

Traffics and Discoveries

By

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THE CAPTIVE

FROM THE MASJID-AL-AQSA OF SAYYID AHMED (WAHABI)

Not with an outcry to Allah nor any complaining
He answered his name at the muster and stood to the chaining.
When the twin anklets were nipped on the leg-bars that held them,
He brotherly greeted the armourers stooping to weld them.
Ere the sad dust of the marshalled feet of the chain-gang swallowed him,
Observing him nobly at ease, I alighted and followed him.
Thus we had speech by the way, but not touching his sorrow
Rather his red Yesterday and his regal To-morrow,
Wherein he stately moved to the clink of his chains unregarded,
Nowise abashed but contented to drink of the potion awarded.
Saluting aloofly his Fate, he made swift with his story;
And the words of his mouth were as slaves spreading carpets of glory
Embroidered with names of the Djinns--a miraculous weaving--
But the cool and perspicuous eye overbore unbelieving.
So I submitted myself to the limits of rapture--
Bound by this man we had bound, amid captives his capture--
Till he returned me to earth and the visions departed;
But on him be the Peace and the Blessing: for he was great-hearted!

THE CAPTIVE

"He that believeth shall not make haste."--Isaiah.

The guard-boat lay across the mouth of the bathing-pool, her crew idly spanking the water with the flat of their oars. A red-coated militia-man, rifle in hand, sat at the bows, and a petty officer at the stern. Between the snow-white cutter and the flat-topped, honey-coloured rocks on the beach the green water was troubled with shrimp-pink prisoners-of-war bathing. Behind their orderly tin camp and the electric-light poles rose those stone-dotted spurs that throw heat on Simonstown. Beneath them the little Barracouta nodded to the big Gibraltar, and the old Penelope, that in ten years has been bachelors' club, natural history museum, kindergarten, and prison, rooted and dug at her fixed moorings. Far out, a three-funnelled Atlantic transport with turtle bow and stern waddled in from the deep sea.

Said the sentry, assured of the visitor's good faith, "Talk to 'em? You can, to any that speak English. You'll find a lot that do."

Here and there earnest groups gathered round ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, who doubtless preached conciliation, but the majority preferred their bath. The God who Looks after Small Things had caused the visitor that day to receive two weeks' delayed mails in one from a casual postman, and the whole heavy bundle of newspapers, tied with a strap, he dangled as bait. At the edge of the beach, cross-legged, undressed to his sky-blue army shirt, sat a lean, ginger-haired man, on guard over a dozen

heaps of clothing. His eyes followed the incoming Atlantic boat.

"Excuse me, Mister," he said, without turning (and the speech betrayed his nationality), "would you mind keeping away from these garments? I've been elected janitor--on the Dutch vote."

The visitor moved over against the barbed-wire fence and sat down to his mail. At the rustle of the newspaper-wrappers the ginger-coloured man turned quickly, the hunger of a press-ridden people in his close-set iron-grey eyes.

"Have you any use for papers?" said the visitor.

"Have I any use?" A quick, curved forefinger was already snicking off the outer covers. "Why, that's the New York postmark! Give me the ads. at the back of Harper's and M'Clure's and I'm in touch with God's Country again! Did you know how I was aching for papers?"

The visitor told the tale of the casual postman.

"Providential!" said the ginger-coloured man, keen as a terrier on his task; "both in time and matter. Yes! ... The Scientific American yet once more! Oh, it's good! it's good!" His voice broke as he pressed his hawk-like nose against the heavily-inked patent-specifications at the end.

"Can I keep it? I thank you--I thank you! Why--why--well--well! The American Tyler of all things created! Do you subscribe to that?"

"I'm on the free list," said the visitor, nodding.

He extended his blue-tanned hand with that air of Oriental spaciousness which distinguishes the native-born American, and met the visitor's grasp expertly. "I can only say that you have treated me like a Brother (yes, I'll take every last one you can spare), and if ever--" He plucked at the bosom of his shirt. "Psha! I forgot I'd no card on me; but my name's Zigler--Laughton G. Zigler. An American? If Ohio's still in the Union, I am, Sir. But I'm no extreme States'-rights man. I've used all of my native country and a few others as I have found occasion, and now I am the captive of your bow and spear. I'm not kicking at that. I am not a coerced alien, nor a naturalised Texas mule-tender, nor an adventurer on the instalment plan. I don't tag after our consul when he comes around, expecting the American Eagle to lift me out o' this by the slack of my pants. No, sir! If a Britisher went into Indian Territory and shot up his surroundings with a Colt automatic (not that she's any sort of weapon, but I take her for an illustration), he'd be strung up quicker'n a snowflake 'ud melt in hell. No ambassador of yours 'ud save him. I'm my neck ahead on this game, anyway. That's how I regard the proposition.

"Have I gone gunning against the British? To a certain extent, I presume you never heard tell of the Laughton-Zigler automatic two-inch field-gun, with self-feeding hopper, single oil-cylinder recoil, and ballbearing gear throughout? Or Laughtite, the new explosive? Absolutely uniform in effect, and one-ninth the bulk of any present effete charge--flake, cannonite, cordite, troisdorf, cellulose, cocoa, cord, or prism--I don't care what it is. Laughtite's immense; so's the Zigler automatic. It's me. It's fifteen

years of me. You are not a gun-sharp? I am sorry. I could have surprised you. Apart from my gun, my tale don't amount to much of anything. I thank you, but I don't use any tobacco you'd be likely to carry... Bull Durham? Bull Durham! I take it all back--every last word. Bull Durham--here! If ever you strike Akron, Ohio, when this fool-war's over, remember you've Laughton O. Zigler in your vest pocket. Including the city of Akron. We've a little club there.... Hell! What's the sense of talking Akron with no pants?

"My gun? ... For two cents I'd have shipped her to our Filipeens. 'Came mighty near it too; but from what I'd read in the papers, you can't trust Aguinaldo's crowd on scientific matters. Why don't I offer it to our army? Well, you've an effete aristocracy running yours, and we've a crowd of politicians. The results are practically identical. I am not taking any U.S. Army in mine.

"I went to Amsterdam with her--to this Dutch junta that supposes it's bossing the war. I wasn't brought up to love the British for one thing, and for another I knew that if she got in her fine work (my gun) I'd stand more chance of receiving an unbiased report from a crowd of dam-fool British officers than from a hatful of politicians' nephews doing duty as commissaries and ordnance sharps. As I said, I put the brown man out of the question. That's the way I regarded the proposition.

"The Dutch in Holland don't amount to a row of pins. Maybe I misjudge 'em. Maybe they've been swindled too often by self-seeking adventurers to know a enthusiast when they see him. Anyway, they're slower than the Wrath o'

God. But on delusions--as to their winning out next Thursday week at 9 A.M.--they are--if I may say so--quite British.

"I'll tell you a curious thing, too. I fought 'em for ten days before I could get the financial side of my game fixed to my liking. I knew they didn't believe in the Zigler, but they'd no call to be crazy-mean. I fixed it--free passage and freight for me and the gun to Delagoa Bay, and beyond by steam and rail. Then I went aboard to see her crated, and there I struck my fellow-passengers--all deadheads, same as me. Well, Sir, I turned in my tracks where I stood and besieged the ticket-office, and I said, 'Look at here, Van Dunk. I'm paying for my passage and her room in the hold--every square and cubic foot.' 'Guess he knocked down the fare to himself; but I paid. I paid. I wasn't going to deadhead along o' that crowd of Pentecostal sweepings. 'Twould have hoodooed my gun for all time. That was the way I regarded the proposition. No, Sir, they were not pretty company.

"When we struck Pretoria I had a hell-and-a-half of a time trying to interest the Dutch vote in my gun an' her potentialities. The bottom was out of things rather much just about that time. Kruger was praying some and stealing some, and the Hollander lot was singing, 'If you haven't any money you needn't come round,' Nobody was spending his dough on anything except tickets to Europe. We were both grossly neglected. When I think how I used to give performances in the public streets with dummy cartridges, filling the hopper and turning the handle till the sweat dropped off me, I blush, Sir. I've made her to do her stunts before Kaffirs--naked sons of Ham--in Commissioner Street, trying to get a holt somewhere.

"Did I talk? I despise exaggeration--'tain't American or scientific--but as true as I'm sitting here like a blue-ended baboon in a kloof, Teddy Roosevelt's Western tour was a maiden's sigh compared to my advertising work.

"Long in the spring I was rescued by a commandant called Van Zyl--a big, fleshy man with a lame leg. Take away his hair and his gun and he'd make a first-class Schenectady bar-keep. He found me and the Zigler on the veldt (Pretoria wasn't wholesome at that time), and he annexed me in a somnambulistic sort o' way. He was dead against the war from the start, but, being a Dutchman, he fought a sight better than the rest of that 'God and the Mauser' outfit. Adrian Van Zyl. Slept a heap in the daytime--and didn't love niggers. I liked him. I was the only foreigner in his commando. The rest was Georgia Crackers and Pennsylvania Dutch--with a dash o' Philadelphia lawyer. I could tell you things about them would surprise you. Religion for one thing; women for another; but I don't know as their notions o' geography weren't the craziest. 'Guess that must be some sort of automatic compensation. There wasn't one blamed ant-hill in their district they didn't know and use; but the world was flat, they said, and England was a day's trek from Cape Town.

"They could fight in their own way, and don't you forget it. But I guess you will not. They fought to kill, and, by what I could make out, the British fought to be killed. So both parties were accommodated.

"I am the captive of your bow and spear, Sir. The position has its

obligations--on both sides. You could not be offensive or partisan to me. I cannot, for the same reason, be offensive to you. Therefore I will not give you my opinions on the conduct of your war.

"Anyway, I didn't take the field as an offensive partisan, but as an inventor. It was a condition and not a theory that confronted me. (Yes, Sir, I'm a Democrat by conviction, and that was one of the best things Grover Cleveland ever got off.)

"After three months' trek, old man Van Zyl had his commando in good shape and refitted off the British, and he reckoned he'd wait on a British General of his acquaintance that did business on a circuit between Stompiesneuk, Jackhalputs, Vrelegen, and Odendaalstroom, year in and year out. He was a fixture in that section.

"'He's a dam' good man,' says Van Zyl. 'He's a friend of mine. He sent in a fine doctor when I was wounded and our Hollander doc. wanted to cut my leg off. Ya, I'll guess we'll stay with him.' Up to date, me and my Zigler had lived in innocuous desuetude owing to little odds and ends riding out of gear. How in thunder was I to know there wasn't the ghost of any road in the country? But raw hide's cheap and lastin'. I guess I'll make my next gun a thousand pounds heavier, though.

"Well, Sir, we struck the General on his beat--Vrelegen it was--and our crowd opened with the usual compliments at two thousand yards. Van Zyl shook himself into his greasy old saddle and says, 'Now we shall be quite happy, Mr. Zigler. No more trekking. Joost twelve miles a day till the

apricots are ripe.'

"Then we hitched on to his outposts, and vedettes, and cossack-picquets, or whatever they was called, and we wandered around the veldt arm in arm like brothers.

"The way we worked lodge was this way. The General, he had his breakfast at 8:45 A.M. to the tick. He might have been a Long Island commuter. At 8:42 A.M. I'd go down to the Thirty-fourth Street ferry to meet him--I mean I'd see the Zigler into position at two thousand (I began at three thousand, but that was cold and distant)--and blow him off to two full hoppers--eighteen rounds--just as they were bringing in his coffee. If his crowd was busy celebrating the anniversary of Waterloo or the last royal kid's birthday, they'd open on me with two guns (I'll tell you about them later on), but if they were disengaged they'd all stand to their horses and pile on the ironmongery, and washers, and typewriters, and five weeks' grub, and in half an hour they'd sail out after me and the rest of Van Zyl's boys; lying down and firing till 11:45 A.M. or maybe high noon. Then we'd go from labour to refreshment, resooming at 2 P.M. and battling till tea-time. Tuesday and Friday was the General's moving days. He'd trek ahead ten or twelve miles, and we'd loaf around his flankers and exercise the ponies a piece. Sometimes he'd get hung up in a drift--stalled crossin' a crick--and we'd make playful snatches at his wagons. First time that happened I turned the Zigler loose with high hopes, Sir; but the old man was well posted on rearguards with a gun to 'em, and I had to haul her out with three mules instead of six. I was pretty mad. I wasn't looking for any experts back of the Royal British Artillery. Otherwise, the game

was mostly even. He'd lay out three or four of our commando, and we'd gather in four or five of his once a week or thereon. One time, I remember, long towards dusk we saw 'em burying five of their boys. They stood pretty thick around the graves. We wasn't more than fifteen hundred yards off, but old Van Zyl wouldn't fire. He just took off his hat at the proper time. He said if you stretched a man at his prayers you'd have to hump his bad luck before the Throne as well as your own. I am inclined to agree with him. So we browsed along week in and week out. A war-sharp might have judged it sort of docile, but for an inventor needing practice one day and peace the next for checking his theories, it suited Laughton O. Zigler.

"And friendly? Friendly was no word for it. We was brothers in arms.

"Why, I knew those two guns of the Royal British Artillery as well as I used to know the old Fifth Avenoo stages. They might have been brothers too.

"They'd jolt into action, and wiggle around and skid and spit and cough and prize 'emselves back again during our hours of bloody battle till I could have wept, Sir, at the spectacle of modern white men chained up to these old hand-power, back-number, flint-and-steel reaping machines. One of 'em--I called her Baldy--she'd a long white scar all along her barrel--I'd made sure of twenty times. I knew her crew by sight, but she'd come switching and teturing out of the dust of my shells like--like a hen from under a buggy--and she'd dip into a gully, and next thing I'd know 'ud be her old nose peeking over the ridge sniffin' for us. Her runnin' mate had

two grey mules in the lead, and a natural wood wheel repainted, and a whole raft of rope-ends trailin' around. 'Jever see Tom Reed with his vest off, steerin' Congress through a heat-wave? I've been to Washington often --too often--filin' my patents. I called her Tom Reed. We three 'ud play pussy-wants-a-corner all round the outposts on off-days--cross-lots through the sage and along the mezas till we was short-circuited by canons. O, it was great for me and Baldy and Tom Reed! I don't know as we didn't neglect the legitimate interests of our respective commanders sometimes for this ball-play. I know I did.

"Long towards the fall the Royal British Artillery grew shy--hung back in their breeching sort of--and their shooting was way--way off. I observed they wasn't taking any chances, not though I acted kitten almost underneath 'em.

"I mentioned it to Van Zyl, because it struck me I had about knocked their Royal British moral endways.

"No,' says he, rocking as usual on his pony. 'My Captain Mankeltow he is sick. That is all.'

"So's your Captain Mankeltow's guns,' I said. 'But I'm going to make 'em a heap sicker before he gets well.'

"No,' says Van Zyl. 'He has had the enteric a little. Now he is better, and he was let out from hospital at Jackhalputs. Ah, that Mankeltow! He always makes me laugh so. I told him--long back--at Colesberg, I had a

little home for him at Nooitgedacht. But he would not come--no! He has been sick, and I am sorry.'

"How d'you know that?' I says.

"Why, only to-day he sends back his love by Johanna Van der Merwe, that goes to their doctor for her sick baby's eyes. He sends his love, that Mankeltow, and he tells her tell me he has a little garden of roses all ready for me in the Dutch Indies--Umballa. He is very funny, my Captain Mankeltow.'

"The Dutch and the English ought to fraternise, Sir. They've the same notions of humour, to my thinking.'

"When he gets well,' says Van Zyl, 'you look out, Mr. Americaan. He comes back to his guns next Tuesday. Then they shoot better.'

"I wasn't so well acquainted with the Royal British Artillery as old man Van Zyl. I knew this Captain Mankeltow by sight, of course, and, considering what sort of a man with the hoe he was, I thought he'd done right well against my Zigler. But nothing epoch-making.

"Next morning at the usual hour I waited on the General, and old Van Zyl come along with some of the boys. Van Zyl didn't hang round the Zigler much as a rule, but this was his luck that day.

"He was peeking through his glasses at the camp, and I was helping pepper,

the General's sow-belly--just as usual--when he turns to me quick and says, 'Almighty! How all these Englishmen are liars! You cannot trust one,' he says. 'Captain Mankeltow tells our Johanna he comes not back till Tuesday, and to-day is Friday, and there he is! Almighty! The English are all Chamberlains!'

"If the old man hadn't stopped to make political speeches he'd have had his supper in laager that night, I guess. I was busy attending to Tom Reed at two thousand when Baldy got in her fine work on me. I saw one sheet of white flame wrapped round the hopper, and in the middle of it there was one o' my mules straight on end. Nothing out of the way in a mule on end, but this mule hadn't any head. I remember it struck me as incongruous at the time, and when I'd ciphered it out I was doing the Santos-Dumont act without any balloon and my motor out of gear. Then I got to thinking about Santos-Dumont and how much better my new way was. Then I thought about Professor Langley and the Smithsonian, and wishing I hadn't lied so extravagantly in some of my specifications at Washington. Then I quit thinking for quite a while, and when I resumed my train of thought I was nude, Sir, in a very stale stretcher, and my mouth was full of fine dirt all flavoured with Laughtite.

"I coughed up that dirt.

"'Hullo!' says a man walking beside me. 'You've spoke almost in time. Have a drink?'

"I don't use rum as a rule, but I did then, because I needed it.

"What hit us?" I said.

"Me," he said. "I got you fair on the hopper as you pulled out of that donga; but I'm sorry to say every last round in the hopper's exploded and your gun's in a shocking state. I'm real sorry," he says. "I admire your gun, Sir."

"Are you Captain Mankeltow?" I says.

"Yes," he says. "I presoom you're Mister Zigler. Your commanding officer told me about you."

"Have you gathered in old man Van Zyl?" I said.

"Commandant Van Zyl," he says very stiff, "was most unfortunately wounded, but I am glad to say it's not serious. We hope he'll be able to dine with us to-night; and I feel sure," he says, "the General would be delighted to see you too, though he didn't expect," he says, "and no one else either, by Jove!" he says, and blushed like the British do when they're embarrassed.

"I saw him slide an Episcopalian Prayer-book up his sleeve, and when I looked over the edge of the stretcher there was half-a-dozen enlisted men --privates--had just quit digging and was standing to attention by their spades. I guess he was right on the General not expecting me to dinner; but it was all of a piece with their sloppy British way of doing business.

Any God's quantity of fuss and flubdub to bury a man, and not an ounce of forehandedness in the whole outfit to find out whether he was rightly dead. And I am a Congregationalist anyway!

"Well, Sir, that was my introduction to the British Army. I'd write a book about it if anyone would believe me. This Captain Mankeltow, Royal British Artillery, turned the doctor on me (I could write another book about him) and fixed me up with a suit of his own clothes, and fed me canned beef and biscuits, and give me a cigar--a Henry Clay and a whisky-and-sparklet. He was a white man.

"'Ye-es, by Jove,' he said, dragging out his words like a twist of molasses, 'we've all admired your gun and the way you've worked it. Some of us betted you was a British deserter. I won a sovereign on that from a yeoman. And, by the way,' he says, 'you've disappointed me groom pretty bad.'

"'Where does your groom come in?' I said.

"'Oh, he was the yeoman. He's a dam poor groom,' says my captain, 'but he's a way-up barrister when he's at home. He's been running around the camp with his tongue out, waiting for the chance of defending you at the court-martial.'

"'What court-martial?' I says.

"'On you as a deserter from the Artillery. You'd have had a good run for

your money. Anyway, you'd never have been hung after the way you worked your gun. Deserter ten times over,' he says, 'I'd have stuck out for shooting you like a gentleman.'

"Well, Sir, right there it struck me at the pit of my stomach--sort of sickish, sweetish feeling--that my position needed regularising pretty bad. I ought to have been a naturalised burgher of a year's standing; but Ohio's my State, and I wouldn't have gone back on her for a desertful of Dutchmen. That and my enthosiasm as an inventor had led me to the existing crisis; but I couldn't expect this Captain Mankeltow to regard the proposition that way. There I sat, the rankest breed of unreconstructed American citizen, caught red-handed squirting hell at the British Army for months on end. I tell you, Sir, I wished I was in Cincinnatah that summer evening. I'd have compromised on Brooklyn.

"What d'you do about aliens?' I said, and the dirt I'd coughed up seemed all back of my tongue again.

"Oh,' says he, 'we don't do much of anything. They're about all the society we get. I'm a bit of a pro-Boer myself,' he says, 'but between you and me the average Boer ain't over and above intellectual. You're the first American we've met up with, but of course you're a burgher.'

"It was what I ought to have been if I'd had the sense of a common tick, but the way he drawled it out made me mad.

"Of course I am not,' I says. 'Would you be a naturalised Boer?'

"I'm fighting against 'em,' he says, lighting a cigarette, 'but it's all a matter of opinion.'

"Well,' I says, 'you can hold any blame opinion you choose, but I'm a white man, and my present intention is to die in that colour.'

"He laughed one of those big, thick-ended, British laughs that don't lead anywhere, and whacked up some sort of compliment about America that made me mad all through.

"I am the captive of your bow and spear, Sir, but I do not understand the alleged British joke. It is depressing.

"I was introduced to five or six officers that evening, and every blame one of 'em grinned and asked me why I wasn't in the Filipeens suppressing our war! And that was British humour! They all had to get it off their chests before they'd talk sense. But they was sound on the Zigler. They had all admired her. I made out a fairy-story of me being wearied of the war, and having pushed the gun at them these last three months in the hope they'd capture it and let me go home. That tickled 'em to death. They made me say it three times over, and laughed like kids each time. But half the British are kids; specially the older men. My Captain Mankeltow was less of it than the others. He talked about the Zigler like a lover, Sir, and I drew him diagrams of the hopper-feed and recoil-cylinder in his note-book. He asked the one British question I was waiting for, 'Hadn't I made my working-parts too light?' The British think weight's strength.

"At last--I'd been shy of opening the subject before--at last I said, 'Gentlemen, you are the unprejudiced tribunal I've been hunting after. I guess you ain't interested in any other gun-factory, and politics don't weigh with you. How did it feel your end of the game? What's my gun done, anyway?'

"I hate to disappoint you,' says Captain Mankeltow, 'because I know you feel as an inventor.' I wasn't feeling like an inventor just then. I felt friendly, but the British haven't more tact than you can pick up with a knife out of a plate of soup.

"The honest truth,' he says, 'is that you've wounded about ten of us one way and another, killed two battery horses and four mules, and--oh, yes,' he said, 'you've bagged five Kaffirs. But, buck up,' he said, 'we've all had mighty close calls'--shaves, he called 'em, I remember. 'Look at my pants.'

"They was repaired right across the seat with Minneapolis flour-bagging. I could see the stencil.

"I ain't bluffing,' he says. 'Get the hospital returns, Doc.'

"The doctor gets 'em and reads 'em out under the proper dates. That doctor alone was worth the price of admission.

"I was right pleased right through that I hadn't killed any of these

cheerful kids; but none the less I couldn't help thinking that a few more Kaffirs would have served me just as well for advertising purposes as white men. No, sir. Anywhichway you regard the proposition, twenty-one casualties after months of close friendship like ours was--paltry.

"They gave me taffy about the gun--the British use taffy where we use sugar. It's cheaper, and gets there just the same. They sat around and proved to me that my gun was too good, too uniform--shot as close as a Mannlicher rifle.

"Says one kid chewing a bit of grass: 'I counted eight of your shells, Sir, burst in a radius of ten feet. All of 'em would have gone through one waggon-tilt. It was beautiful,' he says. 'It was too good.'

"I shouldn't wonder if the boys were right. My Laughtite is too mathematically uniform in propelling power. Yes; she was too good for this refractory fool of a country. The training gear was broke, too, and we had to swivel her around by the trail. But I'll build my next Zigler fifteen hundred pounds heavier. Might work in a gasoline motor under the axles. I must think that up.

"Well, gentlemen,' I said, 'I'd hate to have been the death of any of you; and if a prisoner can deed away his property, I'd love to present the Captain here with what he's seen fit to leave of my Zigler.'

"Thanks awfly,' says my Captain. 'I'd like her very much. She'd look fine in the mess at Woolwich. That is, if you don't mind, Mr. Zigler.'

"Go right ahead,' I says. 'I've come out of all the mess I've any use for; but she'll do to spread the light among the Royal British Artillery.'

"I tell you, Sir, there's not much of anything the matter with the Royal British Artillery. They're brainy men languishing under an effete system which, when you take good holt of it, is England--just all England. 'Times I'd feel I was talking with real live citizens, and times I'd feel I'd struck the Beef Eaters in the Tower.

"How? Well, this way. I was telling my Captain Mankeltow what Van Zyl had said about the British being all Chamberlains when the old man saw him back from hospital four days ahead of time.

"Oh, damn it all!' he says, as serious as the Supreme Court. 'It's too bad,' he says. 'Johanna must have misunderstood me, or else I've got the wrong Dutch word for these blarsted days of the week. I told Johanna I'd be out on Friday. The woman's a fool. Oah, da-am it all!' he says. 'I wouldn't have sold old Van Zyl a pup like that,' he says. 'I'll hunt him up and apologise.'

"He must have fixed it all right, for when we sailed over to the General's dinner my Captain had Van Zyl about half-full of sherry and bitters, as happy as a clam. The boys all called him Adrian, and treated him like their prodigal father. He'd been hit on the collarbone by a wad of shrapnel, and his arm was tied up.

"But the General was the peach. I presume you're acquainted with the average run of British generals, but this was my first. I sat on his left hand, and he talked like--like the Ladies' Home Journal. J'ever read that paper? It's refined, Sir--and innocuous, and full of nickel-plated sentiments guaranteed to improve the mind. He was it. He began by a Lydia Pinkham heart-to-heart talk about my health, and hoped the boys had done me well, and that I was enjoying my stay in their midst. Then he thanked me for the interesting and valuable lessons that I'd given his crowd--specially in the matter of placing artillery and rearguard attacks. He'd wipe his long thin moustache between drinks--lime-juice and water he used --and blat off into a long 'a-aah,' and ladle out more taffy for me or old man Van Zyl on his right. I told him how I'd had my first Pisgah-sight of the principles of the Zigler when I was a fourth-class postmaster on a star-route in Arkansas. I told him how I'd worked it up by instalments when I was machinist in Waterbury, where the dollar-watches come from. He had one on his wrist then. I told him how I'd met Zalinski (he'd never heard of Zalinski!) when I was an extra clerk in the Naval Construction Bureau at Washington. I told him how my uncle, who was a truck-farmer in Noo Jersey (he loaned money on mortgage too, for ten acres ain't enough now in Noo Jersey), how he'd willed me a quarter of a million dollars, because I was the only one of our kin that called him down when he used to come home with a hard-cider jag on him and heave ox-bows at his nieces. I told him how I'd turned in every red cent on the Zigler, and I told him the whole circus of my coming out with her, and so on, and so following; and every forty seconds he'd wipe his moustache and blat, 'How interesting. Really, now? How interesting.'

"It was like being in an old English book, Sir. Like Bracebridge Hall. But an American wrote that! I kept peeking around for the Boar's Head and the Rosemary and Magna Charta and the Cricket on the Hearth, and the rest of the outfit. Then Van Zyl whirled in. He was no ways jagged, but thawed--thawed, Sir, and among friends. They began discussing previous scraps all along the old man's beat--about sixty of 'em--as well as side-shows with other generals and columns. Van Zyl told 'im of a big beat he'd worked on a column a week or so before I'd joined him. He demonstrated his strategy with forks on the table.

"'There!' said the General, when he'd finished. 'That proves my contention to the hilt. Maybe I'm a bit of a pro-Boer, but I stick to it,' he says, 'that under proper officers, with due regard to his race prejudices, the Boer'ud make the finest mounted infantry in the Empire. Adrian,' he says, 'you're simply squandered on a cattle-run. You ought to be at the Staff College with De Wet.'

"'You catch De Wet and I come to your Staff College--eh,' says Adrian, laughing. 'But you are so slow, Generaal. Why are you so slow? For a month,' he says, 'you do so well and strong that we say we shall hands-up and come back to our farms. Then you send to England and make us a present of two--three--six hundred young men, with rifles and wagons and rum and tobacco, and such a great lot of cartridges, that our young men put up their tails and start all over again. If you hold an ox by the horn and hit him by the bottom he runs round and round. He never goes anywhere. So, too, this war goes round and round. You know that, Generaal!'

"Quite right, Adrian,' says the General; 'but you must believe your Bible.'

"'Hooh!' says Adrian, and reaches for the whisky. 'I've never known a Dutchman a professing Atheist, but some few have been rather active Agnostics since the British sat down in Pretoria. Old man Van Zyl--he told me--had soured on religion after Bloemfontein surrendered. He was a Free Stater for one thing.'

"'He that believeth,' says the General, 'shall not make haste. That's in Isaiah. We believe we're going to win, and so we don't make haste. As far as I'm concerned I'd like this war to last another five years. We'd have an army then. It's just this way, Mr. Zigler,' he says, 'our people are brimfull of patriotism, but they've been born and brought up between houses, and England ain't big enough to train 'em--not if you expect to preserve.'

"'Preserve what?' I says. 'England?'

"'No. The game,' he says; 'and that reminds me, gentlemen, we haven't drunk the King and Foxhunting.'

"So they drank the King and Fox-hunting. I drank the King because there's something about Edward that tickles me (he's so blame British); but I rather stood out on the Fox-hunting. I've ridden wolves in the cattle-country, and needed a drink pretty bad afterwards, but it never struck me as I ought to drink about it--he-red-it-arily.

"No, as I was saying, Mr. Zigler,' he goes on, 'we have to train our men in the field to shoot and ride. I allow six months for it; but many column-commanders--not that I ought to say a word against 'em, for they're the best fellows that ever stepped, and most of 'em are my dearest friends--seem to think that if they have men and horses and guns they can take tea with the Boers. It's generally the other way about, ain't it, Mr. Zigler?'

"To some extent, Sir,' I said.

"I'm so glad you agree with me,' he says. 'My command here I regard as a training depot, and you, if I may say so, have been one of my most efficient instructors. I mature my men slowly but thoroughly. First I put 'em in a town which is liable to be attacked by night, where they can attend riding-school in the day. Then I use 'em with a convoy, and last I put 'em into a column. It takes time,' he says, 'but I flatter myself that any men who have worked under me are at least grounded in the rudiments of their profession. Adrian,' he says, 'was there anything wrong with the men who upset Van Bester's applegart last month when he was trying to cross the line to join Piper with those horses he'd stole from Gabbitas?'

"No, Generaal,' says Van Zyl. 'Your men got the horses back and eleven dead; and Van Besters, he ran to Delarey in his shirt. They was very good, those men. They shoot hard.'

"So pleased to hear you say so. I laid 'em down at the beginning of

this century--a 1900 vintage. You remember 'em, Mankeltow?' he says. 'The Central Middlesex Buncho Busters--clerks and floorwalkers mostly,' and he wiped his moustache. 'It was just the same with the Liverpool Buckjumpers, but they were stevedores. Let's see--they were a last-century draft, weren't they? They did well after nine months. You know 'em, Van Zyl? You didn't get much change out of 'em at Pootfontein?'

"No," says Van Zyl. 'At Pootfontein I lost my son Andries.'

"I beg your pardon, Commandant," says the General; and the rest of the crowd sort of cooed over Adrian.

"Excoose," says Adrian. 'It was all right. They were good men those, but it is just what I say. Some are so dam good we want to hands-up, and some are so dam bad, we say, "Take the Vierkleur into Cape Town." It is not upright of you, Generaal. It is not upright of you at all. I do not think you ever wish this war to finish.'

"It's a first-class dress-parade for Armageddon," says the General. 'With luck, we ought to run half a million men through the mill. Why, we might even be able to give our Native Army a look in. Oh, not here, of course, Adrian, but down in the Colony--say a camp-of-exercise at Worcester. You mustn't be prejudiced, Adrian. I've commanded a district in India, and I give you my word the native troops are splendid men.'

"Oh, I should not mind them at Worcester," says Adrian. 'I would sell you forage for them at Worcester--yes, and Paarl and Stellenbosch; but

Almighty!' he says, 'must I stay with Cronje till you have taught half a million of these stupid boys to ride? I shall be an old man.'

"Well, Sir, then and there they began arguing whether St. Helena would suit Adrian's health as well as some other places they knew about, and fixing up letters of introduction to Dukes and Lords of their acquaintance, so's Van Zyl should be well looked after. We own a fair-sized block of real estate--America does--but it made me sickish to hear this crowd fluttering round the Atlas (oh yes, they had an Atlas), and choosing stray continents for Adrian to drink his coffee in. The old man allowed he didn't want to roost with Cronje, because one of Cronje's kin had jumped one of his farms after Paardeberg. I forget the rights of the case, but it was interesting. They decided on a place called Umballa in India, because there was a first-class doctor there.

"So Adrian was fixed to drink the King and Foxhunting, and study up the Native Army in India (I'd like to see 'em myself), till the British General had taught the male white citizens of Great Britain how to ride. Don't misunderstand me, Sir. I loved that General. After ten minutes I loved him, and I wanted to laugh at him; but at the same time, sitting there and hearing him talk about the centuries, I tell you, Sir, it scared me. It scared me cold! He admitted everything--he acknowledged the corn before you spoke--he was more pleased to hear that his men had been used to wipe the geldt with than I was when I knocked out Tom Reed's two lead-horses--and he sat back and blew smoke through his nose and matured his men like cigars and--he talked of the everlastin' centuries!

"I went to bed nearer nervous prostration than I'd come in a long time. Next morning me and Captain Mankeltow fixed up what his shrapnel had left of my Zigler for transport to the railroad. She went in on her own wheels, and I stencilled her 'Royal Artillery Mess, Woolwich,' on the muzzle, and he said he'd be grateful if I'd take charge of her to Cape Town, and hand her over to a man in the Ordnance there. 'How are you fixed financially? You'll need some money on the way home,' he says at last.

"'For one thing, Cap,' I said, 'I'm not a poor man, and for another I'm not going home. I am the captive of your bow and spear. I decline to resign office.'

"'Skittles!' he says (that was a great word of his), 'you'll take parole, and go back to America and invent another Zigler, a trifle heavier in the working parts--I would. We've got more prisoners than we know what to do with as it is,' he says. 'You'll only be an additional expense to me as a taxpayer. Think of Schedule D,' he says, 'and take parole.'

"'I don't know anything about your tariffs,' I said, 'but when I get to Cape Town I write home for money, and I turn in every cent my board'll cost your country to any ten-century-old department that's been ordained to take it since William the Conqueror came along.'

"'But, confound you for a thick-headed mule,' he says, 'this war ain't any more than just started! Do you mean to tell me you're going to play prisoner till it's over?'

"That's about the size of it,' I says, 'if an Englishman and an American could ever understand each other.'

"But, in Heaven's Holy Name, why?' he says, sitting down of a heap on an anthill.

"Well, Cap,' I says, 'I don't pretend to follow your ways of thought, and I can't see why you abuse your position to persecute a poor prisoner o' war on his!'

"My dear fellow,' he began, throwing up his hands and blushing, 'I'll apologise.'

"But if you insist,' I says, 'there are just one and a half things in this world I can't do. The odd half don't matter here; but taking parole, and going home, and being interviewed by the boys, and giving lectures on my single-handed campaign against the hereditary enemies of my beloved country happens to be the one. We'll let it go at that, Cap.'

"But it'll bore you to death,' he says. The British are a heap more afraid of what they call being bored than of dying, I've noticed.

"I'll survive,' I says, 'I ain't British. I can think,' I says.

"By God,' he says, coming up to me, and extending the right hand of fellowship, 'you ought to be English, Zigler!'

"It's no good getting mad at a compliment like that. The English all do it. They're a crazy breed. When they don't know you they freeze up tighter'n the St. Lawrence. When they do, they go out like an ice-jam in April. Up till we prisoners left--four days--my Captain Mankeltow told me pretty much all about himself there was; his mother and sisters, and his bad brother that was a trooper in some Colonial corps, and how his father didn't get on with him, and--well, everything, as I've said. They're undomesticated, the British, compared with us. They talk about their own family affairs as if they belonged to someone else. 'Taint as if they hadn't any shame, but it sounds like it. I guess they talk out loud what we think, and we talk out loud what they think.

"I liked my Captain Mankeltow. I liked him as well as any man I'd ever struck. He was white. He gave me his silver drinking-flask, and I gave him the formula of my Laughtite. That's a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in his vest-pocket, on the lowest count, if he has the knowledge to use it. No, I didn't tell him the money-value. He was English. He'd send his valet to find out.

"Well, me and Adrian and a crowd of dam Dutchmen was sent down the road to Cape Town in first-class carriages under escort. (What did I think of your enlisted men? They are largely different from ours, Sir: very largely.) As I was saying, we slid down south, with Adrian looking out of the car-window and crying. Dutchmen cry mighty easy for a breed that fights as they do; but I never understood how a Dutchman could curse till we crossed into the Orange Free State Colony, and he lifted up his hand and cursed Steyn for a solid ten minutes. Then we got into the Colony, and the rebs--

ministers mostly and schoolmasters--came round the cars with fruit and sympathy and texts. Van Zyl talked to 'em in Dutch, and one man, a big red-bearded minister, at Beaufort West, I remember, he jest wilted on the platform.

"Keep your prayers for yourself,' says Van Zyl, throwing back a bunch of grapes. 'You'll need 'em, and you'll need the fruit too, when the war comes down here. You done it,' he says. 'You and your picayune Church that's deader than Cronje's dead horses! What sort of a God have you been unloading on us, you black aas vogels? The British came, and we beat 'em,' he says, 'and you sat still and prayed. The British beat us, and you sat still,' he says. 'You told us to hang on, and we hung on, and our farms was burned, and you sat still--you and your God. See here,' he says, 'I shot my Bible full of bullets after Bloemfontein went, and you and God didn't say anything. Take it and pray over it before we Federals help the British to knock hell out of you rebels.'

"Then I hauled him back into the car. I judged he'd had a fit. But life's curious--and sudden--and mixed. I hadn't any more use for a reb than Van Zyl, and I knew something of the lies they'd fed us up with from the Colony for a year and more. I told the minister to pull his freight out of that, and went on with my lunch, when another man come along and shook hands with Van Zyl. He'd known him at close range in the Kimberley seige and before. Van Zyl was well seen by his neighbours, I judge. As soon as this other man opened his mouth I said, 'You're Kentucky, ain't you?' 'I am,' he says; 'and what may you be?' I told him right off, for I was pleased to hear good United States in any man's mouth; but he whipped his

hands behind him and said, 'I'm not knowing any man that fights for a Tammany Dutchman. But I presoom you've been well paid, you dam gun-runnin' Yank.'

"Well, Sir, I wasn't looking for that, and it near knocked me over, while old man Van Zyl started in to explain.

"Don't you waste your breath, Mister Van Zyl,' the man says. 'I know this breed. The South's full of 'em.' Then he whirls round on me and says, 'Look at here, you Yank. A little thing like a King's neither here nor there, but what you've done,' he says, 'is to go back on the White Man in six places at once--two hemispheres and four continents--America, England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Don't open your head,' he says. 'You know well if you'd been caught at this game in our country you'd have been jiggling in the bight of a lariat before you could reach for your naturalisation papers. Go on and prosper,' he says, 'and you'll fetch up by fighting for niggers, as the North did.' And he threw me half-a-crown--English money.

"Sir, I do not regard the proposition in that light, but I guess I must have been somewhat shook by the explosion. They told me at Cape Town one rib was driven in on to my lungs. I am not adducing this as an excuse, but the cold God's truth of the matter is--the money on the floor did it.... I give up and cried. Put my head down and cried.

"I dream about this still sometimes. He didn't know the circumstances, but I dream about it. And it's Hell!

"How do you regard the proposition--as a Brother? If you'd invented your own gun, and spent fifty-seven thousand dollars on her--and had paid your own expenses from the word 'go'? An American citizen has a right to choose his own side in an unpleasantness, and Van Zyl wasn't any Krugerite ... and I'd risked my hide at my own expense. I got that man's address from Van Zyl; he was a mining man at Kimberley, and I wrote him the facts. But he never answered. Guess he thought I lied.... Damned Southern rebel!

"Oh, say. Did I tell you my Captain gave me a letter to an English Lord in Cape Town, and he fixed things so's I could lie up a piece in his house? I was pretty sick, and threw up some blood from where the rib had gouged into the lung--here. This Lord was a crank on guns, and he took charge of the Zigler. He had his knife into the British system as much as any American. He said he wanted revolution, and not reform, in your army. He said the British soldier had failed in every point except courage. He said England needed a Monroe Doctrine worse than America--a new doctrine, barring out all the Continent, and strictly devoting herself to developing her own Colonies. He said he'd abolish half the Foreign Office, and take all the old hereditary families clean out of it, because, he said, they was expressly trained to fool around with continental diplomats, and to despise the Colonies. His own family wasn't more than six hundred years old. He was a very brainy man, and a good citizen. We talked politics and inventions together when my lung let up on me.

"Did he know my General? Yes. He knew 'em all. Called 'em Teddie and Gussie and Willie. They was all of the very best, and all his dearest

friends; but he told me confidentially they was none of 'em fit to command a column in the field. He said they were too fond of advertising. Generals don't seem very different from actors or doctors or--yes, Sir--inventors.

"He fixed things for me lovelily at Simons-Town. Had the biggest sort of pull--even for a Lord. At first they treated me as a harmless lunatic; but after a while I got 'em to let me keep some of their books. If I was left alone in the world with the British system of bookkeeping, I'd reconstruct the whole British Empire--beginning with the Army. Yes, I'm one of their most trusted accountants, and I'm paid for it. As much as a dollar a day. I keep that. I've earned it, and I deduct it from the cost of my board. When the war's over I'm going to pay up the balance to the British Government. Yes, Sir, that's how I regard the proposition.

"Adrian? Oh, he left for Umballa four months back. He told me he was going to apply to join the National Scouts if the war didn't end in a year.

'Tisn't in nature for one Dutchman to shoot another, but if Adrian ever meets up with Steyn there'll be an exception to the rule. Ye--es, when the war's over it'll take some of the British Army to protect Steyn from his fellow-patriots. But the war won't be over yet awhile. He that believeth don't hurry, as Isaiah says. The ministers and the school-teachers and the rebs'll have a war all to themselves long after the north is quiet.

"I'm pleased with this country--it's big. Not so many folk on the ground as in America. There's a boom coming sure. I've talked it over with Adrian, and I guess I shall buy a farm somewhere near Bloemfontein and start in cattle-raising. It's big and peaceful--a ten-thousand-acre farm.

I could go on inventing there, too. I'll sell my Zigler, I guess. I'll offer the patent rights to the British Government; and if they do the 'reelly-now-how-interesting' act over her, I'll turn her over to Captain Mankeltow and his friend the Lord. They'll pretty quick find some Gussie, or Teddie, or Algie who can get her accepted in the proper quarters. I'm beginning to know my English.

"And now I'll go in swimming, and read the papers after lunch. I haven't had such a good time since Willie died." He pulled the blue shirt over his head as the bathers returned to their piles of clothing, and, speaking through the folds, added:

"But if you want to realise your assets, you should lease the whole proposition to America for ninety-nine years."

THE BONDS OF DISCIPLINE

POSEIDON'S LAW

When the robust and brass-bound man commissioned first for sea
His fragile raft, Poseidon laughed, and, "Mariner," said he,
"Behold, a Law immutable I lay on thee and thine,
That never shall ye act or tell a falsehood at my shrine.