

Satisfied as to this, Mr. Danby dropped the discussion and like a loyal friend said he would do what he could to further Ormond's views. "And as you really want to sell the business," he added, "I think I know the very man who will be glad to buy and pay a reasonable price."

And so it fell out that about the close of the following week a circular was issued to all interested intimating that Mr. Andrew Ormond would after a certain date transfer his business to Mr. So-and-So, who would thereafter conduct it on the lines which had

hitherto given so much satisfaction—and here followed the usual compliments and flourishes.

A month passed and then, on a May evening, Andrew Ormond wrote his last business letter, gave a parting shake of the hand to all his clerks, from the cashier to the office-boy, and made his first step into the new life which he had planned for himself.

He had many things in his favour. He was a philosopher, self-contained, and his own best company; he had a cheerful disposition,

no anxiety about money, no extravagances, no absurd expectations, and a firm belief in finding happiness by leading one's own life in one's own way.

Going west he fell in with his cousin, Kate Vincent, almost the only relative he had, and quite as outspoken a critic of his affairs as Mr. Danby. He told her that he thought he had got his life right at last.

"Well," said Kate, "we very seldom do get our lives just right, and if they are ever so it only lasts a day."

(To be continued.)

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN SOUTH AFRICA.

At the present time the sympathy and interest of every Englishwoman is stirred to the uttermost by the knowledge of all the suffering and privation that are being endured by English people in South Africa. I know how anxiously the home people watch and wait for news, how eagerly the newspapers are read, and how sadly every heart beats when the news of a dearly-bought victory is followed by the tidings of individual loss and death. I know that no English girl could read with unmoved feelings the accounts of the great and noble deeds done by our brave soldiers out here, deeds that will live in history long after the war is past.

Doubtless you have all read and heard about the Boers as men of war, and you have probably seen pictures of their towns, and the scenes of their battles; but I feel sure you will be interested in hearing about their lives in times of peace, especially if you know as little about the Free State as I did when I came out to Africa a year ago.

Let us begin with their homes. The Dutch farms are curiously unattractive, internally as well as externally. They are generally built under the shelter of a small kopje, and some

of them have the additional shelter of surrounding trees—tall blue-gums, cypresses, silver-wattles, and beautiful orange-trees—but a great many farms are singularly bare of foliage of any description, and give one the idea of having been washed up by a strange wave, and left on the veldt lonely and desolate. They are built of stone, hewn out of the nearest quarry, and mortar made of mud. Very few farms are brick, though some of the rich farmers are now building brick houses. They are all one-storeyed, and have a stoep, which is raised a couple of feet or more from the ground, built of stone, and roofed like an English verandah. Most of the rooms open on to the stoep, and some of them have no other means of entrance, so that retiring to bed on a dark evening, one has to walk cautiously for fear of snakes. Some of the stoeps have no covering, but are just bare unattractive stone platforms. The roofs everywhere are corrugated iron, and look colourless and cold. One longs for a dash of red, an irregular gable window, an old oak beam, or a thatched roof to break the monotony.

Inside the farm-house one finds the same uninteresting commonplace ornaments that one knows so well in seaside lodgings at home. Crochet antimacassars, wool mats in variegated colouring, highly-coloured

almanacs, with a grocer's or store-keeper's (as he is called in South Africa) name in the corner. Very often one finds a mud floor, and wooden chairs, the seats of which are thin strips of untanned leather stretched across. The ceilings are wooden in the bigger houses, and canvas or calico in the poorer ones. The Dutch are very fond of music, and you will always find a piano, American organ, or old-fashioned harmonium in the place of honour in the parlour. Spring-bôk skins take the place of carpets in a great many of the rooms, and the floor boards are stained, polished, and kept in very good condition. Outside are the stables, small detached stone buildings, and at a little distance the huts, where the Kaffirs who work on the farm live. These huts are always built of mud, and have roofs thatched with dried rushes, and they are so low that one has to stoop considerably before creeping in at the door. They are often built in a round shape, with no windows, and a mud floor, hollowed in the centre to form a fire-place. The walls are built with niches, where the household goods are kept, big blocks of home-made soap being always conspicuous, and they are hung round with the dried skins of small wild animals. Round about are the kraals, low stone walls, within which the cattle are driven at night; and there is the orchard with its wealth of fruit trees, peach, apricot, and plum, and

just a patch of flower garden cultivated with great difficulty, on account of the drought, but repaying every little care by flowering abundantly and luxuriantly. Such a wealth of roses one never sees growing at home. The flowers run riot, as if they would say, "Take only a little trouble with us, and we will show you what South African roses can do."

To one side, a short distance from the house, and built on the most naturally adaptable bit of land, is the dam—the most important feature of a Free State farm, supplying water to the garden, the orchard, and the "lands," i.e., the cultivated part of the veldt,



MAKUNGO OR BUSHMEN'S VILLAGE.

(From a photograph for the Paris Society for Evangelical Missions.)

where the farmer grows his crop of seed-oats, barley, wheat, or mealies. The dam wall is sometimes built to a great height, and is formed of stone and mud well and solidly put together; the dam itself when full resembles a small lake or reservoir. After months of drought, no uncommon thing in South Africa, the dam will entirely dry up, and then will fill again with wonderful rapidity after a few hours' tropical rain. The overflow of water from the dam when it is full, after very heavy rain, is carried into the "spruit." I expect a great many of you know that a spruit is the stony bed of a river, with steep sides, which is called a "sluit" when it is dry, and a spruit when full of water. It becomes a raging torrent after a heavy thunderstorm, spreading from bank to bank and impassable for days. The interior of a Dutch farmhouse shows very plainly the difference between English girls and Dutch ones. There are no pretty pieces of embroidery, no dainty paintings, no cleverly-carved tables and chairs; and I think one reason for the absence of these trifles is the apathy of the Dutch girls with regard to their homes.

From the time they are confirmed, about the age of fifteen, they talk and think of little else but marriage, and it is no uncommon thing for quite young girls to marry old widowers with grown-up families. My experience of Dutch girls is limited, but I fancy they would prefer any husband to remaining single, and I have never come across a Dutch "old maid." They lead a very indolent quiet life on the farms, the Kaffir servants do all the work, and the mistress has only to superintend, except in the fruit season, when she makes preserves and cans fruit. This she does to perfection, and has a store of canned fruits to last her all through the winter, and she sometimes presents visitors to the farm with a bottle or two of peaches or figs.

When there is any illness on a farm, the neighbours for miles round flock to the house, arriving by dozens in carts and "buggies," all anxious to see the sick person and to suggest some fresh treatment. No matter how full the house may be or how limited the accommodation, it is a point of etiquette to invite everyone to stay, and the question is at once asked, "Will you outspan?"

The Dutch take an intensely morbid interest in all suffering, and gather in a marvellous way round a sick-room. Sympathy doubtless attracts a few, but I am afraid the majority come chiefly through curiosity, and it is a fact that if a patient recovers, his friends go back to their own farms just a little disappointed; death for them has a strange fascination, and a funeral is looked forward to as an exciting event. They are a very superstitious and ignorant race, not knowing, understanding or practising the most simple rules of hygiene, and having a deeply-rooted dislike to water and fresh air. However ill a person may be, his room will be crowded with people, and though the doctor will turn them out over and over again, they return persistently directly he leaves. They sing the most mournful hymns and psalms round the invalid's bed, and having been sternly ordered away by the doctor, these dismal friends retire to the stables or out-houses and continue

their lugubrious chanting. The Kaffir servants share in the general depression, and sit huddled round their mud huts doing nothing. When one of these Kaffirs falls ill, he or she is doctored by all the others with decoctions made from herbs and roots; if likely to die a witch-doctor is sent for, and his treatment is weird in the extreme; it is also very expensive, as he generally demands an ox or cow in payment. On arriving at the farm, the hut in which the patient lives is pointed out to him, and without going in or seeing the occupant at all he retires to the nearest spruit, very likely some two hundred odd yards away, and begins his cure. Bones, beads, pieces of coloured cloth are arranged in a circle round him. In the centre of the circle he sits before a small fire and makes marks and signs on the ground and in the air. At intervals he sends up to the hut to see how the sick person is progressing, and if the report is unsatisfactory he retires further away still from the hut, saying he was too near the patient before to do any good, and recommences his mysterious operations.

There is no time now to give you more than a sketch of Free State farm life, but I hope the little I have told you will be of interest to you all, and that you will feel as if you knew more about the home life of the Boer after reading these impressions.

* * The above has been sent to us from an old contributor together with the following letter:—

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I wonder whether you heard that we were obliged to come out here for a holiday? We both knocked up after a time of sadness and anxiety, which came when we were working very hard, and the work which promised to be so successful had to come to an end. We have been spending a year of delightful holiday and novelty with one of my brothers who is a doctor in the Free State at a little place called —, and are all much better. Mother is with us; of course it would have been out of the question to have left her at home. And now a sad time has come to us all, and this terrible war has separated us, as it is separating thousands all round us. We three women have been obliged to fly for refuge into the Colony, and my brother and his partner was commandeered as surgeons by the —"



A WIZARD AT WORK.

(Photo: Ferneyhough, Pietermaritzburg.)

Commando, and were not allowed to leave —. The penalty for attempting to escape was confiscation of property and death, so our only course was to come away and theirs to remain. You will know without my telling you what our anxiety is, as we can hear nothing from my brother. Some people are still afraid of their invading Queenstown, but I personally do not think it at all likely and feel no alarm. We are staying here till we can return to —, and find the Queens-town people very kind, but we have had horrible experiences and shall be deeply thankful when peace is restored and we can return.

"E. H. J."

A PRETTY ZOUAVE JACKET.



FRONT.



BACK.

Zouave jacket of white silk gauze embroidered with variegated chenille. Simulated under-jacket and high collar in green velvet. The waistcoat is arranged in diagonal folds. This zouave is to be worn over plain bodices with sleeves.