

LOST ON THE... VELDT

A STORY OF THE BOER CAMPAIGN IN NATAL

By H. B. Mackenzie

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

"I remembered this was the day you spoke of riding over," said Dr. Adair Rothes—for it was he—in a low voice; "but I hardly expected you would come today, with these terrible rumors about."

Bluebell's eyes grew larger than their wont.
"Rumors? I haven't heard any," she said. "What are they, Doctor Rothes?" "You haven't heard?" He had not released her hand, and was holding it very closely now. "They say that the Boers are marching into Natal."

"Oh!" Bluebell uttered a little cry, and the rosy color faded out of her face. "Is it war, then?" "I suppose so," Rothes answered gravely. "It seems Kruger has as good as declared war by sending a message to England demanding that our troops should be immediately recalled from South Africa."

Bluebell sat very still on her horse, her hands clasped; Rothes had at last withdrawn his.

"Will they come to Ladysmith?" she whispered at last.

Rothes nodded. "That is what is expected. We shall be besieged. The inhabitants are beginning to fly already, and I expect in a few days Ladysmith will be deserted except by the garrison."

"And you, what will you do?" Bluebell asked. There was a little quiver in her voice, which seemed to send a swift thrill of mingled joy and pain to Rothes' very soul.

"I shall remain here, of course," he answered, trying to speak in his usual tone. "Unless there is fighting outside. If there is I shall go with the army."

Bluebell was silent for a moment, and then she said:

"You will be on our side, of course?" "I will be with the British army," Rothes answered quietly, "but, thank heaven, a doctor's business is not to fight on any particular side, or to slay his brother, but to do what he can for those who are wounded and dying on either side. But you are going into the town, Miss Leslie? I must not keep you."

"I have messages," said Bluebell; "but I will not wait long, as I am going back alone."

"May I go a bit of the way with you?" Rothes asked eagerly. "I do not like the idea of you riding those twelve miles alone with the country in this unsettled state."

Her soft eyes fell suddenly. Bluebell would hardly acknowledge to herself how her heart beat and her veins thrilled at the proposal.

"Thank you," she said the next moment. "It is kind of you. I shall leave the town about three, I think."

"Then I shall be here at that time," he answered. "Good-bye, just now." And he moved away.

Bluebell rode on into the town. The terrible tidings had shocked and horrified her, but she was not frightened. There was little fear in Bluebell Leslie's nature, small and childish and fragile as she looked. And she was a woman; and the look in Adair Rothes' eyes, the close, warm clasp of his hand, occupied her thoughts almost more than this terrible picture of war.

She found Ladysmith in a state of confusion. Many of the shops were shut. But Bluebell managed to get her business done, and then went to see one of her acquaintances.

She found her busy preparing for departure.

"I suppose it's safer to go," said Mrs. Lloyd, a pretty little English woman, whose husband was an engineer. "Ted insists on my going; but I don't feel as if I could leave him here alone."

"You are going and Mr. Lloyd is remaining?" exclaimed Bluebell, with startled eyes, and then: "Oh, Nellie, how can you?"

"I would not, of course, if I had only myself to consider," said Mrs. Lloyd, the tears springing to her eyes; "but there is my poor little baby, Bluebell."

"What of that?" said Bluebell. "A wife's place is beside her husband, surely? Better you should both die together, if the worst comes, than that you should be separated. Nellie, how would you feel if anything happened to your husband and you so far away?"

Nellie burst into tears. "Yes, you are quite right, Bluebell. I held out against Ted ever so long, and now that you speak like that, I feel that I have been very cowardly to give in to him. No, I won't go!"

Bluebell left her friend, whose mind was thoroughly made up, after a little, and the two friends kissed each other, with the feeling that they might never meet again on earth. Bluebell kept back her own tears, and answered the little woman as bravely as she could, but as she rode out of the town her path was all blurred by the blinding tears that came to her eyes now.

Doctor Rothes was waiting for her, mounted on a fine chestnut horse of his own, and together they rode on in silence until they were out of sight of the town.

"You saw one of your friends?" Rothes said at last.

"Yes, I saw Mrs. Lloyd. She is going to stay at Ladysmith even if it is besieged."

THIS HOUSE FOR RENT

decurrent of either menace or defiance in his voice.

She glanced into Rothes' face. He sat very stiff and very erect on his horse, his face turned towards the other man. Bluebell had never—not even that night of the Maritzburg ball—seen so stern and cold a look upon his face as that which froze it at this moment.

The expression started her still more now. Was it possible these two men knew each other?

"I leave the matter entirely in Miss Leslie's hands," he said gravely. "If she thinks I have come far enough, I am quite prepared to return to Ladysmith."

Moore looked at Bluebell.
"You had better come with me, Miss Leslie, and allow Dr. Rothes to return home," he said; then added in a lower tone: "Your father is not quite himself today. Perhaps you would not care to have a stranger at New Kelsa under the circumstances."

Not quite himself! That decided Bluebell. Not for worlds would she have Adair Rothes, whose good opinion she felt so strangely reluctant to lose, see her own father in a half-intoxicated condition, and that was evidently what Moore's words implied.

Adam Leslie had always been a little apt to exceed, but it was only of late—within the last six months—that his daughter had noticed it. And it seemed to her, since the coming of Gerald Moore that her father had yielded still more to his unfortunate weakness.

"Perhaps you had better not come any further, Doctor Rothes," she said, in a low voice. "If Mr. Moore is going to New Kelsa, of course he may as well ride with me; but I would just as soon go by myself. I am not a bit afraid."

Rothes took off his hat and held out his hand. For one minute, only one, their horses were close together, and Moore's was so far apart as to render him out of earshot at least of a whisper.

"Good-bye," said Rothes, hurriedly and a little hoarsely. "I don't know when I may see you again. God only knows I pray that he may guard and keep you from danger!" He bent a little nearer, and added in a whisper: "As you value your safety and happiness, beware of that man. I treat of you to do so. He is a dangerous man. I cannot say more. Good-bye—good-bye."

The clasp of his fingers on her hand was to remain there for many days. He rode off, raising his hat, and a strange sense of desolation and loneliness fell upon Bluebell.

She turned Rover's head and rode on, not glancing at Moore. Adair's words still rang in her ears.

"So that is Doctor Rothes?" said Moore, giving his horse a little cut of the whip that sent him springing on beside Bluebell.

"Yes," she said, looking straight into his face. "Do you know him?" "I had the pleasure of meeting him once in Maritzburg," said the millionaire dryly; "but, Miss Leslie, I wish to talk of something else just now. Your father has given me leave to do so. What do you think has kept me all this time lingering about this district?"

Bluebell shook her ruddy brown head. A feeling of vague discomfort and uneasiness shot through her at the question; but not in her wildest guesses could she have arrived within a mile of the truth.

Gerald Moore went on slowly: "The country will soon be in a ferment; existence in it will be dangerous, unsafe. For men this does not matter so much; for women, especially those—hesitated and added impressively—"whom we love, it is terrible to be thought of. Your father wishes you to go out of the country while yet there is time."

(To be continued.)

CITY OF HONG KONG.

It is One of the Most Unhealthful Spots on the Globe.

In spite of all the precautions that have been taken, the perfect sanitation of the city, the fine natural drainage, the cleanliness of the streets, Hong Kong, says the Boston Transcript, is one of the most unhealthful spots on the globe. With its tropical heat, the lofty peaks that half encircle it catch the clouds that the rapid evaporation create, the floods of rain pouring down in streaming torrents. The houses lack light, although they are built as well as they could be, with perforated ceilings, through which the air circulates, admitted from openings pierced in the outer walls; the floors are brilliantly waxed, carpets, owing to the great dampness being dispensed with. The great difficulty is to secure light and proper ventilation; the streets are very narrow, and the towering walls of buildings opposite obstruct the light in front, while at the rear the courts or terraces crowded with foliage cast a heavy shade from that direction. In the gardens, while plants flourish luxuriantly, there is no grass, but the ground is green with moss, just as it grows in damp, shady places in cooler climates. The heat and the great humidity are destructive to health, and it is doubtful if there is a single normal liver in the whole of Hong Kong. English women who come out with complexions of cream and roses grow thin and pale; the Hong Kong complexion is a startling grayish green, and the old feudist has, with his pallor, dark bluish circles under the eyes. The least exertion includes exhausting perspiration, and people become gaunt and thin.

Shut not thy purse strings always against painted distress.—Lamb.

nowadays. It will be all right." And away went the train.

"Mumps!" echoed William Hazleton when he called at his sister's. "And Rodney away? And the moving to be done? All three of them down—phew! Well, I'll get the first load in and the carpets down. I'm on duty now until the afternoon. You look after the babies. I'll see to the rest."

"You're the dearest boy, Will—" "That's all right. You're lucky I picked up the place for you. If you were to wait until Rodney got home everything desirable would be gobbled up. This little nest will suit you and your blessed trinity down to the ground—see if it doesn't!"

So it happened on one inspiring spring morning, when the lake was blue and the sky bluer and the air rosily golden, that a furniture van pulled up before the Queen Anne cottage.

"This house, driver!" called David Gregory.

The van backed up to the sidewalk just as a furniture van crawled lazily from the opposite direction.

A slim young man came striding along the sidewalk and passed on the sidewalk before the canary yellow cottage. He twirled his cane watching the advancing wagon. It came creeping along after the manner of conveyances hired by the hour.

"Hi, driver—here!" called Hazleton, and pointed with his cane. That other van there! Some one else was moving in the same block. He turned, drawing a key from his pocket. He went up the steps—and met David Gregory coming down.

"Mr. Hazleton!" ejaculated Gregory.

"Mr. Gregory!" exclaimed Hazleton. "May I ask what brings you here?" demanded Gregory magnificently.

From his point of vantage on the higher step he looked down on the intruder.

"Certainly, sir. I have rented this house, sir."

"Rented nothing! I have made a payment on the rent of this house, sir."

"On what date, may I ask?" The tone was icily polite.

"You are at liberty to ask." The other was consulting his notebook. He



held an open page extended. "This is the date, sir," he said.

"Ah! The very day upon which I decided the house would suit me. I keep no notebooks, but I have a memory, thank goodness."

"I also." There was a significant glare in the eyes of the speaker. "I reserve my memory, however, to recall personal deceit, sir—the deceit of one formerly esteemed a friend."

The blue sky deepened in that. The rose sunshine grew warmer.

"You refer to me, I presume?" "I refer to you."

Then were fierce glances exchanged and angry looks banded. Then was wrath rampant. Then did belligerency impend. None, noting the antagonistic attitude, demeanor, expression of both, would have dreamed that three short months ago they had been "Dave" and "Will" to each other, and had taken upon themselves the roles of the redoubtable Damon and Pythias. But this was before each discovered the other was in love with Alerta Ray.

"I rented this house!" declared Mr. Gregory.

"I rented it!" asserted Mr. Hazleton.

It does not make a difference where the accent is placed, Mr. Gregory's being on the verb, and that of Mr. Hazleton on the personal pronoun clashed, and like striking files emitted sparks.

"On the 28th of March," avowed Mr. Gregory.

"On the 28th of March," solemnly stated Mr. Hazleton.

"At the house across the street, where I paid a deposit!" roared Mr. Gregory.

"It was there I paid a deposit!" insisted Mr. Hazleton. And now it was his turn to place emphasis on the personal pronoun.

"Say, boss!" The appeal came from the bystander. "Where does this truck go?"

"You-h, mistah!" came another mellifluous shriek. "Wha-h you want me to tote dem chayahs?"

Whereat the two men on the steps turned with one accord upon the two men on the sidewalk, and in language inelegant but expressive adjured them to hold their respective tongues. But even while they were in the midst of their vituperation—which certainly must have served as a safety valve—a coupe, driven slowly along the boulevard, drew up before the Queen Anne abode. From the window a charming face looked forth, a young, glowing face, full of interest and pleasure. "Alerta Ray!" breathed Gregory.

"Alerta Ray!" whispered Hazleton. The door of the coupe swung back. A spruce young fellow handed out a gayly gowned figure. The folds of her "pastel" gown—a dull, entrancing blue—trailed after her as she came up the steps. Her chiffon hat curved over

a sparkling face. The rosy tint of her fresh cheeks glowed through her veil like a peach in a net-covered basket.

"Mr. Gregory! Mr. Hazleton! Why, what a surprise!"

A trifle bewildered, the men bared their heads and clasped the little gloved hand so cordially extended.

"How is it we meet you here?" she rattled on. "George engaged this house—O, I beg your pardon, dear! Permit me to make formal introductions! I do not think either of you gentlemen have met my husband, Mr. Millard—indeed, it is not the function one expects—our wedding. To be frank, blushing and dimpling delightfully, "we eloped. And now, George—Mr. Gregory—Mr. Hazleton, George!—how stupid I am growing!—now that Mr. Millard has taken this dear little place I can almost feel romantic. Here it will not be so difficult to imagine that we are actually—"Bowered in roses and covered with thatch."

After the fun of a runaway match!

"Eh, George?"

She looked up at her husband with mischievous eyes.

"You are always right, dear. The agent on La Salle street was not sure that the place might be rented by other parties before we got out. Come, love."

He produced a key from which a paper tag dangled. Seeing the door open, he put it back in his pocket. His pretty wife had reached the topmost step and was looking down upon the waiting vans and the impatient drivers.

"To whom do all these things belong, George?"

"Not to you nor I love. We have the pleasant task of selection still before us. Come in and see your new-found kingdom. Then, "Welcome home!" he said, and the two without heard distinctly the sound of a long kiss. They looked blankly at one another.

"She told me there was another man," whispered Gregory. "I thought she meant you."

"She told me the same," groaned Hazleton. "I never dreamed of any one but you!"

"Will!"

"Dave!" Their hands met. "What a pair of fools we've been!" commented Gregory. "I rented the house for my mother."

"And I for my sister."

"All we can do now is to have the furniture carted back."

"And hunt up other residences."

"And have the old duck refund our deposits—if he will."

"O, never mind about that! Let's send those poor devils off."

"And then go and dine at the club together."

"I'm with you, old boy!" They were gazing at the departing vans, when from the house came a silvery peal of laughter. The men looked at each other.

"If she be not fair for me," began Hazleton.

"What care I how fair she be," concluded Gregory.

There was a rustle of a silk-lined skirt in the vestibule. Two pairs of feet clattered down the steps. Two manly forms strode off side by side.

"We were sold!" declared Gregory.

"At a fire sale!" agreed Hazleton.—Chicago Tribune.

Queer Money.

Europeans trading in China are reduced to great straits for money. English gold will always pass; but is scarce. In large trading undertakings, bars of pure gold, weighing thirteen ounces are recognized as official exchange. Gold leaf is used by bankers for smaller amounts. Inland, where gold of any kind is rarely seen, horse-shoe-shaped pieces of silver, weighing five to fifty ounces, are used. Some trading corporations have been forced to issue bank notes and tokens made of bamboo slips; but the mistrustful Chinaman is very chary of accepting these, so their circulation is limited to one town, sometimes to a single street. In the new colony of Uganda, west of the great African lakes, there was practically no coinage but shells. As these are bulky, and therefore inconvenient, Europeans have started a new system. Needles and cloth are now current everywhere. Three needles will purchase one chicken, one needle two eggs, whilst a cow cost fifty yards of cotton cloth. Shells, however, continue to do duty as small change, as many as a hundred going to one needle.

New Bishop of Columbus.

The Rt. Rev. Henry Moeller, the newly appointed Catholic bishop of Columbus, has been chancellor of the archdiocese of Cincinnati for over twenty years. He was born in Cincinnati in 1840, and was one of the first students in the American College at Rome. In 1879 he left his pastoral duties at Bellefontaine, Ohio, to become secretary to Bishop Chatard. Since 1880 he has been with Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati.

Spins Nearly an Hour.

A Providence (R. I.) man has invented a top which will spin 45 minutes, is of steel, three inches across, and the inventor has made nearly 100 tops trying to form one which would spin a full hour. An ordinary twirl with the fingers is sufficient to spin the top ten or fifteen minutes. But its best work is done when the affair is wound with twine three feet or so.

Financial Stringency.

Dick—"I lost \$50,000 in less than half a minute last night." Fred—"How did it happen?" Dick—"I proposed to Miss Bullion and she said 'No.'"—Chicago News