

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 Queenstown 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.