

THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM

BY OLIVE SCHREINER.

A TALE OF LIFE IN THE BOER REPUBLIC.

(Continued From Last Week.)

some great injury; "you are very kind."

"Don't mention it," said Bonaparte. He knocked out the crown of his cap in old hat, placed it on the table before him, leaned his elbows on the table and his face in his hands and contemplated it.

"Ah, my old friend!"—he thus apostrophized the hat—"you have served me long, you have served me faithfully, but the last day has come! Never more shall you be borne upon the head of your master; never more shall you protect his brow from the burning rays of summer or the cutting winds of winter. Henceforth bareheaded must your master go. Goodby, goodby, old hat!"

"At the end of this affecting appeal the German rose. He went to the box at the foot of his bed. Out of it he took a black hat which had evidently been seldom worn and carefully preserved.

"It's not exactly what you may have been accustomed to," he said nervously, putting it down beside the battered chimney pot, "but it might be of some use, a protection to the head, you know."

"My friend," said Bonaparte, "you are not following my advice. You are allowing yourself to be reproached on my account. Do not make yourself unhappy. No; I shall go bareheaded."

"No, no, no," cried the German energetically. "I have no use for the hat, none at all. It is shut up in the box."

"Then I will take it, my friend. It is a comfort to one's own mind when you have unintentionally injured any one to make reparation. I know the feeling. The hat may not be of that refined cut of which the old one was, but it will serve; yes, it will serve. Thank you," said Bonaparte, adjusting it on his head and then replacing it on the table. "I shall lie down now and take a little repose," he added. "I much fear my appetite for supper will be lost."

"I hope not; I hope not," said the German, resenting himself at his work and looking much concerned as Bonaparte stretched himself on the bed and turned the end of the patchwork quilt over his feet.

"You must not think to make your departure, not for many days," said the German presently. "Tant' Sannie gives her consent, and"—

"My friend," said Bonaparte, closing his eyes sadly, "you are kind, but were it not that tomorrow is the Sabbath, weak and trembling as I lie here, I would proceed on my way. I must seek work. Idleness but for a day is painful. Work, labor—that is the secret of all true happiness."

He doubled the pillow under his head and watched how the German drew the leather things in and out.

After awhile Lyndall silently put her book on the shelf and went home, and the German stood up and began to mix some water and meal for roaster cakes. As he stirred them with his hands he said:

"I make always a double supply on Saturday night. The hands are then free as the thoughts for Sunday."

"The blessed Sabbath!" said Bonaparte. There was a pause. Bonaparte twisted his eyes without moving his head to see if supper were already on the fire.

"You must sorely miss the administration of the Lord's word in this desolate spot," added Bonaparte. "Oh, how love I thine house and the place where thine honor dwelleth!"

"Well, we do; yes," said the German. "But we do our best. We meet together, and I—well, I say a few words. It perhaps they are not wholly lost, not quite."

"Strange coincidence," said Bonaparte. "My plan always was the same, as in the Free State once—solitary farm—one neighbor. Every Sunday I called together friend and neighbor, child and servant, and said, 'Rejoice with me, that we may serve the Lord,' and then I addressed them. Ah, those were blessed times!" said Bonaparte. "Would they might return!"

The German stirred at the cakes, and stirred and stirred. He could give the stranger his bed, and he could give the stranger his hat, and he could give the stranger his brandy, but his Sunday service!

After a good while he said: "I might speak to Tant' Sannie. I might arrange. You might take the service in my place if it"—

"My friend," said Bonaparte, "it would give me the profoundest felicity, the most unbounded satisfaction, but in these worn-out habiliments, in these deteriorated garments, it would not be possible, it would not be fitting, that I should officiate in service of One who for respect we shall not name. No, my friend. I will remain here, and while you are assembling yourselves together in the presence of the Lord, I, in my solitude, will think of and pray to you. No; I will remain here."

It was a touching picture—the solitary man there praying for them. The German cleared his hands from the meal and went to the chest from which he had taken the black hat. After a little careful feeling about he produced a black cloth coat, trousers

waistcoat, which he laid on the table, smiling knowingly. They were of new, shining cloth, worn twice a year, when he went to the town to "nachtmaal." He looked with great pride at the coat as he unfolded it and held it up.

"It's not the latest fashion, perhaps, not a west end cut, not exactly, but it might do, it might serve at a push. Try it on, try it on!" he said, his old gray eyes twinkling with pride.

Bonaparte stood up and tried on the coat. It fitted admirably. The waistcoat could be made to button by ripping up the back, and the trousers were perfect, but below were the ragged boots. The German was not disconcerted. Going to the beam where a pair of top boots hung, he took them off, dusted them carefully and put them down before Bonaparte. The old eyes now fairly brimmed over with sparkling enjoyment.

"I have only worn them once. They might serve; they might be endured." Bonaparte drew them on and stood upright, his head almost touching the beams. The German looked at him with profound admiration. It was wonderful what a difference feathers made in the bird.

CHAPTER V.

SUNDAY SERVICES—SERVICE NO. I. The boy Waldo kissed the pages of his book and looked up. Far over the flat lay the "kopje," a mere speck; the sheep wandered quietly from bush to bush; the stillness of the early Sunday rested everywhere, and the air was fresh.

He looked down at his book. On its page a black insect crept. He lifted it off with his finger. Then he leaned on his elbow, watching its quivering antennae and strange movements, smiling.

"Even you," he whispered, "shall not die. Even you he loves. Even you he will fold in his arms when he takes everything and makes it perfect and happy."

When the thing had gone, he smoothed the leaves of his Bible somewhat caressingly. The leaves of that book had dropped blood for him once. They had taken the brightness out of his childhood. From between them had sprung the visions that had clung about him and made night horrible. Adderlike thoughts had lifted their heads, had shot out forked tongues at him, asking mockingly strange, trivial questions that he could not answer, miserable child!

Why did the women in Mark see only one angel and the women in Luke two? Could a story be told in opposite ways and both ways be true? Could it? Could it? Then, again: Is there nothing always right and nothing always wrong? Could Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, "put her hand to the nail and her right hand to the workman's hammer" and could the Spirit of the Lord chant psalms over her, loud psalms, high psalms, set in the book of the Lord, and no voice cry out it was a mean and dastardly sin to lie and kill the trusting in their sleep? Could the friend of God marry his own sister and be beloved, and the man who does it today goes to hell, to hell? Was there nothing always right or always wrong?

Those leaves had dropped blood for him once. They had made his heart heavy and cold; they had robbed his childhood of its gladness. Now his fingers moved over them caressingly.

"My Father God knows, my Father knows," he said. "We cannot understand. He knows." After awhile he whispered, smiling: "I heard your voice this morning when my eyes were not yet open. I felt you near me, my Father. Why do you love me so?" His face was illuminated. "In the last four months the old question has gone from me. I know you are good; I know you love everything; I know, I know, I know! I could not have borne it any more, not any more." He laughed softly. "And all the while I was so miserable you were looking at me and loving me, and I never knew it. But I know it now. I feel it!" said the boy, and he laughed low. "I feel it!" he laughed.

After awhile he began partly to sing, partly to chant, the disconnected verses of hymns, those which spoke his gladness, many times over. The sheep with their senseless eyes turned to look at him as he sang.

At last he lapsed into quiet. Then as the boy lay there staring at bush and sand he saw a vision.

He had crossed the river of Death and walked on the other bank in the Lord's land of Beulah. His feet sank into the dark grass, and he walked alone. Then, far over the fields, he saw a figure coming across the dark green grass. At first he thought it must be one of the angels, but as it came nearer he began to feel what it was. And it came closer, closer to him, and then the voice said, "Come," and he knew surely who it was. He ran to the dear feet and touched them with his hands; yes, he held them fast. He lay down beside them. When he looked up, the face was over him, and the glorious eyes were loving him, and they two were there alone together.

He laughed a deep laugh, then started up like one suddenly awakened

from sleep. "O God," he cried. "I cannot wait. I cannot wait! I want to die! I want to see him! I want to touch him! Let me die!" He folded his hands, trembling. "How can I wait so long—for long, long years perhaps? I want to die—to see him! I will die any death! Oh, let me come!"

Weeping, he bowed himself and quivered from head to foot. After a long while he lifted his head.

"Yes; I will wait, I will wait, but not long. Do not let it be very long, Jesus, King. I want you; oh, I want you—soon, soon!" He sat still staring across the plain with his fearful eyes.

SERVICE NO. II. In the front room of the farmhouse sat Tant' Sannie in her elbow chair. In her hand was her great brass clasped hymnbook; round her neck was a clean white handkerchief; under her feet was a wooden stove. There, too, sat Em and Lyndall in clean pinafores and new shoes; there, too, were the spruce Hottentot in a starched white "cappie" and her husband on the other side of the door, with his wool oiled and very much combed out and staring at his new leather boots. The Kaffir servants were not there because Tant' Sannie held they were descended from apes and needed no salvation. But the rest were gathered for the Sunday service and waited the officiator.

Meanwhile Bonaparte and the German approached arm in arm. Bonaparte resplendent in the black cloth

clothes, a spotless shirt and a spotless collar, the German in the old salt and pepper, casting shy glances of admiration at his companion.

At the front door Bonaparte removed his hat with much dignity, raised his shirt collar and entered. To the center table he walked, put his hat solemnly down by the big Bible and bowed his head over it in silent prayer.

The Boer woman looked at the Hottentot, and the Hottentot looked at the Boer woman.

There was one thing on earth for which Tant' Sannie had a profound reverence, which exercised a subduing influence over her, which made her for the time a better woman. That thing was new, shining black cloth. It made her think of the "predikant"; it made her think of the elders, who sat in the top pew of the church on Sundays, with the hair so nicely oiled, so holy, and respectable, with their little swallowtailed coats; it made her think of heaven, where everything was so holy and respectable and nobody wore tan cord and the littlest angel had a black tail coat. She wished she hadn't called him a thief and a Roman Catholic. She hoped the German hadn't told him. She wondered where those clothes were when he came in rags to her door. There was no doubt he was a very respectable man, a gentleman.

The German began to read a hymn. At the end of each line Bonaparte groaned and twice at the end of every verse.

The Boer woman had often heard of persons groaning during prayers to add a certain poignancy and finish to them. Old Jan Vanderlinde, her mother's brother, always did it after he was converted, and she would have looked upon it as no especial sign of grace in any one. But to groan at hymn time! She was startled. She wondered if he remembered that she shook her fist in his face. This was a man of God. They knelt down to pray. The Boer woman weighed 250 pounds and could not kneel. She sat in her chair and peeped between her crossed fingers at the stranger's back. She could not understand what he said, but he was in earnest. He shook the chair by the back rail till it made quite a little dust on the mud floor.

When they rose from their knees, Bonaparte solemnly seated himself in the chair and opened the Bible. He blew his nose, pulled up his shirt collar, smoothed the leaves, stroked down his capacious waistcoat, blew his nose again, looked solemnly round the room, then began:

"All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Having read this portion of Scripture, Bonaparte paused impressively and looked all round the room.

"I shall not, my dear friends," he said, "long detain you. Much of our precious time has already fled blissfully from us in the voice of thanksgiving and the tongue of praise. A few, a very few, words are all I shall address to you, and may they be as a rod of iron dividing the bones from the marrow and the marrow from the bones."

"In the first place, what is a liar?" The question was put so pointedly and followed by a pause so profound that even the Hottentot man left off looking at his boots and opened his eyes, though he understood not a word.

"I repeat," said Bonaparte, "what is a liar?" The sensation was intense. The attention of the audience was riveted.

"Have you any of you ever seen a liar, my dear friends?" There was a still longer pause. "I hope not; I truly hope not. But I will tell you what a liar is. I knew a liar once—a little boy who lived in Cape Town, in Short Market street. His mother and I sat together one day discoursing about our souls."

"Here, Sampson," said his mother, "go and buy sixpence of 'meiboss' from the Malay round the corner." "When he came back, she said, 'How much have you got?' 'Five,' he said.

"He was afraid if he said six and a half she'd ask for some. And, my friends, that was a lie. The half of a 'meiboss' stuck in his throat, and he died and was buried. And where did the soul of that little liar go to, my friends? It went to the lake of fire and brimstone. This brings me to the second point of my discourse.

"What is a lake of fire and brimstone? I will tell you, my friends," said Bonaparte condescendingly. "The imagination unaided cannot conceive it, but by the help of the Lord I will put it before your mind's eye.

"I was traveling in Italy once on a time. I came to a city called Rome, a vast city, and near it is a mountain which spits forth fire. Its name is Etna. Now, there was a man in that city of Rome who had not the fear of God before his eyes, and he loved a woman. The woman died, and he walked up that mountain spitting fire, and when he got to the top he threw himself in at the hole that is there. The next day I went up. I was not afraid. The Lord preserves his servants. And in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou fall into a volcano. It was a dark night when I got there, but in the fear of the Lord I walked to the edge of the yawning abyss and looked in. That sight—that sight, my friends, is impressed upon my most indelible memory. I looked down into the lurid depths upon an incandescent lake, a melted fire, a seething sea. The billows rolled from side to side, and on their fiery crests tossed the white skeleton of the suicide. The heat had burned the flesh from off the bones. They lay as a light cork upon the melted fiery waves. One skeleton hand was raised upward, the finger pointing to heaven; the other, with outstretched finger, pointing downward, as though it would say, 'I go below, but

you, Bonaparte, may soar above.' I gazed; I stood entranced. At that instant there was a crack in the lurid lake. It swelled, expanded, and the skeleton of the suicide disappeared, to be seen no more by mortal eye."

Here again Bonaparte rested and then continued:

"The lake of melted stone rose in the crater. It swelled higher and higher at the side; it streamed forth at the top. I had presence of mind. Near me was a rock. I stood upon it. The fiery torrent was vomited out and streamed on either side of me. And through that long and terrible night I stood there alone upon that rock, the glowing fiery lava on every hand, a monument of the long suffering and tender providence of the Lord, who spared me that I might this day testify in your ears of him."

"Now, my dear friends, let us deduce the lessons that are to be learned from this narrative.

"Firstly, let us never commit suicide. That man is a fool, my friends, that man is insane, my friends, who would leave this earth, my friends. Here are joys innumerable, such as it hath not entered into the heart of man to understand, my friends. Here are clothes, my friends; here are beds, my friends; here is delicious food, my friends. Our precious bodies were given us to love, to cherish. Oh, let us do so! Oh, let us never hurt them, but care for and love them, my friends."

Every one was impressed, and Bonaparte proceeded:

"Thirdly, let us not love too much. If that young man had not loved that young woman, he would not have jumped into Mount Etna. The good men of old never did so. Was Jeremiah ever in love, or Ezekiel, or Hosea, or even any of the minor prophets? No. Then why should we be? Thousands are rolling in that lake at this moment who would say, 'It was love that brought us here.' Oh, let us think always of our own souls first.

"A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify, A never dying soul to save And fit it for the sky."

"Oh, beloved friends, remember the little boy and the 'meiboss'; remember the young girl and the young man; remember the lake, the fire and the brimstone; remember the suicide's skeleton on the pitchy billows of Mount Etna; remember the voice of warning that has this day sounded in your ears. And what I say to you I say to all—watch. May the Lord add his blessing."

Here the Bible closed with a tremendous thud. Tant' Sannie loosened the white handkerchief about her neck and wiped her eyes, and the colored girl, seeing her do so, sniffled. They did not understand the discourse, which made it the more affecting. There hung over it that inscrutable charm which hovers forever for the human intellect over the incomprehensible and shadowy. When the last hymn was sung, the German conducted the officiator to Tant' Sannie, who graciously extended her hand and offered coffee and a seat on the sofa. Leaving him there, the German hurried away to see how the little plum pudding he had left at home was advancing, and Tant' Sannie remarked that it was a hot day. Bonaparte gathered her meaning as she fanned herself with the end of her apron. He bowed low in acquiescence. A long silence followed. Tant' Sannie spoke again. Bonaparte gave her no ear. His eye was fixed on a small miniature on the opposite wall, which represented Tant' Sannie as she had appeared on the day before her confirmation, 15 years before, attired in green muslin. Suddenly he started to his feet, walked up to the picture and took his stand before it. Long and wistfully he gazed into its features. It was easy to see that he was deeply moved. With a sudden movement, as though no longer able to restrain himself, he seized the picture, loosened it from its nail and held it close to his eyes. At length, turning to the Boer woman, he said in a voice of deep emotion:

"You will, I trust, dear madame, excuse this exhibition of my feelings, but this—this little picture recalls to me my first and best beloved, my dear departed wife, who is now a saint in heaven."

Tant' Sannie could not understand, but the Hottentot maid, who had taken her seat on the floor beside her mistress, translated the English into Dutch as far as she was able.

"Ah, my first, my beloved!" he added, looking tenderly down at the picture. "Oh, the beloved, the beautiful lineaments! My angel wife! This is surely a sister of yours, madame?" he added, fixing his eyes on Tant' Sannie.

The Dutchwoman blushed, shook her head and pointed to herself.

Carefully, intently, Bonaparte looked from the picture in his hand to Tant' Sannie's features and from the features back to the picture. Then slowly a light broke over his countenance. He looked up. It became a smile. He looked back at the miniature. His whole countenance was effulgent.

"Ah, yes; I see it now," he cried, turning his delighted gaze on to the Boer woman, "eyes, mouth, nose, chin, the very expression!" he cried. "How is it possible I did not notice it before?"

"Take another cup of coffee," said Tant' Sannie. "Put some sugar in."

Bonaparte hung the picture tenderly on her hand when the German appeared to say that the pudding was ready and the meat on the table.

"He's a God fearing man and one who knows how to behave himself," said the Boer woman as he went out at the door. "If he is ugly, did not the Lord make him? And are we to laugh at the Lord's handiwork? It is better to be ugly and good than pretty and bad, though of course it's nice when one is both," said Tant' Sannie, looking complacently at the picture on the wall.

In the afternoon the German and Bonaparte sat before the door of the cabin. Both smoked in complete silence. Bonaparte with a book in his hands and his eyes half closed, the German puffing vigorously and glancing up now and again at the serene blue sky overhead.

"Supposing—you, in fact, made the remark to me," burst forth the German suddenly, "that you were looking for a situation."

Bonaparte opened his mouth wide and sent a stream of smoke through his lips.

"Now, supposing," said the German—"merely supposing, of course—that some one—some one, in fact—should make an offer to you, say, to become schoolmaster on their farm and teach two children, two little girls perhaps, and would give you £40 a year, would you accept it? Just supposing, of course."

"Well, my dear friend," said Bonaparte, "that would depend on circumstances. Money is no consideration with me. For my wife I have made provision for the next year. My health is broken. Could I meet a place where a gentleman would be treated as a gentleman I would accept it, however small the remuneration. With me," said Bonaparte, "money is no consideration."

"Well," said the German when he had taken a whiff or two more from his pipe, "I think I shall go up and see Tant' Sannie a little. I go up often on Sunday afternoons to have a general conversation, to see her, you know. Nothing—nothing particular, you know."

The old man put his book into his pocket and walked up to the farmhouse with a peculiarly knowing and delighted expression of countenance.

"He doesn't suspect what I'm going to do," soliloquized the German; "hasn't the least idea; a nice surprise for him."

The man whom he had left at his doorway winked at the retreating figure with a wink that was not to be described.

(Continued next week.)

Beware of Ointments for Cataract that contain Mercury.

as mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescription from reputable physicians, as the damage they will do is ten fold to the good you can possibly derive from them.

Hall's Cataract Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Cataract Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally and is made in Toledo Ohio, by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free.

Sold by druggists, price 75c per bottle. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Dr. O. C. REYNOLDS, SURGEON, Rooms 17, 18, 19, Burr Bldg. Lincoln. Phone 655, 656.

Notice to Creditors. In the County Court of Lancaster County, Nebraska, in the matter of the Estate of Jacob North, deceased.

To the Creditors of said Estate: You are hereby notified, that I will sit at the County Court Room in Lincoln, in said County, on the 2nd day of April, 1900, and again on the 2nd day of July, 1900, to receive and examine all claims against said estate, with a view to their adjustment and allowance. The time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is six months from the 2nd day of January, A. D., 1900, and the time limited for the payment of debts is one year from the 2nd day of January, A. D., 1900.

Notice of this proceeding is ordered published four weeks successively in The Nebraska Independent a weekly newspaper published in this State.

Witness my hand and seal of said County Court this 4th day of November, 1899. [SEAL] S. T. COCHRAN, County Judge. By Dudley Cochran, Clerk.

ARE YOU GOING TO Chicago OR THE East? The Through Express From COLORADO-KANSAS-NEBRASKA Via Omaha

Great Rock Island Route AND THE Chicago Express From Kansas City.

In addition to Pullman Sleepers, Free Chair Cars, and the Best Dining Car Service in the World, are equipped with BUFFET LIBRARY SMOKING CARS furnished in club style and supplied with latest periodicals, illustrated papers and a select library of fiction.

ARE YOU GOING TO Colorado OR THE West? TRY THE COLORADO FLYER.

Fast, carries dining cars and Pullman Sleepers. Leaves Omaha at 6:40 P.M.; Kansas City 6:30 P.M.; St. Joseph 4:50 P.M., and arrives at Denver and Colorado Springs next morning.

Jno. Sebastian, E. W. Thompson, G.P. & T.A., A.G.P. & T.A., Chicago, Topeka, Kans. Frank H. Barnes, C.P. & T.A., Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Rock Island Wall Map of the United States Is the best offered to the public. It is very large and especially adapted to school purposes. Every teacher of geography and every business office should have one. It will be sent postpaid to any address on receipt of fifteen cents in postage stamps or coin.

Address, John Sebastian, G. P. A. Chicago, Ill. 8c

BEAUTY, THE CONQUEROR BELLAVITA Arsenic Beauty Tablets and Pills. A perfectly safe and guaranteed treatment for all skin diseases. Restores the blood of youth to faded faces. 10 days' treatment 50c; 30 days' \$1.00, by mail. Send for circular. Address: NERVITA W. DICAL CO., Clinton & Jackson Sts., Chicago Sold by Harley Drug Co., Cor. O and 11. Str., Lincoln, Nebr.

Stop! At the Merchants Dining Hall at 1040 P Street and get a big meal for 10c. Get the best 5c cigar ever sold. Get latest reading matter, and get your shoes shined for 5c. Country people invited to call when in the city. 1040 P St.

Webster's International Dictionary Successor of the "Unabridged." The One Great Standard Authority. No writes Hon. D. J. Brewer, Justice U. S. Supreme Court.

Standard by the U. S. Gov't Printing Office, the U. S. Supreme Court, all the State Supreme Courts, and in nearly every school. Warmly Commended by State Superintendents of Schools, College Presidents, and other Educators almost without number. Invaluable in the household, and to the teacher, scholar, professional man, and self-educator.

Specimen pages sent on application to G. & C. Merril Co., Publishers, Springfield, Mass.

CAUTION. Do not be deceived in buying small so-called "Webster's Dictionaries." All authentic shipments of Webster's International Dictionary in the various sizes bear our trade-mark on the front cover as shown in the cuts.

Corporation Notice. The Whittier Law, Land and Collection Agency with principal place of business at Lincoln, Neb., transacts a general Law, Collection, Real Estate, Loan and Insurance business. Its authorized capital stock is \$1,200,000, to be paid in as called for by its Executive Board. It commenced business August 11, 1899, and will continue twenty years. The highest amount of indebtedness it can subject itself to at any time is two-thirds of its capital stock. Its affairs are managed by a president, manager, secretary, treasurer and an executive board of three members. Dated this 2nd day of November, 1899. J. J. WHITTIER, President.

LITTLE Photos 25c Per Dozen Cabinets \$2 PREWITT - - 1214 O STREET

PAINLESS EXTRACTION RIGGS, The Dentist. 141 So. 12th St., Lincoln, Nebr. Gold Alloy Filling. \$1.00 Gold Filling . . \$1.00 and up Gold Crowns . . \$5.00 and up Set of Teeth \$5.00 Best Teeth \$8.00 RIGGS, The Dentist, 141 So. 12th St., Lincoln, Neb.