LOST ON THE... VELDT

A STORY OF THE BOER CAMPAIGN IN NATAL

By H. B. Mackenzie

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

It was a bright moonlight night, and the pale silvery light fell on the long rows of gum treees and nettles, giving a strange white sheen on their leaves, and tracing a curious checkered pattern on the path below. Suddenly, as Bluebell looked, a horseman shot into view—a horse riding straight up towards the house. Even as Bluebell, with a sudden little gasping cry drew back, she saw the rider pause. He turned his horse round and waved something—it loooked like a pistol—in the air, as if to some one behind him; then, turning again, rode straight up the avenue.

Bluebell only waited to see another and yet another horseman shoot into view, then, turning quickly to her door, she opened it and flew along the passage to her father's room.

She knocked furiously. In a moment her father's voice demanded sleepily, "Who is there?"

"Father, father!" she cried, her voice ringing out clear and strong, though her heart seemed almost bursting and her tongue parched and dry. "Rise quickly and get your revolver! The Boers, they are coming up the avenue! They are almost on us!"

She could hear her father mutter a wild oath. At that moment it sent a shudder through her.

There were only women in the house. Besides her aunt and herself there was Marie, the girl they had had as servant for two years, and two half-caste Zulu girls, who slept downstairs. The native "boys" slept in an outside shed. Adam Leslie and Bluebell herself were the only two who could defend themselves against an attacking party, for Bluebell had long since learned to use firearms.

"I am ready!" cried her father in a moment. "Let the villains come on! I'm more than a match for a score of Boer dogs!"

"Father, father, oh, don't speak like that!" cried the girl as Leslie flung open the room door. "Let us speak pleasantly to them. Perhaps, after all, they have no unfriendly intentions. Why should they? We have never done them any harm. We have always——"

"Hist!" exclaimed her father. A horrible spasm had passed over his face; but at that moment the scuffle of what seemed a score of horses' hoofs sounded under the stoop outside, and a loud exclamation was uttered. "Keeep back, girl! I shall go to the window myself," said Leslie, in a low voice.

Bluebell stood back a little. At the same moment a sound of shrieks behind told her that the servants had been roused from their slumbers. She turned and saw Miss Elizabeth, pale and horror-stricken, in her blue duffle dressing-gown, her head covered with the ugly white cap which she always wore during the night, hurrying towards her, followed by the shrieking Marie and the howling native girls.

"Keep them quiet. It will be all right, auntie. They can't mean us harm. It is the Boers," Bluebell said, in short whispers, for she was listening at the same time to what went on at the window.

Her father had flung it open. A voice from below called out:

"Open the door to us, Adam Leslie, and surrender yourself as our prisoner, or we shall burn your house about your ears!"

Bluebell did not recognize the voice, which, though Dutch in accent, spoke excellent English. Her father answered, in a voice that trembled with passion:

"I will not open the door to you, you Boer dogs! What do you want with me?"

"Better speak civily, for the sake of your own life!" retorted the voice in answer. "You're a base informer, and, but for the kindness of Almigthy God, we should have been without our leaders through you! Surrender yourself prisoner, or we'll hang you to the nearest treee and burn your house and all it contains! That's the best course with villains like you!"

"I refuse to surrender!" shouted Leslie, beside himself with rage.

He turned to Bluebell. "Bring me my revolver—loaded!" he cried, between his teeth.

But, instead of obeying, Bluebell sprang forward, and, pushing her father aside, interposed herself between him and the window. With eyes that hardly seemed to see she looked down on the men below—an army they seemed to her excited mind—tall, stalwart fellows in khaki and wide Boer hats, each man armed, and each with stern and relentless gaze on the window. In front, on a fine, high-stepping horse, sat the man who was evidently the leader—a young man, dressed like the others; but with a face—not unhandsome though it was—whose merciless determination struck a cold chill through Bluebell.

"You make a mistake," she said, and her voice rang out clear and sweet after the men's hoarse, angry voices, "My father is no informer. Some one has been telling you a wicked lie. We were always friendly with any Boers that we knew."

The young man looked behind him. The next instant a horseman in the background rode forward and came alongside the Boer leader. Bluebell gave a faint cry, almost staggering backward, and she heard a fearful oath burst from her father as he, too, recognized the man.

It was Gerald Moore.

CHAPTER VI.

In the moonlight his mocking, dark face had a look upon it that seemed to Bluebell's eyes as malevolent and wicked as that of any fiend could be. He was looking straigth up at the window.

"There is no necessity for undeceiving your daughter, Mr. Leslie," he said; "but, you see, there's absolutely no use in resistance—all is known now. If you don't surrender yourself as prisoner it will be worse for yourself. The commando have orders to shoot you if you resist."

A shriek broke from Miss Elizabeth's lips behind Bluebell; but the girl uttered neither word nor cry as her horrified eyes, looking dark and large in the midst of her ghastly white face, strained themselves to catch a glance from her father. He gave her none. His own face was contorted and convulsed with some terrible emotion, the veins in his forehead were swelling to bursting. For a moment or two he could not speak, though his lips twitched convulsively.

Then suddenly his voice broke from him, low and hoarse—a voice that made Bluebell shudder.

"You traitor!" he said, and his tone was terrible to hear, so that even the Boer leader shrank away a little, glancing at Moore doubtingly. "I see your game now! You urged me to give information, and then you yourself turned and informed on me! You are a Judas Iscariot! And I would have sold my child into your hands for gold! May God Almighty forgive me! My——"

The words were strangled in his throat. He made a wild movement, as if he would have leaped out of the window upon Moore; then a sudden, strange convulsion shook him from head to foot, and he fell back against Bluebell, rolled from her grasp, and, falling to the floor, lay there, after one or two convulsive motions, perfectly still.

Miss Elizabeth gave another cry, and moving forward, bent over him. He lay on his side, his face still a deep, almost a purple, red in hue, his eyes half open but glazed and unseeing, his jaw dropped. Bluebell, stricken dumb and motionless, stood beside him, unable to make any attempt to raise him from the ground. Meantime a rapid consultation was going on between the leader of the commando and Gerald Moore.

"You can set fire to the house and do as you like with the old man!" said Moore, savagely. "I have something else to do. The girl is my property and I claim her."

"Do as you like," replied the young leader coldly. He eyed Moore with cold contempt. Notwithstanding the use that they had made of Moore, his was not a character which commended itself to the Boer leaders, who knew more about him than did most Englishmen. "I have nothing to do with any dirty private work. My duty is to take Adam Leslie, dead or alive, and I mean to confine myself to that."

In a few minutes the word of command had been given to the commando, who proceeded to break down the door, and also to force their way into the house by means of the glass door of a bedroom which opened onto the stoop. The women upstairs heard the noise, and Miss Elizabeth uttered a terrified exclamation, while the frightened servants howled and shrieked in concert.

"I shall go to them and demand their right to force themselves into any one's house like this!" said Bluebell, suddenly starting as if from a horrible dream. Before Miss Elizabeth could prevent her she had moved from the room and out to the head of the stairs.

All was dark below, only she could see that the outer door had been opened, and a flood of moonlight streamed in upon the floor. In its light she saw the Boers, in their sandy-colored clothes, striding through that beam of light.

But she had no time to speak, no time even to think. Before she knew what was about to happen she was seized in a strong, almost vice-like grip, something dark, close and stifling was fastened tightly around her face, so that she could not utter a sound save a low, stifled moan, and she felt herself lifted off her feet and carried as easily as if she was a child downstairs. She struggled violently, making wild efforts to free her hands and arms, which were bound to her side by a cloth; but it was useless. As well might a fly have struggled to escape from an imprisoning web.

She could not feel the change from the warmth of the air inside to the chilly atmosphere without; but she guessed that her captor had immediately passed outside with her, and in a few minutes she could feel the jolting of his steps as he passed over the rough and uneven path outside the homesteading.

A deadly despair succeeded the first wild revolt of Bluebell's senses. She could have no doubt as to who her captor was. She had been carried off as truly as was ever maid of the eighteenth century by the man who, for some reason of his own—Bluebell had never thought it love—wished to make her his wife. She was in the snare of the fowler, as powerless to free herself as any poor, fluttering, broken-winged bird.

The thought of what she was leaving behind was terrible to her as her unknown fate. Her father had seemed dead as she looked upon him. Was he really so? It almost seemed to Bluebell's shuddering heart that it would be better for him if he were.

She had been stupefied at first by the fearful accusation made against her father, but in the moments that elapsed between his seizure by the visitation of God and her seizure by man's villainy Bluebell had slowly been coming out of her stupor, to realize that it might be true.

If it were so—if her father, tempted by the traitorous villainy of the man whom he had called a Judas Iscariot, had committed this base deed, though Bluebell could not find it in her heart to call it a crime, then the punishment meted out to him might be so terrible that natural death would be a thousand times preferable.

And then poor Miss Elizabeth, left to face those terrible men, with, perhaps, the dead body of her brother in the house! Bluebell felt her heart torn with anguish and anxiety as she thought of it.

Again she made violent struggles to free herself. Alas! they were worse than useless. The strong arms held her as in a vice.

At this time no word had been uttered. Suddenly Bluebell's captor paused; the next moment Bluebell heard a long, peculiar call rising on the night air. It was like the "vooee!" of the Australian bush. After a momentary pause it was answered. Then Bluebell's captor continued his walk, jolting and stumbling at every step.

Presently there was another pause. Then Bluebell fancied she heard the sound of horse's hoofs, but her hearing was so deafened by the thick cloth that she could not be sure. In a few minutes, however, she knew she had been correct. She felt herself lifted up and placed on the side-saddle of some animal, which she guessed, from the height and from the use of the side-saddle, to be a horse.

Then a voice spoke close to her ear—the voice that was so hateful to Bluebell, and with such good reason.

"There is no use in resistance; you are wholly in my power, and I am determined you shall not escape me now. You are on horseback. I am going to release your arms so that you may hold on with all your might, for we are going over a bad bit of ground. If you don't make any resistance I will take off that head-dress presently, but the more resistance you make the worse you will be treated. And let me tell you it is perfectly useless; nothing but death can save you from me."

Of course Bluebell could make no attempt at moving. Her hands were released from the cloth that had pinioned them to her side, reins were placed in her hand, a whip was flicked in the air, and the animal beneath moved forward.

For the next hour Bluebell found thinking impossible. The horse jolted, stumbled and bumped at every step, sometimes putting his fore-feet into holes from which he had to be extricated by main force, then plunging over loose clumps of grass or shrubs with such suddenness as almost to unseat her. Bluebell was accustomed to the difficulties of riding on the veldt, but now, disabled by the want of sight, suffocated as she was by the cloth over her head and mouth, she was utterly unable to keep steady, and several times her guide had to seize her as she was falling from the horse.

(To be continued.)

Smoked While Being Flogged.

Dover (Del.) correspondence Philadelphia Press: Robert Tilghman believes in the novel, even though he be an offender against larceny laws. Today, for fracturing the state's rules of correct living, Robert underwent a whipping. This was not unusual, to be sure, but the 30 persons who watched the floggings were dumbstruck when Tilghman deliberately lighted a cigarette and puffed contentedly while the lashes were being delivered. Sheriff Wharton used the customary rawhide whip, altogether different from the instrument of torture used in Newcastle county, known as the cat-o'-nine-tails, and while he plied the lash vigorously on the bared back of Tilghman the prisoner was unmoved, to the awe and wonder of the crowd. In all nine persons underwent the punishment.

Brother's Ashes.

Mr. E. W. Scripps, of San Diego, Cal., of the Scripps-McRae League, newspaper publishers, says the Cincinnati Enquirer, arrived and registered at the Hotel Alms yesterday morning with his family, consisting of two sons, James G. and John P. Scripps, and daughters, Misses Dorothy and Ellen Scripps. He is also accompanied by his secretary, Mr. H. B. Clark. Mr. Scripps left San Diego some days ago with the ashes of his brother, Mr. George H. Scripps, who died at the Miramar Ranch, in California, on April 13, and whose remains were cremated in that state. Mr. E. W. Scripps will leave tomorrow evening for Rushville, Ill., with his brother's ashes, where they will be interred. A number of relatives of the late George H. Scripps will accompany Mr. E. W. Scripps to Rushville, Ill., to attend the funeral.

PACIFIC RAILROAD SETTLEMENTS.

The Crowning Achievement of the McKinley Administration.

Washington Letter: "The settlement of the Pacific railroad indebtedness must be ranked as one of the greatest achievements of President McKinley's administration," said General Charles Dick, member of Congress from the Nineteenth district of Ohio, and secretary of the Republican National Committee, to-day:

"All efforts, either by Congress or the executive departments prior to 1897, were of little avail in protecting the government's interests in these roads. In fact, there were grave doubts whether the government would succeed in being reimbursed, even in part, the vast sum expended by the United States in aid of their construction. But the government has realized in cash or its equivalent, within two years, the sum of $124,421,671 out of about $130,000,000 that was due, and more than half the money collected was for accrued interest that had not been paid.

"The discovery of gold in California; the rapid increase in wealth and population in the territory west of the Rocky mountains, and a movement on the part of the older states to establish closer connections during the Civil war with those outlying communities, led Congress in 1862 to authorize the construction of a railroad to the Pacific ocean. The direct benefit to be derived by the government was its use for postal, military and other purposes. The act of July 1, 1862, chartering the Union Pacific Railroad Company was not sufficiently liberal, and therefore nothing was accomplished after its provisions. Though the Union Pacific Company was organized no one was found who would venture money in the construction of the road.

"On July 2, 1864, Congress amended the act of 1862, by making provisions more favorable to the companies. The act of 1862 provided that the government should have a first mortgage on the property of the company, while the act of 1864 provided substantially that, for the bonds the government should issue in aid of the construction of the road, it should take a second mortgage. Two companies were organized under the provisions of the act of 1864, and entered energetically upon the work of construction. The road was built from the California end eastward by the Central Pacific Railroad Company, and from the Missouri river westward to the common meeting point at Ogden by the Union Pacific Company.

"Their lines were united May 10, 1869, anticipating by more than seven years the time required by Congress. The Union Pacific Company constructed 1,034 miles, and the Central Pacific 743 miles. The road of the latter company was subsequently extended 140 miles, and the lines of the two companies from the Missouri river to San Francisco represent a mileage of 1,917 miles.

"In aid of these roads and connecting branches the United States issued bonds to the amount of $64,623,512. Failing to be reimbursed for the interest paid on these bonds, it became necessary, in protection of the interests of the government, to pass the act of May 7, 1878, known as the 'Thurman Act.' This act provided that the whole amount of compensation which might from time to time be due to the railroad companies for services rendered the government should be retained by the government, one-half to be applied to the liquidation of the interest paid and to be paid by the United States upon the bonds issued to each of the companies, and the other half to be turned into a sinking fund. But it soon became apparent that, with the approaching maturity of bonds issued in aid of the roads the provisions of the 'Thurman Act' were not adequate to the protection of the government's interests. Efforts were persistently made looking to a settlement of this vast indebtedness, but without success. So recently as the Fifty-fourth Congress an attempt was made to pass a bill to refund the debts of the Pacific Railroad Companies, but it was defeated in the House by a vote of 167 nays to 102 yeas.

"On January 12, 1897," continued General Dick, "the day following the defeat of the funding bill, the attorney general was informed by the President that default had occurred in the payment of the Union Pacific and the Kansas Pacific indebtedness to the Government, and he was directed to make arrangements to secure, as far as practicable, the payment of their indebtedness. An agreement was entered into between the government and the re-organization committee of the Union Pacific Railroad, by which the committee guaranteed, should the government undertake to enforce its lien by sale, a minimum bid for the Union and Kansas Pacific lines that would produce to the government, over and above any prior lines and charges upon the railroads and sinking fund, the net sum of $45,754,059.99. In performance of this agreement the bid was guaranteed by a deposit of $1,500,000.

"Bills were then filed in the United States Circuit courts for the foreclosure of the government lien. The decrees entered for the sale of the roads not being satisfactory to the government, papers were prepared for an appeal. Then the re-organization committee came forward with an offer to increase its bid to $50,000,000 instead of $45,754,059.99. Subsequently, to settle all points in dispute, the re-organization committee decided to abandon this second bid and to increase the minimum amount to be offered for the property to $58,448,223.75, being the total amount due the government on account of the Union Pacific road, as stated by the secretary of the treasury, including the sum of $4,549,368.26 cash in the sinking fund. Such an amount was bid by the re-organization committee on November 1, 1897, and the sale was confirmed by the court on November 6, 1897. After the confirmation of the sale the whole amount was paid into the treasury of the United States in convenient installments, thus relieving the government from any loss whatever upon its claim for principle and interest due upon its subsidy, and bringing to a final and most satisfactory termination one of these long-standing and troublesome questions.

"In the case of the Kansas Pacific indebtedness, by decree of the court an upset price on the sale of the property was fixed at a sum which would yield to the government $2,500,000. The re-organization committee in conference with the government declared its purpose of making no higher bid than that fixed by the decree of the court, so that the government was confronted with the danger of receiving for its total lien upon this line, amounting to nearly $13,000,000, principal and interest, only the sum of $2,500,000. Believing the interest of the government required that an effort should be made to obtain a larger sum, and the government having the right to redeem the incumbrances upon the property, which were prior to the lien of the government subsidy, by paying the sums lawfully due in respect thereof out of the treasury of the United States, the President, on February 8, 1898, authorized the secretary of the treasury to pay the amounts lawfully due upon the prior mortgages upon the eastern and middle divisions of said road.

"Then the re-organization committee of the Kansas Pacific offered to bid for the road a sum which would realize to the government the whole amount of the principal of the debt—$6,303,000. It was believed that no better price than this could be obtained at a later date if the sale should be postponed, and it was deemed best to permit the sale to proceed upon the guaranty of a minimum bid which would realize to the government the whole principal of its debt. The sale thereupon took place, and the property was purchased by the re-organization committee. The sum yielded to the government was $6,303,000. It will thus be perceived that the government secured an advance of $3,803,000 on account of its lien, over and above the sum which the court had fixed as the upset price, and which the reorganization committee had declared was the maximum which they were willing to pay for the property.

"The result of these proceedings against the Union Pacific system, embracing the main line and the Kansas Pacific line, is that the government has received on account of its subsidy claim the sum of $64,751,223.75, which is an increase of $18,997,163.76 over the sum which the re-organization committee first agreed to bid for the joint property, leaving due the sum of $6,588,900.19 interest on the Kansas Pacific subsidy. The prosecution of a claim for this amount against the receivers of the Union Pacific Company in 1898 resulted in securing to the government the further amount of $821,897.70.

"The indebtedness of the Central Pacific Railroad Company to the government became due January 1, 1898, when default in payment was made by the company. The deficiency appropriation act of July 7, 1898, appointed the secretary of the treasury, the secretary of the interior and the attorney general a commission with full power to settle the indebtedness to the government growing out of the issue of bonds to aid in the construction of the Central Pacific and Western Pacific roads, subject to the approval of the President.

"An agreement for the settlement of this indebtedness was entered into between the commissioners and the railroad companies on February 1, 1899. The amount then due to the United States for principal and interest upon its subsidy liens upon the Central Pacific and Western Pacific railroads was $58,812,715.48, more than one-half of which was accrued interest upon the principal debt. The agreement for settlement provided for the funding of this amount into promissory notes bearing date of February 1, 1899, payable respectively on or before the expiration of each successive six months for ten years, each note being for the sum of $2,940,635.78, or one-twentieth of the total amount due. The notes bore interest at the rate of 3 per cent annum, payable semi-annually, and had a condition attached to the effect that, if default be made either of the payment of principal or interest of either said notes or in any part thereof, then all of the notes outstanding, principal and interest, immediately became due and payable, notwithstanding any other stipulation of the agreement of settlement.

"It was further agreed that the payment of principal and interest of the notes should be secured by the deposit with the United States treasury of $57,820,000 face value of first refunding mortgage 4 per cent gold bonds, to be thereafter issued by the Central Pacific or its successor having charge of the railroads then owned by the company, such bonds to be part of the issue of not exceeding $100,000,000 in all, and to be secured by mortgage upon all railroads, equipments and terminals owned by the Central Pacific Railroad Company, the mortgage being a first lien upon the property.

"In pursuance of another provision of the agreement, the four earliest maturing notes were purchased by Speyer & Co., March 10, 1899, and the proceeds, amounting to $11,762,543.12, and accrued interest to the date of payment, $35,771.02, in all $11,798,314.14, were received by the Treasury March 27, 1899, as part payment of the indebtedness of the Central Pacific and Western Pacific Railroad Companies. The proprietors of the various companies comprising the Central Pacific system were subsequently conveyed to a new corporation called the Central Pacific Railway Company, which latter executed the mortgage and bonds provided for by the agreement of settlement.

"On October 7, 1899, bonds were delivered to the Treasury Department by the Central Pacific Railway Company to secure the outstanding notes held by the Treasury. The United States, therefore, holds the notes of the Central Pacific Railroad Company to the amount of $47,059,172.36, bearing interest payable semi-annally at the rate of 3 per cent per annum, and secured by the deposit of an equal amount of first-mortgage bonds of the Pacific Railway Company, thus providing, beyond any doubt, for the sure and gradual payment of the whole of this subsidy debt, and providing in the meantime for the payment of interest at the rate of 3 per cent upon the unpaid balances. The United States, through the settlement agreement thus entered into will be reimbursed the full amount of the principal and interest of the Central Pacific and Western Pacific debt, aggregating $58,812,715.48.

"The amounts due to the United States March 1, 1900, from Pacific railroads on account of bonds issued in aid of their construction, were as follows:

AMOUNT DUE THE UNITED STATES MARCH 1, 1900, FROM PACIFIC RAILROADS.

Name of Road.	Principal.	Interest.	Total.
Central Branch Union Pacific.....	$1,600,000	$2,152,359.54	$3,752,359.54
Sioux City and Pacific.....	1,628,320	2,578,677.68	4,206,997.68
Totals	$3,228,320	$4,731,037.22	$7,959,357.22

"Efforts are now pending looking to the collection of this indebtedness.

"Out of an indebtedness of about $130,000,000, more than one-half of which consisted of accrued interest, the government has realized in cash, or its equavilent, the sum of $124,421,670.95, within a period of less than two years. No other administration in the history of the United States has ever so quickly, so thoroughly, and so satisfactorily enforced the settlement of large claims held by the government against business corporations, nor has any similar settlement ever previously been made by the government to such good financial advantage. The claims were due. The President insisted upon their collection, and this was done in a prompt and business-like manner."

WESTERN WOOL VALUES.

Farmers in Idaho See the Benefits of Protection.

Western wool values continue to attract the attention of farmers. Idaho affords an interesting exhibit, as follows:

Year.	Pounds.	Farm Price in Cents.	Total Value.
1891	3,513,846	13	$456,790
1892	3,689,539	13	479,640
1893	5,169,534	10	516,954
1894	5,456,823	6	327,410
1895	6,439,055	6½	418,539
1896	7,082,961	6¼	442,685
1897	9,632,833	9	866,954
1898	11,559,401	13	1,502,722
1899	16,183,180	12	1,541,978
1900	18,610,634	12½	2,326,329

The value of Idaho's wool decreased by one-half under free trade, but it is now back to regular protection prices. In 1891 the value of 3,514,000 pounds of Idaho wool was $456,790. But double the quantity was worth less money in 1896.

Just before President McKinley was inaugurated in 1897 the value of 9,633,000 pounds of Idaho wool was $866,954. This year, for less than twice the quantity, the farmer in that state got nearly three times as much money.

Prosecution, Not Protection.

The Republican party prosecutes and punishes those of its public officials who betray their trusts. Protection for dishonesty never was a Republican practice.

Disappointing Democracy.

The peaceful and satisfactory solution of a labor difficulty is always a disappointment to Democratic leadership.

Varieties of Populism.

Middle-of-the-road Populism continues to show fight to the variety that dodges about the fence corners.