes in the mornings – it sounds very well far away – as far away as you can get. That ought to take you well into the tenth year. After that, if your wife hasn’t already got a divorce – she jolly well ought to.
TO SOME LIBERAL M.P.’S

It’s all very well to lounge upon a bench,
Or talk about a land you do not know,
Saying, ‘We’ll add to this, and here retrench,
This can remain, and that we can let go.’
It’s all very well pretending that you’re wise,
Thinking you understand what ought to be,
Drowning the truth with jealous party cries –
It isn’t you that bears the brunt – it’s me!

It’s all very well to heatedly discuss
Some question raised, without the least idea
Of what the consequence will mean to us
Who get the full effect of it out here;
It’s all very nice to linger at the Ritz,
Then motor to the House in time to see
Your party give the Opposition fits –
You never feel the real result – it’s me!

Your weapons – words, your battlefield a hall;
Your object, no one really understands.
My battlefield – an empire you’d let fall;
My weapons – grit, and very grimy hands.
No time for careless speech or polished word,
Brute strength and will assures us victory.
Out in forgotten corners, lone, unheard,
It isn’t you that’s doing much – it’s me!

A nice soft job you’ve got, and no mistake;
I have to fight to live. You have the fun
Of fighting daily just for fighting’s sake;
Quite unaware of all the harm you’ve done.
How can you know the proper ‘ins and outs’
Of problems vast in lands you never see?
And will you ever know? I have my doubts;
It isn’t you who understands – it’s me!
There are several ways of killing a pig, all more or less effectual. Different people have their own methods, but unfortunately pig-killing does not take place every day on the farm, consequently when you attempt to kill the animal you will be out of practice, and your hand, that is if you use your hand for the purpose, will have lost a little of its cunning. The pig notices this. The most popular method, it seems, is sticking with a long knife. Then there is the rifle, shot-gun or revolver method, and I have known enthusiastic novices use all the four on one pig – shot-gun, rifle, revolver and knife – though in this case the pig is generally found to be cut up (or blown up) before the proper time. I have also seen pigs killed quickly when found in the garden – a rake is used in this case.

It seems superfluous to describe or explain the shooting method. All you have to do is to shoot at some part of the pig you don’t intend to eat. To those who, in addition to the pig’s cheek, enjoy the trotters, there is only the tail left to fire at – even if you are lucky enough to shoot it off first shot it will not kill the animal. I have seen this proven by a man who
took aim at the head. Undoubtedly the best method is sticking with a knife, the objective being the heart.

Ten or a dozen arbeiders will be found useful in helping to catch and then hold the pig. It is doubtless owing to insufficient study of anatomy that most people who kill pigs have a very vague idea as to where the heart is. Some believe it to be in the shoulder, others again fancy the back of the neck, the pig meanwhile noticing and cursing their ignorance. Others, again, after repeated attempts to reach the heart, begin to doubt whether there is one in a pig, and in desperation resort to the rifle or other shooting method. At any rate, whatever method is employed, it is a consolation to know that the pig must die some time; and when dead the next operation is the removal of the bristle or hair with boiling water.

Of course pigs can be skinned; you must use your own judgment as to which you can make best – a pigskin saddle or crackling. A golden rule is, if crackling, don’t skin. Roast pork must have crackling. Bacon must have a rind. That is why the skin is left on a pig until it is cooked. To remove the bristles then, a sort of burial service takes place; a shallow hole is dug in the ground – this is very misleading to the pig who is expecting to be decently buried – the hole is strewn with grass, the pig laid in it and covered with grain bags. (This is one of those rare occasions on which grain bags are really used on a
Boiling water is then poured over these bags, the *arbeiders* meanwhile patting them with knives, old frying pans – failing old, new ones will do – or spades. You know the water is boiling by the remarks of the *arbeider* you spilt some on. The patting process continues for a minute or so, then, take your knife for scraping, whip off the steaming bags, and there you are. That is to say, there you are for about a day and a half, for although you find the bristles coming off fast and easily, revealing the beautiful white skin underneath, do not imagine all the bristles are going to come off like this. This is the pig’s little joke. The first half of him is cleaned in about ten minutes, the other half takes about ten hours. A razor may be used to advantage, but only in experienced hands; otherwise the pig will have the appearance of a badly worked antimacassar.

At any rate, before sundown, you will pretend that all the bristles are off – you will pretend this because you realize it is getting late and the pig has to be cleaned inside as well as out.

The pig has now to be hung up, and I may mention that a beam about a foot thick is safer than 3-inch quartering.

A word of advice here. Do not hang the pig up by the front legs. If you do, when you start opening it, the wrong end will come out first and this will prove puzzling.

Sling your pig up by the hind legs and don’t let it
drop. Once the pig is opened you will be surprised to find so much in it – it seems endless, but don’t despair. This is the time, if you are working alone, to find the heart and make an incision in it, so that you can show the arbeiders where the pig was stuck. Where the pig was really stuck you will not know until the next morning, when you are cutting it up for bacon.

The pig will be left hanging – if the rope is strong enough – until next morning.

Never leave a pig hanging in the moonlight. It is very easily seen.

In the morning you will proceed to saw the carcass down. Use a saw, not an axe. You start between the hind legs, and finish where the saw takes you; this is sometimes between the shoulder and the ear on either side – in any case it is wrong.

You will now bring one side on to the operating table and wonder what you will do to it in order to cut it up for bacon and hams. As you have trusted to luck from the moment of slaughtering right through to the process of cleaning, etc., you will no doubt still trust to luck. It is difficult to explain without using technical terms, how to cut up a pig, but the first book of Euclid will be found useful – Mrs. Beeton and Hilda’s Where Isn’t It may also be consulted – there is nothing in them about cutting up a pig, but it will help you pass the time.

In conclusion, I would urge the young pig-sticker
not to get discouraged. Many failures may be at first experienced, the bacon may not cure, it may be too much cured, the bristles may not have come off, the pig may not have died, but never you mind – you’ve done your best!
A. Leghornet, Esq.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your advertisement in the ‘Novices’ Weekly Snare’, will you kindly rail me 20 of your famous ‘Non-Stop Silver Laying Bullets’? As the journey will be at least two days, will you kindly fix up nests in the crate, as otherwise the accumulation of 40 eggs in a jolting crate will get the birds in a fearful mess, I’m afraid. I enclose cheque for £20. Thanking you in anticipation,

I am, yours faithfully,

T. Tampanese.

The Natty Nesters, Ltd.

Dear Sir,

Will you kindly send me per first possible train two of your patent egg-boxes to hold 150 eggs each? I note that your advertisement states that eggs travel quite safely in these patent boxes, but one often hears of awful accidents to eggs in transit, and in order to be on the safe side will you kindly include
about 25 lb. of cotton wool. I enclose cheque for £3 14s. Thanking you,

I am, yours faithfully,

T. Tampanese.

The Poulterers’ Perquisites, Ltd.

Dear Sirs,

Kindly forward as soon as possible 20 patent non-capsizable vermin-proof-ever-ready nests, one ¼ horse-power mill for grinding bone, grit and grain, one large sprouting frame, one bag each of peas, sorghum, beans, barley, rice, hempseed, linseed, sunflower seed, middlings, biscuit meal, octs, fish meal, oyster-shell and anything else in these lines you like, and suitable quantities of charcoal, carbonate of iron, Easton’s syrup, Parrish’s chemical food, Epsom salts, fowl bandages, liquorice, ginger, egg food, shell-producer, shell-hardener, shell-softener, pullet pills, and any other little thing you can think of. I would mention that I am not setting up a shop in opposition to you, but have gone in for some ‘Non-Stop Silver Laying Bullets’, and the above-mentioned articles, I note, are recommended in the ‘Poultry Encyclopædia and Fowl Fanciers’ Journal’. I enclose cheque for £37 11s. 6d.

Yours faithfully,

T. Tampanese.
The Manager, S.A. Railways.

Dear Sir,

From next month onwards I shall be dispatching large quantities of eggs regularly for some years (I may mention that I have gone in for ‘Non-stop Laying Bullets’), and I should be obliged if you would kindly let me know whether, in view of the large quantity of eggs I intend to rail regularly, you could see your way to make a reduction to me in your usual charges or else give me special facilities for these eggs in transit, such as a padded cell on the train, etc. Thanking you,

I am, yours faithfully,

T. Tampanese.

Messrs. Gettem, Dunnem and Co.

Dear Sirs,

I am in receipt of the wire netting, poles, fowl-houses, coal tar, spraying solution, whitewash, 20 china eggs, drinking troughs, nails and screws, galvanized iron, incubator, foster-mother, paraffin, etc., and herewith enclose cheque for £29 7s. The only articles not yet to hand are the camphor-balls, but I will have another good look through the straw for them.

I am, etc.,

T. Tampanese.
The Manager, the Xfontein Bank.

Dear Sir,

Kindly send me per return post another cheque-book containing 250 cheques.

Yours faithfully,

T. Tampanese.

The Editor, ‘The Fowl Fanciers’ Journal’.

Dear Sir,

If not troubling you too much, would you please let me have your advice on one or two little matters in connection with my fowls. I have studied, with much interest, your book ‘Fowls and All About Them’ and I note in your opening chapter you say: ‘On arrival of birds, see if the mouth is quite clean and smells sweet inside.’ In attempting to ascertain this, one of the hens, of a particularly vicious temperament, gave me a very severe peck on the point of my nose, inflicting a large wound. My nose has now swollen considerably, and my object in mentioning this to you is to ask whether, through such an accident, Bumble Foot could be transferred to a nose, and if so, what I ought to do? Again: One of my birds seemed to have contracted what, according to your book, is liver disease. Administering the liver pill, and in trying to elongate the neck for the purpose (you know how fowls some-
times seem to huddle up all their neck on to their bodies!) well, in trying to elongate the neck I unfortunately pulled off the head of the fowl. What I want to know is, supposing this should occur again, can the fowl be eaten if it has liver disease? It seems such a pity to waste it. I should be very much obliged to you for any information you could give me on these points, particularly the point of my nose.

Yours truly,

T. Tampanese.

A. Leghornet, Esq.

Sir,

I certainly think your action in refusing to take back your fowls and refund me the money is rotten. As I pointed out in my 27th letter to you on the subject, I have had your non-stop fowls for four months now and not yet had one egg from them. I am now entirely fed up with the whole business – particularly with you – and shall carry out my threat contained in my 24th letter to you, and inform all and sundry that you have made a big mistake and called your breed ‘non-stops’ instead of ‘non-starters’.

T. Tampanese.
I. Jones, Esq.

My Dear Sir,

I have your letter in reply to my advertisement in the ‘Novices’ Weekly Snare’, for which I thank you. These birds that I am offering for sale are the famous 472-egg non-stop strain – often giving birth to twins. The collecting of their eggs and the amount of time I have had to spend endorsing cheques has been such a tax upon my health that I have had to reduce the numbers of my poultry considerably. I am sure you will be done well by buying this nice lot.

Yours truly,

T. Tampanese.
I don’t know if one can be taught it, whether one is born to it, or whether it’s a thing you catch, like the measles, but the ‘push’ of a good commercial traveller – a really good traveller, one who stands out far and away above other travellers, a super-traveller among travellers, as it were – the ‘push’ and the persuasiveness of a man like this always turns me to clay.

I think it is my deep admiration for his unbounded enthusiasm about the thing he is trying to sell, that immediately undermines any determination I have made not to buy it. The super-traveller, thank heaven, is rare. If every traveller, pushing a line of goods, had been a super-traveller, I should have had to borrow much more money than I have had to so far.

The other day a cart was driven up to my home. In it were a man and a boy. The man called me by my name and asked me if he was right. I told him he was quite correct and that it was a splendid guess. I think he was the quickest and most direct speaker I have ever heard.

Within two minutes, and before he had got out of
the cart, he had mentioned the weather, the last
town he was in, the people he met there, and told
me, all in the same breath, as it were, what he was
travelling for.

His chief line was a patent cooker. What he told me
about it all in this one breath was certainly very
wonderful.

Apparently you just locked your dinner up in this
cooker and it cooked itself. When it was cooked it
would blow the fire out; if the dinner was getting too
cold it would blow a whistle; it consumed only
threepence worth of fuel in a month, and, I think, if
necessary, could be used as a watering can or a fire-
extinguisher if your house was on fire.

I told him there was absolutely no hope of my
giving him an order, but would he come in and have
some tea?

A cup of tea, he considered, was just the very thing
that would go down well. ‘And,’ he added, ‘while
we’re waiting I can show you this little working
model of the cooker.’ I said there’d be hardly any
waiting as the servants were always very quick.

He said it wouldn’t take one minute to show the
cooker; that I’d got a nice house, that the trees looked
well, that it had been a bad year for sheep, and that
he had just sold my neighbour a cooker.

By this time we were in the house and he opened a
little bag and put a miniature patent cooker about
eight inches high on the table. And the very second
that I had finished giving the order for the tea he started explaining the cooker to me.

It was one of the cleverest pieces of semi-technical rhetoric I had ever heard. It lasted, without a break, for five minutes, and he could speak seventeen words easily to an ordinary man’s six, and all the time he was sliding open doors in his patent cooker, pulling out little racks, turning on little taps, pulling up little valves, the while I sat as one transfixed. It was not the wonders of the cooker so much that held me spellbound, as his unhesitating, unchecked, tireless eloquence.

I gave him a free rein. Far better, I thought, to let him go on until he became exhausted than to attempt to stifle this tremendous enthusiasm. He ended up with, ‘The whole thing is made through-out with double-breasted aluminium, trebly-tested brass fittings, specially forged joint sockets, safety valve, special vents, and a spare steam condenser pipe and water gauge, with a combination of something or other, all for £5 17s. 6d. f.o.r. Xfontein.’

He drank his cup of tea as though he really wanted it, and I told him it was a wonderful little invention, but I didn’t require one.

I thought the victory was won, for he put the model cooker on one side, lit a pipe, and leant back in his chair with the air of one who had done his best and failed.

Far from it. We talked on a good many subjects,
but there was not one topic in which his cooker was not dragged in.

Had it been a good fruit year? – Not very; just enough to make a little jam. His face lit up at once. His cooker was the most perfect thing in the world for jam-making. We talked about aeroplanes. Did I know that there was a swivel sort of bearing in aeroplanes made of exactly the same stuff as his patent cooker? Tennis? The beauty of these cookers was that you could put your dinner inside before you went off for your game, and after it was all over you could come back and find your dinner cooked. Living alone as I do, he supposed I had a great deal of reading matter to help me pass the time. I had. With half a newspaper you could generate sufficient heat in this cooker to, etc., etc.

At this stage I felt myself giving way. Here was the super-traveller, fully armed, in a big ‘push’. I tried every topic under the sun to try and get his mind off the cooker, and every topic I touched on only got me deeper and deeper into the mire.

The church – his cooker would cook your meal by itself while you were in church. The Navy – quite a number of cookers had been supplied to the Navy. The rotten winds we had been having – no wind could ever put these cookers out. I thought I had him stumped when I started on worms in maize crops. Not a bit of it. He knew almost as much about worms as I did; reckoned it must entail incessant
work arranging the systematic tillage of the soil in order to minimize the depredations of the worms, and with one of these cookers, no matter how long I was out in the lands, there would always be ever-ready coffee, etc., and a hot meal on my return.

As I say, I don’t know whether ‘push’ like this is a thing you can learn, or whether you merely catch it, like the measles, but this chap caught me all right: he got his order.
Arrive morning train. Hotel runner tells me town is full. No room anywhere. Says it’s Show Week. Ask what that’s got to do with it. Learn that a collection of stock is on show; can’t see why this should fill town – surely there’s a proper place for them. Reach hotel. Crowds of fearfully sunburnt men in lounge; push through them and hear fragments of discussion on bulls’ knees, Berkshire pigs and hackneys. Interview proprietor. Not a chance of a room for at least a week – not even a bed on billiard table. Go into bar – full of sunburnt men – some discussing bulls’ knees, some discussing Berkshire pigs, some hackneys. Awful big fist one man’s got – ought to take on Dempsey. Order a whisky and soda and then go out to another hotel to get a room. Full of sunburnt men – catch something about ‘that bull’s knees, man’ – wonder what really happened to the bull’s knees – seems to be the talk of the town. Interview proprietor. Not a room to be had all the week – not even bath-room. Bath covered over with planks and bed made on it. Owner of this fit-up has
to turn out at 6 a.m. every morning and gets twenty-five percent reduction.

Things look serious, so engage a cab for half a day to take me round hotels. Stop at tobacconist’s – two men inside talking about hackneys. Tobacconist greets me effusively, ‘In for the show, sir?’

‘Yes,’ I reply, ‘fairly in for it.’

Drive to hotel number 3 – interview proprietor – result as before – no room, no beds, crowds of sunburnt men – catch something about pigs and bulls – end of sentence lost, but pretty sure to be ‘knees’.

Must buy paper and see what it says about this freak bull. Wonder if it’s the same bull they’re all talking about. Buy paper and read it in cab. See column headed: ‘Where to find your friends.’ Terrific list, but all someone else’s friends – nothing about bull’s knees.

Arrive at hotel number 8 at lunch time. Crowds of fearfully sunburnt men; not a room to be had, but I can get lunch – at the third relay, that would be in about an hour. Spend the time in doing a little shopping, though heaven knows where I’m to have the things sent. Call first at barber’s for a shave. Effusively greeted, and asked if I am ‘in for the show’? Reply as before. Am ushered into long room full of sunburnt men – some being shaved – others waiting to be shaved – catch something from two nearest men about, ‘My bull’s back!’ So this is the
owner of the bull, is it? At once tell him of his mistake. ‘You mean his knees, don’t you?’ Then apologize. Shall be getting bull on the brain soon. Walk to chemist’s. Chemist asks me if I’m ‘in for the show’? Tell him I’m in for tooth powder.

Getting very tired. Back to hotel number 8 through fearfully crowded street. Two men pass me discussing a ram – quite a change this – feel inclined to follow them and shake hands. Arrive at hotel number 8 – hotel bus draws up outside and disgorges heaps of sunburnt men about me. ‘No, I only brought in the bull this time,’ says one of them to somebody. Where is this bull? Go into bar, full of sunburnt men. See suspicious smile on barman’s face as he comes towards me, so tell him at once that I am not in for the show, and want a sherry and bitters.

Have lunch at small table with a hackney breeder and a thoroughbred breeder; a breeder of Shorthorns and a breeder of Frieslands. Shall suggest to the proprietor, for peace’s sake, advisability of having different tables for the different breeds. Madness putting a Shorthorn and a Friesland man at the same table. Table on left seems to favour pigs – table on right going very strong on that chap’s bull – in fact, seem to be surrounded by owners of wild animals. Take another tour round town after lunch, interviewing apologetic proprietors of bedless hotels.

Hope at last – at a small pub – with vacant hen-house for hire. Seems to be the only unoccupied
space in the town; engage same and decide to leave by first train in the morning – learn that there is a train that night for somewhere. At once cancel engagement of hen-house and book seat in train – doesn’t matter where it’s going so long as it gets me out of this. Meanwhile kill time at Show – fearful lot of animals there and thousands and thousands of sunburnt men. Everyone talking about something as I push through them. This is the sort of thing I heard: ‘My bull’s knees … I’ll bet you £5, Charley … four and a half per cent. butter fat and … not a ghost of a chance … best stallion on … Friesland or Shorthorn, I don’t care a … beautiful staple … three year old and as quiet as … so told him that for all his hackneys … bull’s back, man … two thousand acres of wheat … and dirt cheap at … Billy’s Berkshires … two firsts, one second … Merinos better class than … but that bull of …’

Oh, damn the bull; clear away from this babel at once. Call at bookseller’s to buy books, etc., for journey tonight. ‘Good afternoon, sir; in for the –’ Leave hurriedly for fear I should go mad.

Decide to write a tragedy, entitled ‘—fontein during Show Week’, first opportunity I get.

Dinner at hotel that night repetition of day experience – though note of exultant prize winners tends to make noise louder. Wander round town until train starts. Go into refreshment-room at station – lot of sunburnt men discussing Frieslands.
Train arrives very late – seems to be as full as — fontein; however, find seat in one carriage. As train moves off chap in corner says to t’other chap, ‘Good show of bulls up there?’ So I’ve got to travel with it! Write out telegram to send at next station ordering accommodation in nearest lunatic asylum.
I walked into the store and found myself in the collar and tie department.

The gentleman behind the counter said, ‘Good morning,’ and asked if he could do anything for me.

I told him he’d be the best judge of that. I was going to build a dam and wanted a complete dam-making outfit, ready for use.

He knew where they were kept, said he’d show me the way if I followed him, led me through the boot department, up some stairs, through miles of pots and pans and kettles, down some stairs, across the furniture show-room, and I asked him if we were halfway there yet or should I wait here and order lunch.

He said we were just there, and explained that I had come in at the wrong end of the store – the dam-making outfits were kept at the back. I told him that I thought the back of a store was surely the wrong end to come in at, and moreover, unless one had been trained to it, a difficult thing to do without getting into trouble.

We then finished the last lap, and I was pointed out another gentleman in a large yard, surrounded
by a Canadian steel and iron exhibition.

I said, ‘Good morning,’ to him, and told him I was building a dam and wanted a complete outfit ready for use.

He seemed a little surprised, said, ‘Certainly,’ took a pencil and notebook out of his pocket, and asked if I wanted a wheel-scoop or one on steel runners.

‘Whichever’s the quickest,’ I told him.

He said that they all went the same pace, only some hold more bits of dam than others. Would I have a look at them?

We walked through the Canadian steel and iron exhibition and eventually arrived on the edge of a sea of dam-scoops.

‘These are the wheeled ones,’ he said, and he unhitched a lever and made it do things.

There was a tense silence, broken only by the jangling of the scoop as he moved the lever up and down. It was a pretty little exhibition in mechanism, evidently designed to impress me. ‘No, I don’t like that one,’ I said. ‘It makes rather a lot of noise – let me see some others.’

There was a wonderful range of colours – some were blue, some green, some black, some red. ‘I rather like the shade of this blue,’ I said, ‘and yet that’s quite a pretty green one there – no, I’ll take this blue one, please – it’ll match the air better when I use it.’

He jotted it down in his notebook.
'They must get awfully dusty here,' I said. 'Yes, they do rather – lucky they’re not gold watches. Now you want the trek gear, I suppose,’ he asked.

‘Yes, I suppose I do,’ I answered.

‘How many oxen are you using – I suppose you’re using oxen?’ he asked.

‘Yes – or elephants,’ I replied, ‘but they seem a bit scarce; I’m afraid oxen are the only things in the market nowadays.’

‘Trek chain for how many? Eighteen oxen?’

‘Eighteen oxen,’ I said.

‘Yes? You’ll want nine,’ he went on.

‘Nine,’ I repeated. ‘Put in forty spare ones, will you?’

‘Certainly. Yokes?’ he asked.

‘Oh, I think a thousand’ll do for a start,’ I said.

He agreed that they might last a week or two, and added that they always came in useful.

‘Very,’ I said; ‘look well driven half-way in round the flower beds. How do you sell them – at per each, pound, ton, dozen, bale, square foot or wheel-barrowful?’

‘At per each, dozen, hundred, thousand, or million – just as you take them,’ he replied. He was getting playful.

He jotted down a couple of thousand at my request. I just love having a man at my side jotting down my orders – I can never stop.
‘Ropes?’ he asked.
‘Yes,’ I said. ‘A hundred.’
‘Thank you.’ He jotted it down.
‘What a lot of jotting down you’ve had to do,’ I said.
‘It’ll be nothing to the totting up,’ he answered.
He said this quite quickly, so it wasn’t so bad.
‘Now what else do I want?’ I asked. ‘I’ve got riems.’
‘Plough?’ he asked.
‘Got a plough,’ I told him; ‘but I’ll take a couple of spare ones.’
He picked two out.
‘I think that about completes the outfit,’ he said, running over the items.
‘Oh, spare shares,’ he suggested.
‘Oh, yes,’ I answered, ‘a few pairs spare shares. Say that ten times quickly.’
I don’t think he heard me.
‘Well, that’s the lot, I think,’ he said.
‘Is that the lot?’ I asked. I wondered how many thousand pounds it would tot up to.
Now I should have to tell him my secret.
‘I say,’ I began, ‘you look a decent sort of chap; I hope you don’t mind, but all this order of mine is just bluff.’
‘Just how much?’ he asked.
‘It’s all just a joke,’ I explained. ‘The fact is, I’ve never bought more than a couple of dozen yokes or
half a dozen chains at once in my whole life before. My bank balance is generally about ninepence over-draft, but I’ve always longed – just longed – to give a huge order like this, just to see what it feels like, you know. I say, I hope you don’t mind, do you, for it’s been quite a wonderful experience?’

‘That’s all right,’ he answered. ‘Fact is, I don’t belong to this store at all – I’m the butcher from next door.’
— XX —

HOW TO BREAK-IN A HORSE

There are several ways of breaking in young horses, just as there are several ways of breaking one’s neck. Why you should pit yourself against an animal that has double the number of legs you have and whose feet are a hundred times harder, Heaven only knows, the reasons for breaking in young horses are best known to yourself. You may be seeking adventure – you may possibly have nothing else to do; you may be stark, staring mad; you may only be drunk. Whatever your reasons are they are never known to the young horse.

You can do the job yourself; you can hire somebody to do it for you; or you can, with a certain amount of persuasion, bring it into the ordinary everyday work of your arbeiders.

There’s another way, too, of handing it over to the poor neighbour who is living on the next farm and who is, at the moment, busy erecting some outbuilding on your own farm at so much per square foot, but in this case you have to resign yourself to parting with the young horse for at least twelve months – while it is being trained to go to visit the neighbour’s relations and things, and taught
to know the road to the dorp for you. You don’t mind in the least being parted from the young horse for twelve months – twelve seconds is about the time it usually takes if you handle it yourself – but there is an uncertainty, a very disquieting uncertainty, in parting with it for twelve months, that the young horse won’t treat its trainer properly, that it will injure him, that you’ll be mulcted in all sorts of fearful damages, and you will come to the reasonable conclusion that you had better attempt to break in the young horse yourself – that is, with the means immediately at your disposal on your own farm.

The means immediately at your disposal are many. There is, first of all, yourself. But you are probably very busy (if you’ve got any sense) and cannot spare the time. Then there is Hendriks, whose time is entirely at your disposal; and providing you have broken the news gradually to him – by gradually, I mean, extending over a month or two at odd intervals – and have hinted at a pretty decent pair of riding breeches you’d like to give him because you like him, a really good, strong pair, hardly ever used (so strong they chafe off ounces of your flesh in a six-mile ride) and an old pair of leggings – provided you have hinted at these in a diplomatic manner and have not frightened him at all, you can prepare to ‘break-in’ the young horse in whatever way you’ve read of or seen, or heard of them being broken in. At
least, you can begin breaking him in – it’s very rarely that you can break him in all at once – as a rule the young horse does that best.

You seize, then, a favourable opportunity when Hendriks has had not only a tremendous feed of pap and milk, but, by way of a bribe – I mean a change – some coffee with it. He is at peace with the world.

‘Bring the horses, Hendriks, and let us catch the young one.’

The die has been cast!

For better or for worse – for good or ill – for a pair of old boots and fairly new riding breeches, the horses are to be brought to the kraal, and a young one caught – by Hendriks, if he can last out – and – if horse and Hendriks both live – trained. Of such momentous happenings is this great farm life of ours pregnant. (I don’t know if this last sentence is quite all right or not, but I think I’ve seen something of the sort in H.G. Wells or Carlyle, or somebody.)

When the horses are in the kraal and you are looking at them – particularly the young one – you begin to philosophize upon the beauty of the young – quite quietly, of course, for if you did it aloud it might put Hendriks off. But though there’s philosophy in most things it doesn’t help much in a commercial age like this.

Far better cultivate sang-froid, and if you’ve got any of it, use it now at this horse-breaking period of your life, for all you’re worth.
A ton or two of sang-froid is worth a whole handful of birds.

This is a moment when it is best not to hesitate – not even to pray a little. Allow Hendriks to think, if you can manage it, that your greatest ambition in life is to seize the young horse immediately and spring upon its back. Bustle about – outside the kraal if you like; or inside if you think it will help matters along – dole out ropes by the mile to all and sundry; don’t even look at the young horse, and when you and all and sundry have knotted several ropes together with feverish haste and got them, with a running noose, on the end of one of the longest whip sticks in the world, hand it to Hendriks as though you were merely giving him a box of matches, and say, ‘Catch him’ – just like you would if he were to catch a fowl for your supper.

You can give your valuable instructions from outside the kraal – it is much too dusty inside – and, as whatever you say is never heard or understood by the boys in the middle of the seething mass of wild horseflesh, you can whistle some little tune or do anything else you like – the kraal gate is quite securely fastened.

In ten minutes’ time – after the old cart-horse has twice been caught by mistake and once nearly throttled, and Hendriks’s father’s old mare has been lassoed round the nose – there will be a halt to readjust the noose and the ropes, and to give you all
a chance to say something appropriate to the moment. What the boys say, you don’t know, but an encouraging remark for you to make just then is: ‘You nearly caught him that time, Hendriks.’ (Rotten lie, really; he was miles off.) But Hendriks’s, ‘Yah, Baas,’ is reassuring.

When the young horse has really and truly been caught and choked to death and swirled back to life again, and you have got the blinkers on it – to keep the dust out of his eyes – and the whole farm staff are in a panting mass along the ropes, holding them as though they were keeping a Union-Castle liner to its moorings, and you have said, ‘That’s right,’ several times, you can feel pleased that the beginning of the ‘breaking-in’ process has got so far without any accidents, and you can now decide whether you will ‘lunge’ the animal (really only a suitable method if you have arranged for the horse’s disposal to a circus proprietor), or you can ‘couple’ it. It is best not to ‘couple’ it to a plough, or a house, or anything stationary like that, but before the sun is quite down you will have hitched its neck to the neck of a twenty-year-old plough mare, half the size of your house, have three boys in front and two behind, make a clicking noise with your tongue and part of your back teeth, and see what happens.

After you and three spare boys have managed to push the young horse’s hind legs off the old plough mare’s back, or rather, pulled the old plough mare’s
back from under the young horse’s hind legs, you will find it cooler on the other side of the fence, while the kraal gate is opened and the animals led out. That is to say, the old plough mare is being led out, she dragging out the young horse on its near side nostril. In time this teaches the young horse to walk, though the plough mare would feel more at home if she went on ploughing with it.

Later on, before it is quite dark, you can either uncouple the young horse and let him go, or else leave him coupled to the old plough mare; but this latter method is somewhat extravagant, as you are almost certain to have to cut the ropes through next morning to release the young horse from the mare in the wire fence.

If, after this, you still feel like breaking in something, you can get another young horse and try again. In any case, you’ll have to hand over the riding breeches and gaiters to Hendriks, and I really think it is cheaper in the long run to buy a horse ready trained and devote your time to something – possibly just as uncertain but not quite so hazardous – like playing the trombone.
Must raise some cash somehow. Hendriks wants, if not all, at least part of his wages for last four months. John has not yet requested an advance. Haven’t a penny in cash, and don’t know what to sell. If I can only raise thirty bob, Hendriks will be satisfied.

Great inspiration! Haven’t had any meat to eat for a month. Decide to slaughter old ewe and take as much as I can spare into local market. Undoubted success. Bidding for chops most spirited. Knocked down to Van Aasvogel at 5½d. per pound. This, together with two quarters and the skin, doesn’t leave me much to eat, but brings me in seventeen shillings.

Go into several stores jingling the money in my pocket. Storekeepers imagine cash transaction imminent. Order many useful things, and ostentatiously inspect small sovereign purse in glass case on counter. Then request all goods ordered to be put down to me.

Lunch at hotel, 2s. 6d.; forage for horses, 5s.; two drinks with Jones (I paid for both – mean beggar!), 4s.; one bottle of meat-preserving liquid, 2s. 6d.; groom, 6d.; charge for space on market table, 1s.;
total ‘exes,’ 15s. 6d. Return home with 1s. 6d., which, by the way, I owe Griet’s mother for eggs. (Griet’s the cook, invariably unemployed – nothing to cook.)

Hendriks, with expectant look on face, waiting for me as I arrive home.

Had left him working maize planter, and during journey home had been hoping he had broken it – I to deduct damages from his wages. He apparently has not.

Close on sundown, so tell Hendriks I’ll see him in the morning. Spend most of the evening in thinking what I can tell Hendriks. Whatever it is will be a lie. Write down list of English neighbours; then tick off those I know are as hard up as I am. All ticked off bar one. Unfortunate that I should have sent his cattle to the pound a week ago.

Grand morning – blue sky, bright sun, little butterflies fluttering, birds singing, and all that sort of thing. Only blot on landscape Hendriks’s expectant face outside. Proceed to interview him, though with considerable misgivings. Explain, with assumed annoyance, yet with some degree of cheery optimism, that chap who should have been in town with my money didn’t turn up; but was sure to be out to the farm during the week, when Hendriks would be paid in full; but (wonderful how inspiration comes to the hard pressed) put it to Hendriks that if he is in a hurry, why not take sheep in payment? Hendriks agreeable – suppose he thinks
a bird in the hand, etc. – in fact, seems quite elated. Feeling of elation more than reciprocated on my part.

Must take gun out, and try and shoot some dinner. Worst of tramping about with a gun, it gives you such a deuce of an appetite, and one never shoots anything. Meet Captain Bones, R.M., while out near main road. Tell him I’m trying to shoot a little game for Sunday. He wants to buy my pointer – only thing on farm I wouldn’t sell. Offer him the pig. No business done.

Shortly afterwards dog points. ‘Steady, Belle; steady.’ Wish I knew what it was. Worst of shooting in South Africa, one never knows what dog is pointing at. Might be a steenbuck; might be a quail. You never know till the thing gets up. Always a shock when you expect a quail and a 40 lb. steenbuck gets away from your feet at sixty miles an hour. ‘Steady, Belle; steady, my dog.’

Getting very close now. Magnificent point. Am close now. What is it? ‘O, voetsek, you fool!’ Dog pointing at ridiculous tortoise; length about 4½ inches. Belle injured. Return to house at 3 p.m. Result of four hours’ sport: one puff-adder and a lark. Go to bed and dream of London and all its restaurants. Good old London!
ON WATER FINDERS

I used to think once that a chap who could find water with a twig – a water diviner, was most awfully rare. About one in a million men had this power, I thought. The thing was so wonderful, the idea so uncanny, the mystery of it so marvellous, I imagined it would be a most rare thing to meet a water diviner. Funny how wrong one’s ideas are. I have since discovered that the rare thing is to find somebody who can’t find water with a twig. At least, it seems that out of every ten men, there are nine on whom ‘the twig works alright’. It is positively wonderful.

I didn’t find this out until I wanted to bore for water some time ago. I’m not fearfully keen on water as a rule – I enjoy beer much more – but my business, which happens to be that of an undertaker for stock on my farm, cannot be carried on successfully without water, though it has often tried to. (You use the water to mix with Epsoms salts and dip and things, and any that’s left over to mix with coffee, tea, whisky and things, and to wash your hands with after the post-mortem on the animals
and things you’ve dipped and dosed).

So I told a lot of people I was going to bore for water, and I wished I knew of a water diviner, twig twister, or something of the sort to show me where to bore. To my utter astonishment, five out of the first six people I spoke to about it, all said ‘the twig worked with them alright’. It also ‘worked’ with their brothers, had ‘worked’ with their fathers and, I have no doubt, from the way they spoke, that it was going to ‘work’ with their sons whenever they got any. As time went on, and as I met more people I got quite used to the remark: ‘What! Doesn’t it work with you?’ and I came to the conclusion that I lived in a world of water-divininers. This was very strange. And none of them, by the way, really liked water as a beverage very much. If they’d said their twigs ‘worked’ on beer one might have understood it. But everyone of these fellows, said they could find water with a twig.

Then I met several boring contractors – owners of water bores – and every single one of them could use the twig! Not only the owners of the bores, but the chaps who were working with them – even the engine man and the boy who stoked up the fire. I asked one or two of them whether they found out first that the twig ‘worked with them alright’, and then bought the machine, or whether they bought the machine first and only discovered their divining powers afterwards. In the majority of cases the twig
had always worked with them. Very naturally they went in for water boring. It was obviously no use their starting a butcher’s shop or taking up the stage as a profession. I pointed out to them that they were indeed lucky fellows to have discovered their powers so young in life and to have been enabled to acquire a drill as well. I can imagine few things more tragic than, say, an expert professional barber suddenly discovering that ‘the twig works with him alright.’

I tried quite a lot of these water diviners from time to time. Some were boring contractors, some were professionals. You paid the professional chap so much, in return for which he showed you where to bore and owed you so much water. I don’t quite remember now how I managed it, but with the first professional twig twister I had, I reckoned after his performance, that if he was to owe me so much water the safest thing for me to do was to owe him his fee, which I did. He came from a long way off, this chap, with a verbal reputation that was astounding, and without the most necessary thing with which to live up to it – a willow twig.

I had one tree on the farm in those days – a wild tree, miles away, growing between two slabs of granite on the side of a hill, but it was of no use to him. He wanted a willow twig (I recollected a song which connected tit willows in some way, with water, or worms, or something of the sort), and I
sent to a distant farm where willows grew, for the loan of a willow twig. The professional and I went out with it. The twig did wonderful things almost at once. Pointing it to the left he ‘located’ the underground stream and walked swiftly along its course, the twig vibrating furiously the whole time. He went off at a fearful lick, and I sent Hendriks for my horse and said I might be away a week. I was going to follow this chap, and I know the length of some of these underground rivers. Suddenly the twig stopped vibrating – the chap marked a spot with a stone and said something about ‘strong water’ – located another stream, marked another spot, had lunch and left.

I was now frantically keen on water divining, and a chap came here one day to borrow something and, in the course of our conversation, said he’d always been able to find water. I think he’d sprung from an amphibious family, for all his parents, and great-grand parents had been able to find water. Perfectly wonderful some of the things were that they had done. He was one of the most accommodating chaps I had ever met. Any sort of twig would work with him, or if I hadn’t a twig, a piece of barbed wire or an ox riem or a banana would do just as well. I got him to work with a twig, and the funny thing was that it wouldn’t work at all where the willow twig had worked. But it worked on lots of other places, like mad. I asked him if it hurt, and he said not
much, but the expression on his face was terrible.

Then I hired a boring machine, and after starting them on the willow twig man’s underground river spot I went down to the house. I didn’t go near the machine again for some days, but occasional visits from one of the machine boys for meat, tea, sugar, etc., told me that all was well, and that up to the present nobody had been drowned. I was glad of this, for I remembered how furiously that willow twig had ‘worked,’ and I had been a little bit anxious as to what would happen when that terrible stream was struck.

I forget how many years that machine was here, but after trying every spot, and having now and again reached almost to the precincts of Hades, the chap who worked the bore said he could find water with a twig. This was the eleventh hundred and forty-seventh chap I had met who had said he could find water with a twig. So, as by now we seemed to be life-long acquaintances I told him to have a shot. This chap seemed to be a perfect adept. He not only could ‘locate’ the stream, but he could also tell you how far from the surface it was, it’s breadth, number of gallons per hour, size of the fish in it and everything. He found a spot where the twig swung down, vibrating frightfully. ‘Ah! there she is!’ he said, joyfully. I looked up, expecting to see the girl with the coffee. ‘There she is!’ he went on; ‘a very strong stream. Now I’ll just work away from it, and you
count the yards I take. When the twig swings upwards that will mean the edge of the stream, and if you multiply the number of yards I have taken by three, add the year you were born in, divide by two and subtract your age, it will give you the depth from the surface in feet.’

Here was something quite new. He grasped the trembling twig and walked away. I counted one, two, three, four – like they do at duels – and hoped he wouldn’t lose himself.

All of a sudden I saw the twig spring up, and give him a fearful whack on the face. But then this chap I remember had a very watery eye.

He bored on this spot, and one or two other spots and then left. I fancy his life insurance policy was about to mature and he wanted to draw the money.

I believe there really is a machine that locates water, and one of these days, when I’ve worked off that overdraft, I’m going to engage it.
— XXIII —
VERSE – AND WORSER

Writing verse is just the opposite of sculpturing. The sculptor chap, when he wants to sculpture an angel on horseback, or anything like that, simply gets a huge piece of marble or stone and chips off all the pieces he doesn’t want.

The verse writer gets first an idea – poets call it ‘wooing the muse’ or something pretty like that– and then he piles up around it all the words he wants. Wanting words and getting them, by the way, are not always the same thing.

I believe one poet chap went off his head trying to find a rhyme to ‘silver’. Personally, when I discovered a rhyme to ‘bugle’ I was as pleased as though I had bored for water and found beer. It’s funny what little things please some men. However, that has nothing to do with this.

There burst into my beautiful young life one day a word that nearly gave me a permanent squint looking at it. It was ‘Eisteddfod’.

Read it as you like, spell it backwards, turn it upside down, hold it in front of a mirror, look at it through a strong light, subject it to the acid test, do whatever you like to it, and you can’t get anything
else out of it except just ‘Eisteddfod’.

As this isn’t a history of Wales I can’t tell you about its origin, but later on, after I had become a real ‘Eisteddfodian’ and was competing with the bards of the land, I happened to hand a telegram in at the local post office addressed to the secretary of the South African Eisteddfod. The postmaster, an old friend of mine, looked at the word, turned the colour of a ha’penny stamp, looked at me, asked me what it was, and when I spelt it and pronounced it, he hinted that I had better not have any more, but to inspan the cart and go out of town as quickly as possible.

The Eisteddfod competition that I decided to enter for was ‘a poem on any South African subject’. In case you don’t know, I may as well tell you that writing verse isn’t anything like so easy as writing out a promissory note. You’ve got to know a whole lot about different things, such as metres, spondees, dibrachs, iambs, dactyls, hexameters, pentameters, assonance, alliteration, tercets, catalectics, and several other what nots. Rhyme, too – but that’s often overlooked. The only excuse I have for studying them is that they form a refreshing change to trying to find out what’s wrong with my sheep and beans and potatoes.

The subject of my poem was to be ‘The Veld.’ Twenty years in South Africa had instilled a love of the veld within me that had long passed the blood
and bone stage, and had reached to my marrow – a much finer product, by the way, than any I have been able to grow in my lands, but that doesn’t matter.

I love the veld. On the veld I have lived since I came from school, and on the veld I have gone through thick and thin to stick to the piece I’ve got, and when a man does that for twenty years it can’t be because he dislikes it.

I was therefore going to make my poem as very beautiful as possible; it was to be of sixteen to twenty verses, and in the simplest language was to tell of the many charms and fascinations of the surroundings in which I have made my home. I devoted whole hours while dosing the sheep, ‘shooing’ the Army Worm, etc., in thinking out the proper measure or metre and general formation of the epoch-making ode, and these being finally decided upon, I started roughly outlining the verses one fine morning while Hendriks, John and Vellum were skinning a cow that had fallen down a hole.

The two chief essentials for writing serious verse after you have got the main idea and have been able to dismiss from your mind dead cows in holes, is firstly to find that you are in the proper mood, and secondly, not to be disturbed once you’re in it. Now the proper frame of mind comes at any odd time – sometimes it doesn’t come at all, but whenever it was possible and whenever I felt in the mood I
found myself in my little writing-room off the stoep, occasionally in the mornings, occasionally in the afternoons, working at my poem. I remember getting to the lines:

Give me the veld in all its different moods –
Its storm and calm – its vastnesses untrod –
The sanctuary of its splendid solitudes,

just after we had had a week’s blazing heat, followed by a freezing wind from the South, followed by pouring rain, when I had to climb up on to the roof with a bucket of clay to plaster round the chimney where the rain was washing in. The getting up on to the roof in heavy rain with a bucket of clay was a fair feat in itself, but it was nothing to coming back after using it and trying to pick up the thread of ‘the sanctuary of its splendid solitudes’ again.

The worst of writing about a big subject like the veld is that there may be hundreds of charms about it that appeal to one and at the same time be extremely difficult to express in so many words.

One morning, after all the men had been set about their different jobs on this vast estate of mine, I felt like writing at least half a dozen verses. I started off with:

The first bird notes – the bleat of distant sheep,
The lines of hills that gradually unfold,
The stir of earth that dawn has roused from sleep
And ...

when the long familiar, ever-cursed footfall of Hendriks sounded outside the door and, ‘Baas, die ploeg het gebreek,’ burst in upon my ‘first bird notes’ and ‘stir of earth’ reverie.

Back again after fixing up the plough to the old job of picking up lost threads of the veld fascination. And so another verse:

The mighty mountains, desolate, apart –
Great symbols of the vastness of the whole
Where, etc.

written while squirting Keating’s Powder out of a bellows held up with the left hand to clear off some of the flies that were buzzing round in hundreds and forever settling on my face and arms. That’s how my Eisteddfod verse was written.

Eventually I was writing against time. Five days left and seven verses still to write. Three days left and four verses still to write. One day left and still two verses to finish, and in between my attempts would come inspiring interruptions such as, ‘Sir, had nog nie die wasgoeds’e seep uitgegee nie’; ‘Baas, darie siek skaap is nou dood, Baas’ (they use the double ‘Baas’ on occasions like this – it is a special courtesy, engendered of excitement really, at the
prospect of eating meat); and, ‘Baas, daar is een klomp perre in Baas’s korenland en Vellum het gasê ek moet soën klein moertjie bring; die cultivators wieletjie is af.’

So on, *ad infinitum*.

Of course, the closing date for the competition came with the great ode still unfinished.
Had I but known, three years ago, my bulging bag of wheat,
What it would cost me to produce you as you stand;
Had I but known how hard it is to grow a thing to eat,
I should have quickly hied me to some other land;
I should, of course, have been unknown to you,
But probably a good deal richer, too.

There as you stand, you more than bulging bag, you represent
All my ambitions and my hopes of years ago;
Drought after drought – year after year – those aspirations went,
And I? – I very nearly followed them, you know,
It seemed such rot to throw (for seed was dear)
Bags upon bags of you away each year.

Now when too late I notice what an idiot I was,
But at the time you must admit I couldn’t know That I was too ambitious; and that you’d get wild because
I bought a bag of you and I thought that you would grow;
Let me again emphatically say
Had I but known I should have gone away.

What you have cost me, what I have spent on you
I’ll now explain,
You’ll feel quite proud, but don’t I beg of you, please bust,
I’ve sewn you up and do not wish to sew you up again,
The extra labour you’ll agree would be unjust:
It’s cost me to produce you rather more
Than double that which I can sell you for.

For three long years you wouldn’t grow at all, and so that seed
Goes – as I learnt at school – upon the debit side;
Now for a change you blossom forth and flourish like a weed –
O! how I wish, my wily wheat, that you had died,
Died as you used to – when the grain’d form,
Or else been murdered by a locust swarm.

I pay the reapers half-a-crown to reap a bag of you,
The little sickles total up, say, eight and four –
The men who thresh you out, you know, they want a bob or two,
The sack you’re resting in cost ninepence at the
store,
Add on to this the cost of your despatch,
You must acknowledge that you aren’t much catch.

With labour, seed, and wasted time, let’s say you
cost a pound,
Just as you’re tightly bulging – going to feed the
mob,
And after I had travelled far to various towns, I
found
That if I sold you now I’d get about ten bob;
Moreover, I was told in every shop
That very soon the price of wheat would drop.

No, bag of wheat – I trust you see exactly what I
mean –
I think, that after all it takes to make you grow,
You’re quite the rottenest thing in ‘specs’ that I
have ever seen,
And, bag of wheat, you must excuse my saying so.
Again I most emphatically tell,
Had I but known, you could have gone to hell.
HOW TO PLOUGH

To plough properly it is first of all necessary to obtain a plough. There are various ways of doing this, just as there are various sorts of ploughs, but the general and most successful plan is to go to the nearest town, select one that you like best at some winkel, and tell the man there to ‘put it down’ to you.

There are probably two or three young men there receiving a certain amount of money per month from the boss for the honour of putting ‘things down to you’; and if you have helped most of them to earn their salaries in this respect for at least three years, it would be safer to go to the young man who doesn’t know you so well as the others, and get him to serve you.

Arriving home with your new plough, you begin to off-load it. It off-loads very quickly if Hendriks and John are the fools they generally are, and after having cursed Hendriks and John, and they have both given you the usual month’s notice, you will begin to think of your next requirements.

You will have seen, much to your annoyance, that a plough doesn’t go by itself, and for the purpose of
getting it to move you will want oxen. It is to be hoped you have got these, as it takes some time to breed them, and, moreover, you stand a very poor chance of getting any from your neighbours.

Yokes and skeys can be obtained from another winkel; these are also ‘put down to you’, and as you don’t know the price until you receive the account some months later, you will be surprised at the value put on these pieces of wood by the winkel owner. You go to the land and have a good look at the yokes and skeys, with the account in your hand, and think much more of them than you did before – you used to leave them out in the land before the account came, now you lock them up every night.

For strops and riems it is inadvisable to shoot a cow, especially in summer, as the meat gets wasted:

How doth the busy blow-fly
Improve each shining hour?
It settles on the meat we eat
And makes it fairly hum.

These lines, as you know, were written by the immortal Tennyson, though ‘hum’ and ‘hour’ are generally considered a very poor attempt at rhyming.

You will be forced to buy riems and strops, and as there is no winkel in a 50-mile radius where you have not already got a large account against you,
you will be in a quandary as to where you can obtain them.

Your safest plan will be to run some vegetables and butter into the market for a few years, until you have realised about £1 5s., and then go and astonish the owner of the nearest winkel by jingling the money in your pockets, selecting your riems, etc., and pay cash for them. This will be a unique experience for you (and the shopkeeper), but as in all probability the goods will come to about 3s. 9d. more than you have got, you (and the winkel-keeper) will feel more at home when you tell him to put the 3s. 9d. down to you.

You are now almost ready to begin ploughing; you have a trek chain, one you jumped in the war, and you will now need a driver and ‘voorloper’. The latter can be found in almost any arbeider hut – finding them and getting them are not synonymous terms, however.

Your best plan is to go to a hut on your own farm, discover the ‘voorlopers’, and their parent, and explain to the parent gently, yet with some amount of determination, that if he doesn’t something-well quickly send one of his youngsters out to the land at once, he can something-well go– also at once.

Not because it helps you, but because it is more convenient to the ‘voorloper’s’ parent, the ‘voorloper’ is despatched to the land.

Unfortunately, just as you’d thought everything
was ready, you realise that rain is most necessary before you can plough, and mere force of habit immediately makes you think of the nearest winkel and getting some ‘put down to you’. Naturally, this is quite useless.

You may have to wait about nine months for it – it may be only nine hours. In the former case the ground is sure to be too dry; in the latter, too wet. The happy medium is never struck in South Africa. The rain, however, having at last come (you know this because you’ve just begun shearing) you now inspan. This usually takes some hours – it depends a lot upon the oxen. When they are finally inspanned, the driver yells, and flourishes a whip, which just misses your face by an inch. The ‘voorloper’ falls over and gets up again; the oxen swish their tails about; the trek chain tightens, and you release the lever of the plough – and push it well – and, altogether, this particular moment presents a scene of wonderful animation; everything is doing something, as it were, with the exception of the plough.

This doesn’t go into the ground at all, in spite of the wet land. You try again, with the same result. You have a talk with the driver, and he suggests, after a close scrutiny, your putting the shares on. It is as well to use shares, notwithstanding their high price.

When this is rectified, you can really begin ploughing – never start on the left and come down
on the right, or you will have a sort of Chinese puzzle to work out when you come to draw the second furrow.

With the above few hints we hope we have explained most of the necessary points to the young ploughman. His reasons for ploughing are best known to himself. Ploughing, after all, is merely a sort of habit one gets into; a thing one feels one must do. How many young men passing a vacant billiard table on their way out to the stable yard, can resist catching hold of one of the balls and trying to hit one of the other balls with it? – very poor shot, too, as a rule. It’s the same with ploughing; sort of irresistible impulse; no benefit derived; nothing made by it; merely a habit, like temperance, merely a bad habit.
TO A SITTING HEN

My patient bird, I envy you your will,
Cooped up for days and weeks on several eggs,
Sitting with hopeful eye, profoundly still,
Unmindful of the want to stretch your legs.

What if the busy world around you teems
With strenuous life and wild activity?
Only an earthquake would disturb your dreams,
Only an earthquake rouse your lethargy.

Don’t you get tired of what you have to do?
Never a change of posture all the day;
Wouldn’t some pal, some feathered friend or two,
Help you to pass the weary hours away?

Determination such as you possess
Were half life’s battle if ’twere given to men;
Strong as we are, our strength of mind is less
Than yours, when you intend to sit, O hen!

Once you’ve made up your mind to rest those legs,
And sit for weeks, determinedly, alone,
You’re going to sit, and if there are no eggs,
You’ll sit and even try and hatch a stone.

Should there be eggs, presumably yours
(Although it’s just as likely they are not),
Something gets hatched, and you, the simple cause,
Have not the least idea what you have got.

You may hatch turkeys, or just homely geese,
You do not know, nor do you really care,
And though the brood may rapidly decrease,
You do not wonder why, or how, or where!

The point with you I’ve found is not so much
That you want chickens, as, that you will sit –
A bird that gets its way, and being such,
You’re naturally rather proud of it.

You’ve sat, you’ve done just what you wanted to,
Despite all efforts to dissuade you, Hen!
A mind made up, something accomplished, you
Can set a fine example to all men.
What put the idea into my head I cannot say. I was having a light lunch at the time, consisting of a stale ‘beskuit’ and a cup of tea. It came upon me in a flash – its very suddenness staggered me – the prospect of the future that it brought was absolutely dazzling. Between the stale ‘beskuit’ and the idea that came into my head I can form no connection whatever. But as I was eating, and, as I say, in a flash, I decided to become a millionaire!

Here, strange to say, was an emphatic decision arrived at without any previous mental argument. A decision is a thing you try and make for yourself, after your friends have made it for you. But this just flashed upon me. I would become a millionaire.

The apparent simplicity of the ambition tickled my fancy. Of course I saw now why there were not more millionaires – nobody really ever decided to become one.

How many men who had become millionaires had started out in life with that object? I couldn’t tell you; but I wrote to fifty millionaires I did not know and asked them whether they had originally intended to become what they were. I only received one reply
and that hinted at a possible libel action being taken against me.

That, however, did not deter me from my scheme. I am a very determined person; if I make up my mind to do a thing I invariably do it – even if it is my next door neighbour.

At the outset I must acknowledge I was severely handicapped; there were so many ways of becoming a millionaire that I did not know which one to take. I was, however, undaunted.

I had in the bank £50. I wanted as yet another £999 950.

Of course I can see now the magnitude of the task I had set myself. At the time I didn’t. I was young, and under the popular impression that you can do anything you try to. I didn’t know you had to keep on trying – I mean forever.

On my own initiative I was to become a millionaire, and with that determination fixed in my mind I started to fulfil my ambition.

Exactly what happened I cannot quite recollect, but in a very short space of time I found myself in prison – commonly called the ‘tronk’.

I was also doing hard labour – very hard labour.

No explicit reason was given me for the Government’s unkind action, but I gathered that of the many different ways there were of becoming a millionaire I must have taken the wrong one.

And yet I was not certain. This is what annoyed
more than the temporary check I had received – a five years’ check I might say.

I used to have time in my cell to think over things. My ambition to become a millionaire was surely a natural one. Why then should they have – ?

Here were arguments coming quickly now – at the wrong time of course – they should have come before I made my decision.

Then it began to dawn on me. Of course, it is quite easy to become a millionaire, the difficulty is to avoid being caught. Here was the art, hitherto unseen. It could be mastered, too, I reckoned. But when they let me out I didn’t bother.

I have a little farm now with just £50 worth of poultry on it.
The gardener in South Africa can always be happy in the fact that rain may be expected all the year round; he continues to expect, but this does not water the garden.

Everybody expects rain, some going so far as to say what date it will fall on – the 15th of some months is very popular. It is quite clever how they can cut it down to a day like this; it is also quite inexplicable. Whether the rain comes or not, the fact of their being able to mention a date shows that they must know something about it.

Others go by the moon. Rain is always expected at the change of the moon, but it seems that the moon must keep its movements dark from the rain, for when you have seen it change at least 37 times and no rain fall, you naturally lose faith in lunar observations.

It is better then not to wait for 37 changes if you wish to start a garden.

It is a consolation to the young gardener, however, that, for the proper propagation of such useful edibles as turnips, mangelwurzel, carrots, cabbages, pea-nuts, etc., an excellent substitute for rain may be
had with the help of Hendriks, a watering-can, and the ‘fontein’. The watering-can and ‘fontein’ are indispensable; Hendriks isn’t. It is as well to let Hendriks see this sometimes, and most Hendriks’s give you the opportunity occasionally.

The ‘fontein’ is generally anything between 10 and 20 feet below the level of the ground, the result of constant digging and cleaning out, and it is not unlikely that it may at first strike the newcomer as a specially prepared pit for performing frogs.

The water is obtained by descending a certain depth where the ground slopes at the least acute angle, lying down on your chest, getting a hold on whatever you can with your feet, and giving the hand that holds the watering-can a dexterous movement downwards in the water.

This movement to the novice may have to be repeated more than once, in which case it would be as well to have a firm hold of something that will not give way with your left hand.

After a little practice you will find that you can, sometimes at least, get the watering-can full the first shot.

It shows a great lack of appreciation on the part of the consumers of cabbages, etc., that they never realise how essential it is to the welfare and growth of their vegetables, that you discover some means, whereby you may get back with the water thus obtained to your garden.
Where the ingress to the ‘fontein’ was fraught with so much hope and ambition, the egress will require not only a good deal more ambition, but will present difficulties undreamt of at the time of buying your sixpenny packet of carrot or cabbage seed.

It would be somewhat optimistic to say that we suppose you got back to your garden with the water, but we will hope so, and now proceed to give a few useful hints in the event of our hope being realised.

After a week’s watering your seed bed will be a mass of little green heads. These must not be mistaken for cabbages, they are only the first crop of weeds, a glaring, if superfluous, acknowledgment of the energy expended in watering the ground; and if the weeds are not too thick you will notice in a few days seven or eight larger shoots nestling snugly among them – these are your cabbages, and such will be carefully treasured and valued.

As a rule it can be estimated that 100 packets of seed will give you about 100 plants, scarcely a heavy return, but the fact must not be overlooked that much may happen to a bed of seed before it is ready for transplanting.

Though a pointer’s foot is a comparatively small one, such a dog, when out for exercise, has been known to completely alter the appearance of a neat and well-watered bed of seedlings. Rain, again, though rare at other times, can safely be reckoned on in time to wash away anything you may have in a
garden, and cases have been known, even in a drought, where the young agriculturist has awakened in the morning to find his rows of transplanted cabbages and lettuces completely gone from the face of the earth. A supposition of black magic is quite in keeping with the strange phenomenon until the truth dawns upon him that the cattle must have got into the garden during the night, some hundreds of deep hoof marks bearing out this theory.

In the case of potatoes, such an accident is not quite so serious, for though the tops have gone, the possibility of there being something underneath, after all, has sufficient of the gambling element in it to make the prospect of digging quite exciting. If, when digging, you find that each time your spade goes in the ground it cuts through about half-a-dozen potatoes at the same time, you may safely conclude that you are too much on the line, and it would be advisable to start a little further back and endeavour to get the spade under, and not through, your crop.

On the other hand there may be no potatoes at all. This fact is only discovered by digging for half a day where you think they ought to be and finding nothing. In this case the excitement with which you started your work will have abated considerably.

For insects and grubs, which play such havoc with plants, spraying with Cooper’s Dip is most effectual, though should this be resorted to it is advisable to
see that your garden is both cattle and sheep proof – more on their account than the plants.

And even after all the trials and disappointments with which the young gardener is beset, even after months of careful tending and hard work, you bring your garden to a quite imperfect state through succeeding in giving it what may be termed ‘an almost edible aspect’, on no account must one be disheartened when, after giving the kitchen-girl the only cabbage you grew and two of your five lettuces for dinner, you will find that the lettuces have been well boiled and the cabbage finely cut up with slices of hard-boiled egg for a salad.
'Dorp' means village, and if you have been to one you have been to all; for they are all alike. In the distance, just a handful of white corrugated iron and dark green trees strewn anyhow over the yellow veld, surrounded by light brown hills and kopjes.

You can travel for hours towards these little brown kopjes, which stand out so sharply against the bright sky, but you never seem to get any closer to them. In the still, clear atmosphere of a summer day distances are extraordinarily deceptive, and a hill fifty miles away appears to be about half that distance from you.

And so one travels for hours – long, weary hours – in a jolting, ramshackle, creaky Cape-cart, drawn by four ramshackle old mules – travel for hours in a thick, hanging cloud of dust, and without meeting or seeing another human being in all that vast stretch of country.

It is always like Sunday when you are travelling between the dorps. Not a sound except the creaking and jolting of the cart and the persistent clop, clop, clop, clop, clop of the hoofs; not a sign of life, except the six square feet of mules, cart, and harness.
On the right, just miles and miles and miles of flat, yellow veld, with tufts of light brown grass a few inches high dotted over it, broken occasionally by hundreds of grey ant-heaps. A deep blue, solitary hill, which might be cut out of cardboard, stands out sharply on the horizon, and though the cart turns and twists, goes up an incline, or goes down, goes on for hours, there is always the same hill always in the same place – you haven’t gone a fraction of a yard past it. On the left, more barren miles of veld, with a low range of blue hills on the furthest edge. In front, a glaring white road, thick with dust, winds through the waste, and above is a sky without a cloud, and a scorching sun blazing down at a white heat.

You get very tired of it all before you have gone halfway, and you get in a bad temper very soon in the second half. If only the wheels wouldn’t rumble – if only the cart wouldn’t creak and jolt and bump – if only the thick, hanging dust wouldn’t travel with you – if only you could meet somebody, see something –

And just as you are despairing of ever arriving anywhere, the mules toil up a slight incline, and you see the little dorp lying half a mile below you.

Just a heap of galvanised iron roofs and green trees scattered on two sides of the only street.

And you welcome the sight as though it were London.
The cart rattles noisily in the lifeless street, and people appear at the doors on either side to see who has come in to town.

The arrival of the cart is one of their excitements.
And what a funny little town it is!
At the top of the white, dusty street, and facing you, stands the most imposing building in the place, the Dutch-Reformed church, and (like the dorps) if you have seen one you have seen them all. Yellow stone, a galvanised iron spire, and a galvanised iron roof.

The oddly shaped buildings on each side of the street are all built of that same stone, and all roofed with galvanised iron. You feel you could touch the tops of them with your hand, for there isn’t a double-storeyed building in the whole street. Some of them are dwelling-houses, repulsively plain and square, some are ‘stores’, a couple of hotels, a butcher and baker’s shop, a lawyer’s office, a post office, a court house and a market square of huge size with a galvanised iron shed (you can’t get away from the galvanised iron in South Africa) in the middle of it, under which are long tables to hold the market produce brought in tri-weekly by the surrounding farmers. That is the dorp – that is the little world in which many of the inhabitants were born in, have lived all their lives in, and will die in.

A slow, easy-going, contented people these, old and young alike, all settled down into a groove from
which nothing will ever move them.

It is their universe, this little dorp – all they care
about, all they think about – and a single telegraph
wire that goes out over those lonely stretches of veld
is all that connects them to that big world which
they have never seen, and of which they know so
little.

Nothing ever changes in the dorp, everything and
everybody goes on for years in exactly the same way.
The bench on the hotel verandah has not been
moved an inch since the hotel was built; the
newsagent’s window has had in it the same copy of
‘Ally Sloper’ and the same dirty little riding whip
with the absurd tassel for years. For years everybody
in the dorp has moved with clocklike regularity,
everyone does, separately, exactly the same things
every day – there is a monotonous, machine-like
precision about it all.

Every morning at sunrise the shopkeeper takes
down the shutters from the store; brings out the
buckets containing samples of grain, and arranges
them in a line against the building, and hangs upon
old nails stuck into the walls outside various kinds
of goods – not because they will attract customers,
but chiefly because it’s an old habit that can’t be got
rid of – the old groove that he can’t get out of.

Every morning at eight the two hotel breakfast
bells ring simultaneously.

At nine every morning the doctor comes out of his
house followed by his pointer, and both walk over to the hotel for breakfast. And at nine-thirty the doctor comes out and throws his dog a bone or a piece of bread, in precisely the same spot every day.

At one the young store assistant goes home to dinner. At two he comes out of his house smoking. He takes exactly the same number of puffs every day between his house and the store – takes exactly the same number of steps to reach there. And every day at the door of the store he lifts up his heel and knocks the ashes out of his pipe, always in the same spot.

Every day for years at three o’clock the old resident who lives in the corner house walks up the street, looks up and down, and strolls slowly up the road. You could set your watch by any of these people, and never be a minute out. The magistrate – one of the few remaining links of the war – wearing a white helmet, riding breeches, and leggings – goes home every day at three-fifteen, and every day at four the schoolmaster passes on his way to the tennis courts. It seems to be prearranged that they shall each have the town to themselves at certain hours.

So this little dorp goes on. Always the same clockwork regularity, always the same people, always doing the same things, day after day, year after year.

At nine p.m. the lights go out one by one, and the only sound you can hear is the clicking of the billiard
balls echoing loudly in the silent street.

A little village, with a little community with little minds. They have their little sets, their little scandals, their little jealousies, and their little squabbles. Now and again there is something really exciting for them to talk about – something interesting to bring them a little out of their groove – but not often; and it will be a long time before they have such a topic of conversation, such an excitement, as that never to be forgotten day when the big tree in the baker’s garden was blown down.
SONGS IN AFRIKAANS

In a report on the South African Academy, Dr. Malherbe said that he had, ‘with difficulty’, collected 80 different songs in Afrikaans.

And Professor Brummer, after a short speech on ‘specialists in music’, stated with much emphasis, that he ‘was totally opposed to having anything more to do with the matter’.

Now, take Dr. Malherbe’s almost apologetic ‘with difficulty’ and Professor Brummer’s ‘totally opposed to having anything more to do with the matter’, and we music-loving veld-dwellers cannot help wondering what’s wrong.

It looks as though doctors and professors, authorised to speak upon this absorbing subject, were anxious to throw a wet blanket upon a very hot-bed of possibilities.

To me, music-lover that I am, song-singer that I am, and all the other ‘I am’s’ I am, this summary dismissal of music and songs, as an academic question, cuts me to the quick.

Buoyed up as I have been throughout my life by songs and musical sounds, inspired through all my years of solitary toil here by all the music of the veld,
such as the uplifting song of the korhaan at dawn, the mellow sound of creaking corrugated iron in droughts, the chirp of the weevil in the mealies, the pretty ‘swish’ of hail in wheat, the pop of bean-pods shedding their wealth upon Mother Earth, the un-oiled windpump, the music of the drawn cork from the dop bottle, and Hendriks, five miles away, bringing the wagon home at dusk – buoyed up and inspired by music such as this, what can one think of Professor Brummer and Dr. Malherbe?

Dr. Brummer and Professor Malherbe, or rather, Professor Brummer and Dr. Malherbe, are taking life and singing too seriously. There is a despondency about their utterances that is totally unwarranted.

South Africa is full of song. Why, even here on this small piece of veld I’ve got dozens and dozens of ‘veldliede’, songs, choruses, ragtimes and oratorios – all in Afrikaans. I’ve got operas by the bagfull. Operabouffes, musical comedies, tragic operas, opera-comiques (they’re spelt this way for the same reason that a lie is spelt ‘camouflage’ and official news spelt ‘communique’ – it’s something to do with ‘entente cordiale’ and started in the ‘esprit-de-corps’ and ‘savoir-faire’ age, long, long ago).

When I say that I have all these masterpieces, I should perhaps add that I mean I have the nucleus of them – that they are, as it were, in embryo. They are in embryo in a sweltering, red-hot brain awaiting but the magic wand of a musical enthusiast, with a
heap of bank balance, who can pay for a farm manager to dissect my dead sheep to find out what they’re dying from, while I bring these gems of South African music to life.

In my comic opera, or ‘opera-comique’, treasured secret though it is, I may say that my opening chorus of *arbeider* women ‘plakking’ miste on the farm of a rich Englishman is a thing of such beauty and rhythm that when I play it over on my (what was once a) piano, and sing the words, I dream at night of chaps like Wagner and Beethoven turning in their graves and coming to me, stark, staring mad – because, I suppose, they hadn’t thought of it themselves.

My musical comedy with its chorus of ‘bywoners’ ‘braying’ riems, and the return of the head-‘bywoner’s’ daughter from Johannesburg (where she has seen a bit of life at the Carlton), to the little farm, on the day her mother was preparing biltong for sale, has such a plot in it that writers of film stories will turn green with envy.

It is in this musical comedy that I have introduced an exquisite love lyric. The words may not be up to much – but the music! – the music in original Afrikaans is something never to be forgotten. Here are the words of this priceless gem:

You’ll find me waiting by the gate of the kraal, my sweetheart;
You’ll find me there beside the old calf-hok;
I shall be thinking of the kop and the pooitjes,
darling.
Kop and pooitjes you and I will eat at six o’clock.

When you approach me with your pretty little veldskoens, angel –
Come to get a bucketful of miste for fire –
I’ll feel the earth a-trembling underneath those veldskoens, sweetheart,
Sending thrills of joy into my heart – you liar.

If this doesn’t ‘go’, I have another called ‘When the Stinkblaars bloom again.’
No! Dr. Malherbe and Prof. Brummer are wrong. They must not throw a wet blanket upon the red-hot possibilities of music in South Africa, in Afrikaans.
They are depreciating a whole continent of musical wealth. They have handed over all their responsibilities to ‘a committee of three’, who are to approve or disapprove of the future of South African music.
Now, if that committee of three will add to their number, and pay my expenses to the Victoria Falls (which I haven’t yet seen, but where I think we might meet), I could sing to them some of the most exquisite gems of songs in Afrikaans they have ever heard. Either that, or – they might push me over the falls instead.
SONG OF THE AGITATOR

Once in another country,
Somebody said: ‘Beware,’
Somebody saw a danger,
Nobody seemed to care;
Someone gave voice to the menace
To rulers wilfully blind,
Who in all their beautiful wisdom said:
‘Shut up – We’ve our axes to grind.’

They went on grinding their axes,
The cloud of the menace grew;
An old man spoke to the people
Told them of what he knew;
Warned them and said be ready;
Spoke of the love he had –
The nation in all its wisdom said:
‘The silly old fool’s gone mad.’

There in that stricken country,
A nation is bowed in grief,
At a slaughter – of which there was warning,
And in which there was no belief;
Agony – tears – disaster –
Ruin – where all was peace,
And the nation brought to its wisdom, prays,
‘Lord – let the slaughter cease.’

We who are blessed today with peace and the beauty of this our land –
We who could lead our people aright and show them the happy way,
We, who could, if we really cared help them to understand –
Let us obscure the issues a-head by the jealousies of today.

The future requires that we each and all should banish the petty spite,
Bringing all sections together to face a danger that’s very near;
The present, however, is ours, and so, let us go forth and excite
A people enjoying the blessings of peace, and the fruits of a wonderful year.

Let us go drifting slowly along in our own little wilful ways,
Blinking our eyes at the distant things to look at the nearer view,
Let us go wasting the wonderful hours, spending these critical days,
Discussing the matters that do not count at the cost
of the things that do.
Let us be blind – quite blind – to the fact that ours is the will and the power,
To shatter with boasts and idle words a nation’s security;
Let us go drifting as others have done – carelessly – hour by hour,
Forgetting that hours in time make years, and that years hold destiny.

We have not toiled in the peaceful fields – nor given shade to the earth –
Ours is the work of the intellect and an outlook on windowed walls;
Having created nothing in life of lasting value or worth,
Ours is the narrow view whereby a continent stands or falls.

So do we nurse deep down in our hearts the trivial enmity,
So do we spend our little time not doing the work we could,
So do we kneel to God in the church, asking forgiveness as we
Forgive them who never by us are forgiven – and feel we are very good.

Then when the awful end has come and the
smouldering fury has burst,
We will look on with the people we led and expect them to understand;
Chaos let loose – red ruin aflame – and knowing ourselves accursed,
The tide that we wittingly would not stem sweeps onward over the land.

Out in another country a nation is bowed in grief,
At a slaughter of which there was warning and in which there was no belief.
Agony – tears – disaster – ruin – where all was peace;
And a nation deep in its sorrow prays: ‘Lord – let the slaughter cease.’
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<td><strong>078</strong> - DIE SWART LUIPERD: GEHEIM VAN DIE WIT HEKS</td>
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<td>H. Steyn</td>
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