

LOST ON THE... VELD

A STORY OF THE BOER CAMPAIGN IN NATAL

By H. B. Mackenzie

CHAPTER I.

It was evening—a glorious evening, such as only tropical countries know. The hot wind that had blown all day had now died down, and there was a great stillness; but a pleasant coolness in the air made it delightful after the sweltering heat.

There had been no rain for a long time, and the ground was parched and dry. Outside the pretty homestead the red sand of the veld lay thick and fine in the dry grass which covered the wagon track. But inside the grass looked green enough. Perhaps it had received an artificial shower. All round the grassy lawn were flower beds, mostly of tropical flowers, among which the succulent blue lily raised its long, trumpet-shaped flowers; but there were a few English flowers, too—stately hollyhocks, sweet-scented roses, queenly dahlias.

Beyond the lawn an avenue of blue-gum and black nettle led to the veld without. Behind the house, which was built of stone, and looked quaint and pretty with a veranda running round it, rose some of the highest peaks of the Drakensberg. A little to the left ran the river Klip.

On this evening the sun, too near its setting to be hot now, was shining right into the sleepy brown eyes of a girl who lay full length in the shade of a gum-tree, a book on the grass beside her. Her head was supported by a plump little brown hand, and she was smiling a very happy, contented smile, as if some happy thought passed through her mind.

It was a pretty face, too, with its warmth and healthiness of coloring, its smiling, half-open, red lips, its clear, open, childishly smooth forehead, over which little curls of the brown hair shot with ruddy gold came straying. The half-shut, smiling eyes were very soft and happy just now; but who could say whether they might not some day be filled with burning passion, with blinding tears, or with the cold, set expression of despair?

"Bluebell, Bluebell! where are you, child?"

The voice came across the little lawn, clear and distinct on the evening air; and the girl, rising up from her comfortable position, shook herself, very much as a wet spaniel might do after coming out of the water, and started at a quick run for the house.

A tall, angular, spinster lady stood upon the doorstep.

"What a dear, child!" was the salutation. "Have you forgotten we are to have company tonight?"

"Well, I do believe I had," retorted the girl. "Don't be angry with me, will you, auntie? Really I couldn't help it. I'll never, never do it again. Now dad's going to bring some one from Maritzburg, is he? Who is it, auntie? Not anyone very great, I hope—Mr. Rhodes, for instance?"

"Don't talk nonsense, child!" returned Miss Elizabeth Leslie. "No, no! It's no one so great as that, only some very rich man, I believe, who has made his money at Kimberley or somewhere. But run away and dress yourself, child. I have a good supper ready, so I hope your father won't keep us waiting. He wished us to have dinner; but why should I? We don't call it dinner when we are alone, and why should we change our customs for strangers?"

"Quite right, auntie dear." Bluebell patted her aunt's bony shoulder with a gentle hand. "Besides, likely enough he's some coarse, horrid man! They are always the kind that become millionaires. Oh, auntie, I hope father won't make a great friend of him if he is!"

"We shall soon see him, dearie, so there's no use thinking beforehand what his ways are," said Miss Elizabeth—she was always called Miss Elizabeth—soothingly.

Bluebell ran upstairs to her own room. It was a pretty little room, not containing much furniture, but as dainty as feminine fingers could make it. Bluebell did not spend all her time lying dreamily under the gum-tree. She had just donned her pretty mauve muslin frock, drawn in at the waist by a blue band—it was rather strange that Bluebell should smile and blush a little to herself as she fastened the blue band—when the sound of horses' hoofs galloping up the avenue drew her attention. She ran to the window, hiding behind the window curtains.

Presently two riders emerged from the avenue, and rode up the gravelled path to the house. Bluebell could see them distinctly.

The first was her father. Bluebell knew him well enough not to require to take a second look at him; yet she did take a second look.

Adam Leslie, Esq., of Tinlaverstock, Scotland, who had emigrated to South Africa 10 years ago, was a man of middle age, heavily built, stout, and red-faccd, with a heavy chin, a stubborn mouth, and a pair of rather cold gray eyes. But just now his face was redder than usual and there was a slight want of certainty in his gait as he sprang from his horse that Bluebell colored to see.

His companion, the "millionaire," was not at all what Bluebell had pictured him. He was an old man; he looked straight-backed and alert, and sat on his horse with an air of negligence that showed him a true horse-

man. For the rest, Bluebell could see that he was somewhat dark in complexion, wearing a short little peaked beard; but she could not see his face distinctly.

She went downstairs presently. Her sitting room was a pleasant apartment, with skins of springbok and other wild animals covering the floor. A lamp burned on the table, on which a sumptuous supper was spread. The two men stood by the fireplace talking.

As Bluebell entered her father turned.

"Well, my girl, I'm back again, you see. Come and kiss me, Bluebell."

The girl approached, and the other man on the hearthrug stared at the dainty white figure as Adam Leslie gave her a sounding kiss on the cheek.

"You see I've brought a friend with me, Bluebell. Mr. Moore—my daughter, Bluebell."

Mr. Moore bowed low, Bluebell did the same. She did not offer her hand, as her frank custom would naturally have led her to do; she hardly knew why.

"You will remember your native country every time you address Miss Leslie," said the millionaire, turning to his host.

Adam Leslie laughed uproariously. Bluebell felt now quite sure that he had been drinking. He was usually a reserved, even taciturn man, stern enough towards his household; but alcohol loosened his tongue and gave him a certain coarse frankness.

"Quite right, quite right, Mr. Moore! It was her mother gave her the name—a romantic freak; but it serves its purpose here, and makes us remember the poor old 'mither' country."

Miss Elizabeth came in presently, and they all sat down to the abundant supper. During the meal the two men talked, Mr. Moore quietly and gravely, in a somewhat rich, sonorous voice; Mr. Leslie with loud hilarity. Miss Elizabeth and Bluebell said very little, and the latter had a strange, uncomfortable consciousness during the meal that the dark, slow-moving eyes of the millionaire turned again and again to her face. She knew not why the look made her shiver suddenly every time she met it all through her warm, joyous heart and body.

The two men talked politics, discussing the likelihood of Kruger's yielding to Britain's demands.

"Give in? Not he!" cried Leslie loudly. "Well, the British know what to do next, that's one good thing. We'll sweep the whole race of them from the earth before we've done with them, or I'm mistaken, and it's what they deserve!"

"If it comes to war, of course there can be no doubt as to which side will win," said Mr. Moore, more quietly. "I suppose you have no friends among the Boers or Afrikaners, Mr. Leslie?"

"Friends among such people?" cried Mr. Leslie. "Not very likely! I would not admit one of them into my house!"

Bluebell spoke almost for the first time. Her voice was just a little unsteady, as if emotion of some kind was stirring it.

"You don't always speak like that, father. I am sure we have never received anything but kindness from any of the Dutch with whom we came in contact. And, besides, there's a good deal to be said for their desire to rule their own republic in their own way. How would we like over in the old country if foreigners came and settled down among us—Frenchmen or Germans—and compelled us to conform to their customs? They are only like their brave forefathers in the time of William the Silent."

Her father interrupted her with a loud laugh.

"Doctor Rothes has provided you with quite a number of arguments, Bluebell. But politics are quite outside a woman's sphere, my girl, so I advise you not to take them up. Eh, Mr. Moore, isn't that so?"

"I think Miss Leslie would even make a convert of me," said the millionaire, bowing gallantly. Again Bluebell caught his eye, and the look gave her another shiver. "May I ask he went on quietly, discussing Miss Elizabeth's pie. 'Who Doctor Rothes is?'"

"A young Englishman over at Ladysmith," replied Mr. Leslie carelessly. "We have him here sometimes. A very clever young fellow—quite exceptionally clever; but just a little quixotic, you know, as young fellows are apt to be."

"Just so; I understand," said Mr. Moore quietly. He glanced at Bluebell without appearing to do so, and saw that the healthy rose in her cheeks had deepened almost imperceptibly in tint, and that her long lashes drooped over and demurely hid her eyes.

The millionaire was to stay at New Kelso—thus Mr. Leslie had named his farm in memory of the Scottish town near which he had lived—all night. Bluebell did not feel nearly as hospitable as usual.

Now Kelso was a lonely enough place, being about twelve miles from Ladysmith, the nearest village, and the womenfolk sometimes saw no outsider for the space of many months; they were, therefore, all the more disposed to make the most of any stray one who did appear.

But Bluebell did not feel that Gerald Moore was going to be any acquisition

She had a vague, groundless dread of him, as if his presence denoted danger.

"I don't like him," she said to herself. "And yet why should I not? He has done nothing to make me dislike or distrust him."

Downstairs the two men were sitting together at the table, a decanter of Scotch whisky and two glasses between them.

They had been speaking in low tones; but now, as the whisky began to take effect, Leslie raised his.

"You are a generous man, Moore!" he cried. "And you are in earnest when you tell me that this is the sole return you ask for your extraordinary generosity?"

"The sole return," Moore replied. He raised his hands to his lips, and kept it there for a moment; then, dropping it to his glass, which had stood full beside him all the time, though Leslie had replenished his several times, he added slowly: "But I must have that return, Mr. Leslie—that and no other. I have set my mind upon it."

CHAPTER II.

It was a week later. Bluebell had gone to Ladysmith, riding across the dry, open veld by the wagon-path on her sure-footed little horse Rover. She was a capital horse-woman, and nothing daunted her when in the saddle.

It was a very hot day, and there were signs of coming rain, which made Bluebell hurry. Her path lay across the dry veld. Coarse, parched grass and withered shrubs made it look like a desert. The road was a bad and narrow one. It swelled and undulated like an ocean, now dipping down into a hollow, now rising to the height of a little green-covered kopje. Sometimes she rode close to the river, which seemed almost dry now, so long had been the drought; and always she kept in sight of the great frowning peaks of Drakensberg, above which eagles and vultures circled in their sky-piercing flight.

Bluebell had messages at Ladysmith, but it was not of her messages she was thinking as she neared her destination. She was close to it at last. She saw the little town nestling, as it seemed in the distance, almost at the bottom of Bulwaan, though in truth separated from it by wide stretches of meadow lands, with the Klip winding its course through them.

Now she passed numerous kopjes of red earth, interspersed with shrubs, between which grew abundance of flowers, white jasmine and climbing convolvulus, and the rich glory of red and yellow bloom clustered thickly on the low, dwarf shrubs which covered the kopjes.

Bluebell had acquaintances in Ladysmith. The Leslies were pretty well known in the country.

She was just turning into the town when some one emerging from behind a sudden curve came towards her. Bluebell started a little and stooped over Rover, a richer color than exercise had brought there coming into her cheeks.

In a few seconds the newcomer was close to her, and lifting his big gray hat from his head, paused by her horse. He was a young man, perhaps nearing thirty, attired in gray khaki, and with a sunburnt face which showed that he was exposed to all weather. For the rest, he had been originally a fair-complexioned man, with good features and an open, frank expression. His dark gray eyes were clear and steady, but could look wonderingly soft and tender. They did so now, though his expression was one of much anxiety as he held out his hand, into which Bluebell put hers without a word.

(To be continued.)

Burma's Amber Mines.

In Burma amber is found in a region difficult of access and jealously guarded by those who have every interest in keeping their secret. It is situated in the Hukong valley, surrounded on three sides by almost impassable ranges of mountains, so that it is accessible only from the south across low hills forming the watershed between the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy. In one of these low hill ranges are the famous and mysterious mines of golden resin. It is obtained in a very primitive way. After the harvest the diggers go to the hills, and selecting a place where there are no pits dug by previous prospectors, shape with their swords a small pointed hoe, a wooden shovel, and a basket of split bamboo. With these they make a hole in the blue clay, removing the refuse by means of the basket, and gradually deepening the shaft. Three men work in company—one below (the shaft not being large enough for more than one at a time), while the others hand up the basket. The amber is found in "pockets," which are generally indicated by strings of coaly matter appearing in the clay.—Stray Stories.

First Class in Optics.

"In looking out of doors, do you notice how bright is the green of the grass and the leaves?" asked an elderly gentleman of a little girl, whose home he was visiting. "Yes, sir." "Why does it appear so much brighter at this time?" he next asked, looking down upon the bright, sweet face with tender interest. "Because ma has cleaned the window, and you can see out better," she said.—Stray Stories.

Tommy's Only Wish.

"What would you like best tomorrow, Tommy, on your birthday?" "I'd like to see the school burnt down," replied the lad.

"D-N-S" THE TARIFF.

CURSES THAT MAY COME HOME TO ROOST.

Sentiments Not Likely to Be Shared by Sheep Raisers Who Have Profited Enormously Through the Restoration of Protective Duties on Wool.

"D-n the tariff and all its fools!"

Such is the message of the Field and Farm, an agricultural journal published in Denver, Col., in response to a request by the American Protective Tariff League for information concerning the industry of sheep raising. The inquiry sent out by the tariff league was as follows:

"Dear Sir: We are anxious to show by reliable reports the actual effect of the Dingley tariff upon the industry of sheep raising. Wool was upon the free list under the Wilson free-trade tariff and is now adequately protected by the provisions of the Dingley tariff. Kindly fill out the blank spaces on the reverse side of this card and return the same to us at your earliest convenience.

"The information asked for will be held strictly confidential, and in no case will the figures furnished be used otherwise than making up the totals upon which general percentages are to be computed. Yours very truly, 'THE AMERICAN PROTECTIVE TARIFF LEAGUE.'

Summarized returns of this investigation will be printed in the American Economist, and a copy mailed free to persons furnishing reports."

Accompanying this inquiry was a leaflet showing the effects of protection and free trade on wool growing and sheep raising. For example, from 1878 to 1882, inclusive, under the Morrill tariff the number of sheep throughout the country increased by over 11,000,000. Under the tariff of 1883, in which the duties on wool products were materially reduced, the number of sheep decreased by about 6,000,000. With restored protection to wool through the McKinley tariff of 1890 the number of sheep increased by nearly 4,000,000. The Wilson tariff, with free trade in wool, practically went into effect when Mr. Cleveland was elected, and immediately the flocks throughout the country began to decrease, and from '93 to '96 decreased by about 9,000,000. The Dingley tariff reimposed the scientific schedules of the McKinley tariff, and with the promise of protection through the election of McKinley and a Republican congress the sheep industry immediately began to advance. From 1895 to and including 1898 the number of sheep advanced by about thirteen hundred thousand.

The effect of protection and free trade in regard to the number of sheep owned throughout the country is not more impressive than the effect as to values. Under the Morrill tariff the lowest price per head was \$2.09, and the highest \$2.55. Under the tariff of 1893 the lowest price per head was \$1.91, and the highest price was \$2.27. Under the McKinley tariff the lowest price was \$2.49 and the highest price \$2.66. Under free trade the lowest price was \$1.68 and the highest price \$1.92. Under the Dingley tariff the highest price in the history of the nation is recorded—namely, \$2.75.

These facts of vital interest to the sheep raisers of Colorado and adjoining states seem to have an inflammatory effect upon the editor of Field and Farm: Hence his obligatory response, "D-n the tariff and all its fools!" Why? We do not know. We could not possibly have supposed that the citation of acts like those gleaned from official statistics and quoted above would operate on the mind of the editor of Field and Farm as a rebul, and cause him (the editor) to lose his temper and fall to cursing like a drab.

We hardly think the sheep raisers of his section will join this Bryantine in "d-n-ing the tariff." Over the border in Utah they will not be likely to echo his profane sentiment. A sheep raiser in Utah county, for example, will not "d-n the tariff," for he reports that whereas in 1896 (Wilson free wool tariff) he owned 8,000 sheep of an average value of \$2 per head, he owned in March, 1900 (Dingley protective tariff), 11,000, of an average value of \$4.25 per head.

Sheep raisers in Chotaen county, Montana, do not "d-n the tariff." One of them reports that his flock has increased from 4,000 in 1895 to 6,500 in 1900, and that the value per head has increased from \$2.25 in 1895 to \$5 in 1900.

From Bingham county in Idaho comes the statement from a farmer who owned 2,900 sheep in 1896 and now owns 6,000; market value in 1896, \$2.50 per head; market value in 1900 \$5 per head.

Reports from Colorado are even more impressive. A Trinidad man now has 8,000 sheep, against 6,000 four years ago, and their present value is \$4.50 per head against a value of \$2.00 per head in 1896. Another Trinidad man has increased his flock from 3,500 to 5,000, and quotes value at \$4 per head instead of \$1.25 per head in 1896. A Triachera flock owner has 4,200 sheep, or 2,700 more than he had in 1896, and the value at \$4 per head, or just double the value of 1896.

These are fair samples of the large number of reports received from the localities from which (presumably) the major portion of the reading patronage of the Field and Farm of Denver is forthcoming. Do these prosperous farmers, who are, in the aggregate, many millions of dollars richer because of the change from free wool to protection, "d-n the tariff?" We

should think not. It is much more reasonable to suppose that their profane expletives, if they use any such, will be applied to an editor who, while publishing a paper for farmers, has so little sense as to shower curses upon an economic policy through whose operations, directly and indirectly, the farmers of the United States have in the past three years been able to recoup in great measure the frightful losses—estimated at upward of five billion dollars—which they suffered during the four years of Cleveland free trade. "D-n the editor" the farmers might, and with just cause, but not the tariff.

How the New Broom Sweeps.

One week's record of new railroad equipment shows a total of 7,800 cars of different kinds distributed among eight different roads. In addition four other roads have put in orders for a total of twenty-three engines. It is this sort of thing which has been reported almost every week, in the news of the railroads, for many months back. There seem to be no signs of a let-up, but, on the contrary, the demand for more equipment by the railroads, which demand is only a by-product of the increasing demand for all kinds of American products, continues to be steady. The Dingley law, like the proverbial new broom, swept clean; and in a very brief space of time freed us from the want and idleness and poverty which free trade had brought upon us, and, unlike the new broom, it grows more effective as it grows older. As it and the protection which it gives to American industries grow in length of days, our national prosperity grows in volume. The American people will see to it that the law continues in force for many a long day yet.

Who Said Stop?

"I shall not stop talking about the money question until 70,000,000 people secure the right to attend to their own business without asking the aid or consent of any one to attend it for them."—Wm. J. Bryan.

Well, now, who said stop? Nobody, so far as we know, has ever expected William Jonah Bryan to stop talking, unless his tongue becomes paralyzed or his jaws drop out of place from incessant waggling.

It seems that the people were attending strictly to their own business on the 6th of November, 1896, when they chose between the policies of Wm. McKinley and W. J. Bryan.—Elizabeth Home News.

A POSSIBLE PRESIDENT? NO!



Evidently Dangerously Ill.

"Alas, poor Bryan!" said the thoughtful man, as he laid aside his paper.

"What's the matter with him?" asked the Populist in alarm.

"Sick," replied the thoughtful man, regretfully; "dangerously ill, beyond question."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the other, reaching for the paper. "How do you know? What proof have you?"

"Only yesterday," answered the thoughtful man, pointing to the paragraph he had just been reading, "he asked to be excused when called upon for a speech."—Chicago Post.

Good Business Policy.

Under the wise policies of Republicanism, as exemplified by President McKinley, the country has become more prosperous than ever. Work and good wages are the rule. Merchants and manufacturers are making money. The credit of the nation is better than ever before, and the demand for our products is greater than the supply. This is something which the people will not overlook, and that party which has proven itself the most competent in its management of national affairs will again be selected. Good business policy and the people demand it.—Grand Rapids (Mich.) Herald.

Just the Reverse.

Under the Cleveland regime a deficit used to turn up at the end of each month. Matters are just the reverse now. Each month shows an increase in the surplus of the United States treasury, and, besides that, the public debt is being steadily reduced.—St. Louis Star.

On the Brink.

And now it appears that New York cabled to London on one day an offer to take the whole of the \$150,000,000 war loan which England is floating. Pretty good for a nation that is on the brink of moral, political and financial ruin.—Stouix Falls (S. D.) Argus-Leader.

The Fact Remains.

It is no longer necessary to put a foreign label upon home-made goods in order to hasten their sale.—Philadelphia Record.

Why is it no longer necessary? How has the silk industry of the United States, to which the above remark is applied by the Record, attained to the enviable position of being able to market its products as home-made goods and to supply 85 per cent of all the silk fabrics worn and used in this country? Because of the sound common sense of insuring to that industry a fair living chance to sell its products in the home market through the operation of protective duties. In the absence of such defense against the rivalry of silks made in countries where labor is cheaper the silk makers of the United States could not possibly have succeeded as they have done. They would have failed in spite of all their energy, skill, enterprise and business ability, just as many other flourishing industries would have failed, and for the same reason. The Philadelphia Record points with pride to the tremendous development of silk manufacture in the United States, notably in Pennsylvania, which heads the list in the total number of silk mills within its boundaries; but the Record carefully refrains from pointing with pride to the true reason for this tremendous development. The fact remains, however.

Things That Have Come True.

Who could have predicted, in October, 1896, when paralysis extended to every industry, that in the brief period that has elapsed since that date the representative of a Democratic paper like the Cleveland Plain-Dealer would say that "our labor is fully employed and our people contented?" Four years ago, when the wall of calamity came from Kansas that its farmers were hopelessly burdened with mortgages, who would have dreamed that four years later the editor of a silver paper would be able to declare, in New York, that "business conditions were never so excellent in Kansas as today," and that "its farmers have practically all paid of the mortgages on their farms and most of them have money to lend?" There has never been so marvelous a change in the history of this or any other country as has taken place during the four years.

It may be added that if Bryan politicians fail to take into account the effect of these conditions upon the elections next November they are reserving a painful surprise for themselves. General prosperity is a vastly more potential factor in the pending campaign than any question affecting the status of the Philippines.—Indianapolis Journal.

Calamity vs. Prosperity.

"Calamity awaits Colorado this year unless the Republican party is successful. Even the ores of Cripple Creek will undergo a change and refuse to yield the yellow metal.—Georgetown Courier.

Brother Randall should have added to his sarcastic remarks quoted above a few more words as follows: Even the Cripple Creek ores with their wealth of yellow metal cannot offset the blight that a continued Bryanism in Colorado would bring. The success of the Republican party this fall in Colorado is absolutely necessary to save this grand state from the effect of the embalming fluid of Democracy that now flows in her business veins, in place of the red rich blood of McKinley prosperity.—Golden Globe.

First Get the Facts Straight.

It is a question how much of the popular feeling on this subject has been worked up secretly by certain commercial interests, which had prepared for a handsome speculation by accumulating a stock of Puerto Rican products, whose American price would be increased by the abolition of duties on imports for that island. The only people really interested are those who bought up sugar and tobacco, and who are holding them for the rise that would follow such a law; and the only stagnation of trade is that caused by this selfish interest. It is just as well to get the facts straight before rushing off into a sentimental outcry against the president in this matter.—Toledo Blade.

Would Simplify Matters.

If Bryan is to dictate the state and national platforms of his party, why not abandon the attempt to hold a convention? Much time, trouble and expense would be saved if the Nebraskan were authorized to go to Kansas City, nominate himself for the presidency and name his own platform.—Cleveland Leader.

Same Ratio.

The public debt is decreasing at a rapid rate, notwithstanding extraordinary expenses for the Philippine trouble. During the last Democratic administration the public debt increased, in time of peace, in just about the same ratio that it now decreases.— Dixon (Ill.) Star.

Severe Tests for Watches.

At Kew, at the meteorological observatory, a watch is tested in every position and its rate measured and recorded by the hour. It is hung upside down, hung from each side, placed dial down, and back down and at any number of angles, and to finish it is baked in an oven and frozen in a pall of ice. When it is considered that 19,000 vibrations an hour occur in a watch and it must not vary a second in a week it is easy to see why no watch has ever been perfect.