

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Descartes Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Schopenhauer Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Grimm Jerome Bebel Proust
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Voltaire Federer Herodot
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy
Chamberlain Langbein Gryphius
Brentano Claudius Schiller Lafontaine Kralik Iffland Sokrates
Strachwitz Bellamy Schilling Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
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Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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The Boer in Peace and War

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Boer Mounted Police.ToList

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THE BOER IN PEACE AND WAR

CHAPTER I ToC

A Boer may know you, but it will take you some time to know him, and when a certain stage in your acquaintance is reached, you may begin to wonder whether his real nature is penetrable at all. His ways are not the ways of other people: he is suspicious, distant, and he does not care to show his hand—unless, of course, there is some pecuniary advantage to be gained. He is invariably on the alert for advantages of that description.

His suspicious nature has probably been handed down to him from preceding generations. When he first set foot in South Africa he was naturally chary concerning the native population. He had to deal firmly with Bushmen, and the latter certainly proved a source of continual trouble. The Boer set himself a difficult task when he undertook to instil fear, obedience, and submission into the hearts of these barbarians—a task that could only be faced by men of firm determination and unlimited self-confidence.

These characteristics have always inspired the Boer, and although he may often have been the object of derision, it is to his credit that the predominant qualities mentioned have enabled him to pull through the miry clay. Without these qualities, it is patent that the little band which landed at the Cape long years ago would have succumbed before the conflicting forces which then existed. And as succeeding years passed on, and the sun still shone upon the heads of the pioneers, it is worthy to note that, despite the difficulties which continually presented themselves, the little band multiplied, prospered, and evolved an ensample not too mean to contemplate.

The Boer cannot be charged with any incapacity where the mere treatment of natives is concerned; he can manage that business perfectly. In the first place, he does not make the too common mistake of allowing the black populace to insert the thin end of the wedge.

This is a mistake too often fraught with serious results, and the Boer knows it. A native, no matter if he be Swazi, Zulu, Basuto, or any other nationality, will always take advantage where such is offered, and he will follow it up with enough persistence to warrant ultimate success. In Natal, at the present time, this mistake is very apparent, and, in consequence, one very seldom encounters a native who is content to attire himself in any other manner than that adopted by his master. He demands decent clothing, and, if possible, it must be new and fashionable. I have known cases where a 'boy' has been presented with a respectable suit of clothes a little too small for him, and it is unnecessary to add that he disposed of that suit. People who have hitherto allowed their children to put their pennies in the Sunday School Mission box, will perhaps hesitate to continue supporting the 'poor, down-trodden native' when they learn that he is so fastidious, and perhaps, after all, their spare copers might be assigned to a more deserving cause.

The Boer does not treat his black servants in any such fashion—he knows better. He puts them on a sound footing to begin with, and he leads them to understand that they must remain there.

This method of treatment where the natives are concerned has, to a great extent, insured the progress of the Boer in South Africa. He has laid down certain laws at the outset, and he has rigidly adhered to those laws. He employs a different method of treatment from that which is attributed to the Natal farmer and others who employ native servants. He has never allowed his original attitude towards natives to become compatible with the British idea; he prefers still to look upon them as slaves, although he is perforce required to regard them as servants. The difficulty in Natal with regard to the rapidly increasing native populace, and how to deal effectually with the question, might have arisen in the Orange Free State, for instance, were it not for the fact that the native, in comparison with the white population, is small. By a Law passed in the Volksraad some few years ago, it became compulsory for farmers to allow only a limited number of native families to remain on the farms. This created considerable dissatisfaction among both farmers and natives, and the result was that native labour approached the inadequate in a very short time. Hundreds of native families left the State, and although the Law ultimately admitted of a wider interpretation, the native

populace has not materially increased. The present attitude of natives in the towns is not altogether satisfactory since the passing of this Law. Labour being scarce, they are inclined to take up an independent attitude, which, if fraught with little danger, is at least calculated to produce a certain amount of friction between white and black. Added to this, there is the fact that the education of natives, which is becoming more general, undoubtedly assists the growth of this independence. The Boer farmers in this connection adhere to their pristine view of the matter, namely, that educating natives amounts to casting pearls before swine; and although this does not tend to encourage the work of the missionary, there may possibly be a certain amount of truth in it.

Before the arrival of British subjects at the Cape, the Boer had it all his own way. He looked upon himself as practically the ruler of the country, and it was not natural that he should look with favour upon the advent of a probable rival. He lived peacefully in a way—that is, when he was not in open conflict with the natives. He killed his game and cooked it and ate it heartily, and he enjoyed a measure of happiness. He had found a home; the free-and-easy life suited him; and if he was not possessed of riches (which would have been of little value to him then), he had, at least, health and strength and an abundance of daily food.

But one day the now accursed Englishman crossed his path, and that made a considerable difference. He perhaps wondered why the English came there at all, when he was just beginning to develop a great country. But he did not, of course, know then what he knows now, namely, that the English are insatiable land-grabbers! He looked upon their advent more in the light of a huge slice of impertinence. He knew also that it was dangerous to meddle or contend with them, so he merely looked on with a suspicious eye. He watched their every movement, and he also very probably looked for the day of their departure. But they did not depart; they had come to stay.

The Boer did not like his English neighbours from the start; there was far too much of the go-ahead persuasion about them. He wanted to jog along quietly and cautiously, and he very naturally resented the presence of people in whom the desire for progression was

strong. So long as the Boer was left to himself he was not aware of his own tardiness. He was very much in the position of a cyclist on the track; it needed a 'pacer' to show how slowly he was travelling. The 'pacer' in this instance brought with him no commendation in the eyes of the Boer; he merely created suspicion and ill-feeling, which ultimately developed into rancour.

When suspicion lays hold of a man it invariably changes the whole of that man's character. It did so in the case of the Boer. It debarred any chance of reconciliation with the English for the future. The Boer does not know the meaning of compromise, and if he did, it would go against his grain to entertain it. His nature is stubborn; he cannot bring himself to look at a question from any other view-point than his own. He will argue a point for hours, and although he may be in the wrong, it is a moral impossibility to convince him that he is not in the right. His consummate ignorance may largely account for this; but even semi-educated Boers are not much better in this respect.

The Boer makes an excellent pioneer, and when he found that the English ideas were not compatible with his own, he decided to move farther north. That is another of his characteristics— independence. He is not only independent to a degree, he is sensitive; and when he discovers by accident that he is a much-aggrieved party, his indignation does not usually take a violent form—he simply clears out. He may be somewhat different where the Transvaal is concerned—he may be indignant, but he has no intention in this instance of adopting the procedure of his forefathers. The latter had not yet dropped into an inheritance glittering with gold; they were merely agriculturists, and they desired pastures of their own. Some of them found desirable pastures in the barren wastes of the Free State, and subsequently the majority wended their way to the Transvaal.

It is not, of course, my intention to reiterate history. History is good enough when it is new, but I should only be covering ground which is already familiar to most readers. My purpose is to present glimpses of the Boer as he is to-day.

CHAPTER II To C

The Boers are very much like the Scotch—they are clannish. Every Boer has a solid belief in himself, to begin with, and every Boer has a profound belief in his brother. This characteristic has many advantages: it not only welds a people together, it is a sufficient guarantee of success in times of trouble and difficulty, and it has stood the Boer in good stead. He likes to tell you that no difficulty is insurmountable in his eyes—nay, further, he does not believe in the existence of any difficulty which he is not competent to overcome. Rumours of trouble with natives do not appal him, because he knows before he slings his gun over his shoulder that he is going forth to inflict due punishment upon the insurgents. He does not in any instance entertain the thought of a repulse. He marches to the front with a firm, determined step, and he does not rest until he has conclusively settled the matter.

The march to the front is a sort of family concern. I have tried occasionally to unravel the relations of the numerous families in certain districts, but it seems to me that the complications are too great to admit of analysis. For instance, it will be found that the family of Wessels is closely allied to the family of Odendaals, and the Odendaals, on the other hand, are related to the De Jagers. This kind of thing worries and tantalizes a man, and the only safe conclusion to arrive at is that the entire nation is linked together in some way or other by family ties. This may account for the fact that it is seldom necessary to introduce one Boer to another—they are very well acquainted without such formalities; if they are not, they very soon strike up an acquaintance.

Of course there are exceptions, and I remember one in particular. The instance I refer to occurred in a store. One of the gentlemen in question was leaning heavily against the counter, and one could observe at a glance that he, at least, had a good opinion of himself. Presently Boer number two entered. He was small in stature, like the other man, but there was a note of uncertainty about him which seemed to betoken that his opinion of himself did not measure up in proportion to that of the other Boer. Number two looked about him

a bit, and occasionally directed a furtive glance at number one, who, on the other hand, stolidly regarded the array of goods spread out before him. Number two seemed to have settled the question in his own mind at last, for he approached the other party and held out his hand.

'I am Britz,' he said laconically, as the other touched the outstretched hand indifferently.

'Ja!' said number one; 'I am Papenfus.'

The conversation ended here, and number two made a silent departure.



Waggons Bringing Wool To Early Morning Market (Johannesburg).ToList

The preliminary salutations of another pair of Boers are probably as interesting. It was during a prolonged drought, and both gentlemen had evidently experienced a difficulty in finding a sufficiency of water for the purposes of ablution. They had not met for a number of years, but the recognition was mutual.

'Almachtig, Gert, you are still as ugly as ever!'

'Ja!' replied the other readily; 'and you are still alive with that face!'

The Boer is coarse in his conversation, although he prefers to regard it as wit. He likes to participate in a conversation bristling with this sort of wit, but when you come to tell him a really good thing, he fails entirely to grasp the point, and your joke falls flat, resulting usually in a painful silence.

He is also very chary of complications in the handling of money. He brings his wool into town once, and sometimes twice, a year, and that staple comprises the current coin of the country. His clip is weighed off in due course, and he proceeds to the store and sits down while the clerk figures up the amount. You may be foolish enough to ask him if he will buy a plough or a bag of coffee, but he continues to smoke hard and expectorate all over the floor without giving a definite reply. He wants to handle the money first, and then he will arrange about his purchases. Within half an hour he will probably have in his pocket two or three hundred golden sovereigns (he does not look upon bank-notes with favour; he wants something hard and substantial), and he will at once proceed to the matter of buying. At the end of the day his waggon is loaded up with a variety of household and agricultural necessities, for which he has paid, say, £150 of the money received for his wool. This is his way of doing things, and he thinks it is the right one.

During the Boer War of 1880 merchants in the Free State had a bad time of it. The Boers were, of course, very much excited, and the English merchant was looked upon scornfully and contemptuously. One Boer had already drawn up a memorandum of what he considered should be the *modus operandi* in dealing with the storekeepers. Two or three were to be hanged, and the others were to be tied up in front of their own buildings and shot down like crows. That was in Harrismith.

The Boer has not much to boast of in the matter of brains, but what he does possess he is careful not to abuse. A man can abuse his brains in many ways—by taking to strong drink, for instance. I have been among Boers for some years, and I can honestly say that I never yet saw a Boer the worse for drink. He may indulge occasionally, but he very seldom carries the practice to excess. When he does

take it he likes it strong—as strong as he can get it. He scorns the idea of mixing it in water. He reckons that he did not go to the can-teen or hotel to pay for water. He wants the full value of his money, and he takes it.

I have said that the Boer is suspicious; he is likewise jealous by nature. If there happens to be rinderpest on the next farm to his, he is never contented until he gets his full share. He does not mind if the visitation plays extreme havoc among his stock so long as he is not left in the lurch. I remember some time ago hearing of a Boer who had decided to build a large dwelling-house on his farm in place of the wretched little building he and his family had hitherto occupied. This Boer had made some money, and contact with English people in the towns had resulted in more advanced ideas. He determined, therefore, to spare no expense on this new project—he even included a bath-room. The building was scarcely completed, when about a dozen Boers, who were also capitalists in a way, immediately set about making arrangements for similar structures. This form of jealousy is, of course, good where trade is concerned.

If the Boer is nothing else, he is at least talked about. I say nothing else advisedly, because he is nothing else. In his own country he is nothing, and out of it he is less, if that were possible. It may seem out of place on the part of a Scotsman to make such an assertion, because a Scotsman (and a Yorkshireman, too, by the way) is, in the eyes of the Boer, a friendly being, and far removed above a mere Englishman. A Boer will give a Scotsman the best in the house, and put up his horse comfortably, but an Englishman in the same circumstances fares differently. It is, of course, unnecessary to say that while a Scotsman makes no objection to exceptional hospitality, his views of the Boer do not differ materially from those of any other person of whatever nationality. He drinks the Boer's coffee, and shakes hands with him and all his family, but there may be, and usually is, a great deal of deception mixed up with such extreme good-feeling. I could never understand, nor has it been explained to me, why the Boer is so partial towards Scotsmen, unless it be that a great many Scotch words resemble words in the Dutch language. Perhaps that may in some degree account for it, although I do not think there is anything to be proud of on the Scottish side.