

THE KISSING BUG

The Electrical Adventures of an American in Africa Hunting for His Affinity.

By J. O. FAOAN. (Copyright, 1899.)

CHAPTER III.

Containing "Norma, the Daughter of a Boer."

After a time I took more interest in the conversation and the stories of my guide than I did in my own adventures. We were trekking very leisurely in a northerly direction through the district of New Scotland with the idea of spending the winter in the gold fields at Pilgrims Rest.

Meanwhile I found the relations on the highveldt so utterly magnificent from my point of view that I didn't care how long I remained to enjoy it. The change from the climate of New England was inconceivable, and I began to feel like a new creature, with prospects and a future before me.

But little did I imagine what was in store for me. About this time the faithful and entertaining Hans was busily preparing a new story. He seemed to be doing a lot of scribbling and note taking, which I had never before known him to indulge in. After two or three weeks of preparation he finally told me that he was ready, and very much to my surprise, he added:

"I am going to read you a story this time, and I think you will be more than usually interested, for the reason that two of the characters in it are Americans with whom I hunted and traveled only a few years ago. This trip of ours had a romantic and wonderful sequel and I took great pains to preserve all my correspondence and information in regard to it."

The following evening, after making everything snug round the wagons, we sent the Kaffir drivers to hunt for jackals, whereupon Hans produced his manuscript and read as follows:

NORMA—The Daughter of a Boer.

The water is delicious, clear and beautiful, but you cannot persuade a Dutchman to drink a drop of it. They call it "the Pool of Blood." The little round pebbles, chips of quartz, even specks of gold twinkle and glisten at the bottom of it. A little crystal stream trickles in, another trickles out and wanders down the hillsides into the brook that glides in and out among the thorn trees. In the vicinity are the ruins of about half a dozen houses, and close to the pool is what looks like an old orchard and the remains of a Boer laager now crumbling to pieces.

Here, in days gone by, a party of immigrant Boers halted in their travels and founded a settlement.

After a while trouble arose with the Kaffirs. On a fateful day the men seized their rifles and pursued a band of the thieves some distance into the bush. They left, as they thought, a strong guard to defend their homes and their families.

On their return they found the settlement in flames. Not a voice was there to greet them, not a hand to shake. The corpses of the men and the women were scattered here and there among the wagons, the beautiful pool was choked up with the bodies of the children, and, instead of the sparkling water, there was blood.

As you stand by the pool and face the sunrise, you see before you the highlands of the Komati in the Transvaal. This natural rampart looks like a huge wall or fortification. It reaches away to the west and north for twenty miles or more, and divides the high veldt from the low veldt, or bush country.

When it is winter on the highlands and the country is a black stretch of burned-up grass, you will find the Boers with their families and their herds scattered all over the bush country. The climate in these regions is delightful, the vegetation luxuriant and the hunting grounds among the finest in the world.

Now, the wagon road between these districts passes within a short distance of the deserted settlement, and nearly all the year round wagons may be seen passing up and down the rocky highway.

There is a regular halting place just where the little path straggles from the road, leads up to the pool and then passes into a small inclosure, which is a graveyard. There is only one great flat stone in it, and the inscription it bears, being interpreted, is as follows:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR WIVES AND CHILDREN.

That is all, but to this day when the wagons pass by, you will find the people who frequent the sturdy Dutch farmers drop their whips or lay aside their rifles and make their way reverently to the little shrine. Then they uncover their heads and utter the prayer they have known from their childhood.

"O Lord, deliver our dear ones from the power of the Kaffirs."

But for many years after the massacre the old settlement itself was shunned by the Boers as a place of ill-omen and bitter memory.

At last old Dirk Joubert, whose wife and four children were asleep in the little cemetery, returned, as he said, to end his days in the spot where his heart and his hopes were already buried. The man's possessions consisted of a few cows, a wagon and a rifle. He was a stern, unbending kind of a man, who worked hard and said little, but every once in a while a kind word or a kind deed escaped him, and his neighbors would say, "Leave old Dirk alone, he has a good heart."

Of course he loved his little daughter, Norma, his only child and companion, who had escaped in a miraculous way from the massacre and after a while even the Kaffirs pitied the old man and the little girl who was motherless.

However, old Dirk stuck to the farm and his daughter grew up and, with bare head and bare feet, did the work of a man. So when Norma was fifteen years of age she was strong and healthy and brave. Her father had taught her to read and write, to handle a rifle, to mount the hides of the horses, to chop wood and to hoe corn. In fact, they had to fight for existence in a new country.

The old man had many friends and they often tried to persuade him to return to the high veldt and live with them, but in truth he was brokenhearted and refused to move an inch. Afterward, when he found out that his child could do, he became proud as well as stubborn.

Nobody called Norma beautiful, and yet there was something in her face that made you look and then wonder and afterward you knew her history you discovered that it was a face to be worshipped. At least the young Boers thought so, as they watched her grow up to womanhood and brave the storms and the terrors of the wilderness with single-hearted devotion to her old father.

Those who have never been compelled to feed and to clothe themselves by means of a rifle can have no idea what existence cost in the early days when the farmers first trekked northward and commenced to dispute for the right of way with the Kaffirs and animals.

In course of time Dirk began to fall. He still went hunting at times, but often returned empty-handed, so more and more it fell to Norma to provide.

One night some of her father's cattle broke away and the next day were found that the Kaffirs were holding them at a kraal some five miles away. So Norma set out to bring them back. She had heard that there was a party of foreigners hunting in the neighborhood. They were Americans or English, she didn't know which, and she didn't care. She hated foreigners simply because her father did.

However, she secured the cattle and was returning slowly homeward, when the report of firearms recalled the foreigners to her mind.

Wishing to avoid them she took to a Kaffir path which led through a dried up swamp over which the reeds had grown thick and high.

Her precautions, however, were in vain. As she rode on among the reeds she found herself in plain view of the wagons of the hunters.

At a glance she could see that one of the foreigners had a water buck at bay among the reeds and was calling for assistance. Another man with a white helmet on his head was scrambling down the rocky bank that skirted the swamp.

He was about half way down when Norma was horrified to see a large tiger cat spring from its lair and alight square on the man's head and shoulders. Down the bank they rolled together, the man yelling for help, while the growls of the tiger were half smothered, as, with snap after snap, it tried to bury its muzzle and jaws in the flesh of its victim. They landed almost at the feet of Norma. In the scramble the cat lost its grip, fell off to one side and was squirming and doubling up for another spring when a bullet from Norma's rifle pierced its brain.

The wounded man was Claude Norcross, and his friend, who hastened to his assistance, was Robert Dearborn, Americans, both of them.

Norma understood her duty, in spite of her father's dislike to foreigners. As the man's injuries were very serious she invited the party over to the farmhouse. There they remained for over three months, and when Claude had recovered his friend Dearborn told him that he owed his life to Norma's skill and devotion.

As for Claude, his gratitude was boundless, and his admiration for the girl was so sincere and outspoken that after he was gone Norma missed him dreadfully, and once in a while took refuge in tears.

In 1853 old Dirk Joubert died, and was gathered to his wife and children in the little cemetery.

Some well-to-do relations, living in Pretoria, took charge of Norma, and, of course, from this time on a great change came over her life. However, she made such good use of her time and opportunities that when Claude met her about two years later, as his return from the Zambesi, he could hardly credit his senses or believe his eyes.

He had, of course, a genuine regard for her, and this soon ripened into something more serious for them both, and, to make a long story short, in the end they plighted their faith to each other.

But Norma's guardians were very bitter against the foreigners and refused to have anything to do with Claude. He tried everything he could think of to conciliate them, but to no purpose, so after a while he appealed to the law, and in disgust and returned to his own country.

About six weeks afterward Norma herself disappeared and was never seen again either in the low country, which she loved so well, or at the home of her guardians.

As for the old folks they didn't trouble themselves much about the child. They had always thought she was wayward and headstrong, and to the conclusion that she was also wicked.

So they simply wrote the words "Black Sheep" against her name in the old Bible and consoled themselves with the idea that they had done their duty.

Boston, Mass., April 7, 1880. LETTER TO THE WIFE. FROM NORMA TO CLAUDE.

They say it takes two to make a quarrel, Claude, and you indeed proved to be as angry, but from me you have had nothing but patience and a loving, faithful heart. You remember that last day in Pretoria when you took dearest to witness that if I would only desert my own country and come to yours you would marry me at once, and you said and I knew that was all that was necessary to make us both supremely happy.

So now you have been lavishing your money and wasting your time on my poor self, on my education and surroundings, only to find out at last that your rich friends will not permit you to marry a "questionable character."

I am sure that is what they call me, and, indeed, how can I blame them, seeing that my friends treated you in much the same way?

However, there is this difference, my dear Claude, that I scorned my friends and left them for your sake. And now, what will you do? What have you done?

Why, Claude, you have quarreled with me, you have left me with nothing but a name and with unkind, cruel words on your tongue.

Oh, Claude, Claude, forgive me if I am wrong, but you see I am a poor defenseless woman, and I suppose I dream and imagine all sorts of impossible things, and it even seems to me now as if I had nothing left to depend on but my own will and my own strength.

I am sure I don't know what you said or why I should be so wicked as to imagine anything of the kind, but after you had left me to-day the idea took possession of me that perhaps after all you were in one way and another trying to convince me of the misery of my position, trying to drive me to extremities so as to make me surrender and become to you something less than a wife.

Claude, I can't, I won't believe that, for if I could, I think, may I am sure that I could kill you.

grew strong and hopeful, and I said to myself: "Claude will return, and hand in hand we will walk peacefully, we will have faith, and all will yet be well."

A YEAR LATER. LETTER THE LAST. NORMA TO CLAUDE.

I understand you at last, and I thank God for it. I scorn your proposals, and I feel for you now nothing but contempt and anger. Either you have had to do with a girl who trusted to your honor and to your sacred word, now you will have to reckon with the daughter of a Boer.

These apartments and all this luxury which you have provided for and lavished on your intended wife now fill me with indescribable loathing and disgust, and to-day I shake it all from me forever. Just one word more.

I go from this house to the home of your former friend, Robert Dearborn. I send you a copy of a marriage license, and you will, doubtless take notice that the principals to the contract are Robert Dearborn and Norma Joubert.

Now I wish to tell you that your former friend is a good man and honorable, and I, therefore, warn you that your miserable life has any value whatever in your own eyes—to keep away from him. That is all—APRIL, 1881. CLAUDE TO ROBERT.

My first thought is a horsewhip, but for the sake of old times I will consent to perforate your body with a bullet or two, as the case may require.

Now above all things I hate publicity, so I insist that we shall have no seconds, no surgeons or nonsense of any kind. As you are the challenged I grant you the privilege to name the weapons and to arrange in any way. If you cannot and dare not, I will.

ROBERT TO CLAUDE. In the name and in the defense of Norma I answer you. I will arrange to the letter as you desire, and I shall be glad to be the means of ridding the community of a creature who practices the tricks of a perjurer and a sneak under the cloak of a gentleman.

You will receive due notice of the hour and the place. Meanwhile may you dream of bullets and of a miserable end. MAY, 1881. NORMA TO ROBERT.

I confess I cannot trust myself to see you again until after the settlement, therefore, I write.

Robert, my preserver, you are so good, so noble, I am afraid if you come to me again, and sit at the arrangements, so with your voice and your eyes I shall relent and remember that I am a woman.

It may be a sickness, a fever, or simply an insane, unholly desire for revenge. I cannot tell, I cannot even think or take time to consider the consequences; I can only assure you that I hold you to your word.

Now for the arrangements. The public schools of a course of humane treatment to animals.

The population of the South African republic consists of 83,000 Boers, 57,000 other whites, called uitlanders, and 600,000 Kaffirs and Zulus.

There are in Boston 43,277 persons born in British America, including Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

Austria is the country most lenient to murderers. In ten years over 800 persons were found guilty of murder, of whom only twenty-three were put to death.

Warrington, Eng., town council has just issued an order penalizing the delivery of milk to the streets of the town. The order is under the Lord's day act of 1875.

The giraffe was thought to be near extinction, but Major Maxse, a British explorer, has discovered herds of them along the Sobat river, a tributary of the White Nile.

Norwegian legislators propose that girls who do not know how to knit, sew, wash and cook should be refused permission to marry. Daughters of wealthy men are not to be an exception.

Since January 190 colleges, academies and seminaries and eight art galleries in the United States have received gifts amounting to over \$2,000,000.

New York city annually pays \$50 in gold in one payment to every living person who has spent in the city of New York, California standing second with \$15,577,800.

Gambling in France is said to have reached such proportions that the government has been obliged to levy a tax on it. It is estimated that half of the suicides in Paris are due to losses at the races.

In Germany potato bread is used by the natives of Thuringia to feed their horses, especially when they are worked hard in the fields.

Cuba and Porto Rico used to buy annually 1,000,000 worth of shoes of American manufacture, and a clumsy article they were. A much better grade of American shoes is being in the island now for \$2 per cent less.

A recent bulletin of the United States Treasury department during the first ten months ending May 1, 1896, 414 American railroad locomotives were exported to foreign countries, the value of these locomotives was \$4,000,000.

In ten years American Life Insurance companies have doubled their assets, the total amount being \$1,200,000,000.

A railroad official in a recent lecture stated that it cost his road each year about \$1,000,000 for rubber stamps. The stamps for ink, \$7,000 for lead pencils—both of which cost nearly as much for stationery as they do for the stamps.

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A single furlong in New Jersey, it is said, cost the farmer \$100 for the corn and about 4,000 for schools, churches, engine houses, etc. It is estimated by a four-year-old boy that he had made \$100,000 in the year in the country to tillers of the soil and breeders.

An monument was desired by an elderly maiden lady who died a few weeks ago in Athlone, Ireland. She left a fortune of \$100,000, and her executor, a lawyer, provided that her body should be converted into ashes and used in making the mortar for building the edifice.

Princeton University continues to be the envy of most institutions of learning. It received about \$50,000 in gifts during the year ending 1895, including \$100,000 for a new dormitory, \$100,000 for a new professorship in English, \$100,000 for a new chair in politics and \$50,000 toward a chair in history.

Moths fly against the candle flame because their eyes can bear only a small amount of light. When, therefore, they come within the light of a candle, their sight is overpowered and their vision confused, and as they cannot distinguish objects they pursue the light itself and fly against the flame.

People who wear false hair will be interested in the announcement of a strange discovery made at Antwerp. In that city a woman had a quantity of hair which was stolen from a railroad station. It was afterward learned that the hair had been raised from a large number of lunatics and convicts in public asylums and prisons.

Several saloonkeepers in Manchester, O., have adopted a novel method to keep loafers away from their premises. They have placed the window sills and door steps are treated with a quantity of white caliche. This prevents the loafers from dropping into an easy posture, and they move to a more inviting resting place.

A Cure for the Drinking Habit. Philadelphia Record.

The old cure for the drink habit, which consists of chewing ralsina every time a drink is desired, has been tried in a number of cases with great success, and it is now being freely recommended in various quarters. Another remedy which is indorsed quite often by the medical fraternity consists of eating apples in great quantities, both during meals and whenever thirst is felt. It is singular that both these remedies are strictly homeopathic in their use, and application, because wine can be made from raisins, and apples and apples vinegar themselves are practically dried grapes. From apples, of course, cider can be made, and the argument appears to be that using both these ingredients in small quantities kills the desire to partake to excess of the more "sacrosanct" product. As a pleasant remedy is made, especially in the South.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The Friends have ninety colleges in the United States, with total attendance of 20,000 students.

Among birds the swan lives to be the oldest. In extreme cases reaching 20 years, the falcon has been known to live over 152 years.

An enactment of the Texas Legislature provides for the teaching in the public schools of a course of humane treatment to animals.

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HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Not Congenial. Chicago Record.

"Your engagement is broken!" "Yes, we couldn't agree. I like watermelon cut in round slices and she always watermelons in long slices."

Used to It. Chicago Tribune.

Photographer—Yes, I can take your picture, but it's a dark day, and it will require a considerable exposure.

A Broad Aim. Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Ma, sis out on the street throwing stones at the horses."

Benevolent Old Gentleman (to angry boy)—Stop, my son! Never let the sun go down on your wrath.

Brooklyn Life.

"Mrs. Henpek (glaring) Go ahead, Henry!" "Mrs. Henpek—That I used to get down in Cuba in the war."

Home Instruction. Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

"Go you are a school teacher?" "Then you can't teach the young idea how to shoot."

Evidence Against Them. Chicago Times-Herald.

"I thought you said the Peacocks had money?" "We've been given to understand that they have."

Too Much for Human Nature. Detroit Free Press.

"How is it that you and Jones haven't spoken for years?" "I can remember when you were a baby."

Misapprehension. Brooklyn Life.

"I didn't know you were a baseball player, father."

Difference in Fluids. Chicago Tribune.

"But," said the girl who had married beneath her, "just because you don't like Harry you ought not to treat me as a strange mamma. Blood is thicker than water."

Crushing. Detroit Journal.

Here the poet railed bitterly. "It is absurd to pretend that my lines are not worth a Rhine art thou, by cliffs beset. No Thames, of placid, even tide. With grass lawn edging either side; With strong and turbid, and perished. By frequent whirrs and eddies veered. At times an overwhelming flood. Of brute destruction—yet through all. Large wealth bestowing grain and woods. Upgrading where once swept by floods. And no more, whatever thy zone. God's hills will hold thee to His crown. Our new democracy in thee. With castles on each parapet. No Thames, of placid, even tide. With grass lawn edging either side; With strong and turbid, and perished. By frequent whirrs and eddies veered. At times an overwhelming flood. Of brute destruction—yet through all. Large wealth bestowing grain and woods. Upgrading where once swept by floods. And no more, whatever thy zone. God's hills will hold thee to His crown. Our new democracy in thee. With castles on each parapet. No Thames, of placid, even tide. 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