

The Boer Girl.

While the attention of the world is turned in the direction of South Africa, naturally all that pertains to the home life of the men who have made such a brave fight is of interest, and the women of the Boer household come in for their share. The young women especially are always sure to awaken one's warmest sympathy, and one is filled with curiosity to know whether the sweethearts of the brave young fellows who are marching with Joubert are of the "airy, fairy Lillian type," or "a daughter of the gods, divinely tall," or some other Tennysonian ideal, but the truth compels one to admit, that, however her lover may regard her, the daughter of the farmer of South Africa would scarcely excite the admiration, much less the adoration, of the young English lover. The daughter of the wealthiest class of Boers is not a beauty by any means, although it may be said of her that she is

Beyond expression fair

With her floating flaxen hair,
for she is usually a blonde, with pink cheeks, a fair skin, blue eyes and pretty dimples, but that is all that can be said of her personal charms, for she has no form, or, rather, she has altogether too much form, and gives in her youth every evidence of the fact that she will attain to the dimensions of her mother when she has reached maturity. She seldom can be persuaded to adopt the corset, for the Boer girl is by nature indolent, and the exertion of overcoming the tendency to superfluous adipose tissue is entirely beyond her powers.

The daughter of the rich Boer has governesses at home when she is a child, and in due time is sent to school at Cape Town or in Europe, as her parents may decide. She is not at all stupid, but learns languages especially very readily. During her school life her environment is, of course, not at all natural, and it is in her own home that one is best able to observe the young lady and decide whether she is lovable or even likeable, and what influence she may be able to exert in her little sphere.

Instead of envying the less corpulent woman of other countries who are living among them, the Boer girls positively pity them, and it is not unusual to hear them make remarks in their harsh language concerning their English neighbors which would be considered decidedly coarse and unfeeling if uttered by any one else, but, coming from them, one feels certain that no such meaning was intended.

The girls, like their mothers, are, as a general thing, untidy in their habits—even the well-to-do, for whom there is no excuse. The poorer people suffer from a scarcity of water, which might account for their negligence of personal cleanliness. Each young lady in the family has a "best dress," which is made of the loudest colored material she can obtain in the stores of Bloemfontein or Pretoria, or possi-

bly the neighboring town or village, if she can not afford to shop in the capital. There is always a hat to match, and one can not conceive any greater atrocities than those the milliners of South Africa are pleased to perpetrate for the country trade. This "suit" of the daughter of the house usually costs between £9 or £10. It is not the custom to bathe, and if it were suggested the answer would be that such a proceeding would undoubtedly produce sickness and probably result in death. Some of the Boer girls have, however, inherited the love of cleanliness from the Dutch ancestress.

The better class of people, those in the cities, who are, of course, good church members, do not permit dancing of any sort, and when the young men come to the house games are played, but in the country districts it is often indulged in. A lady who attended one of these dances described very graphically her experiences. The guests were invited to come at 7.30 o'clock, and when she arrived an accordion and a banjo were making merry music. The hostess wore a wonderful garment of pale green nun's veiling, with gold bead trimmings, and there were about ten bouncing couples of Dutch girls and Boer boy present. At the end of about twenty minutes a dance was completed, and so violently had the young people danced that it was necessary for the panting performers to sit down, completely exhausted. The men were in the Sunday black broadcloth, while the girls wore satin bodices in bright colors and cashmere skirts of a different shade, the contrast being generally vivid enough to set one's teeth on edge. "None of them could have been called pretty," said the lady, "dull heavy features and clumsy, badly-formed figures being characteristic of all."

The stout maiden of 18 seems to be at least 25, and is usually married at this age. A wedding in the country is a time of great rejoicing, and the courting is at least unique. A young man asks permission of his father to court a neighboring damsel, and one's neighbor in South Africa lives anywhere within a radius of fifty miles. He then invests in a saddle cloth of the loudest color and most pronounced decoration possible. When one sees a young Boer with one of these gorgeous saddle cloths there is no mistaking the seriousness of his intentions. Now, one would suppose that when the gentleman on the gayly caparisoned steed approaches the house of his lady love, he would seek her out; but this he does not do, but, instead, avoids her and seeks her father. He reverentially asks the old gentleman to permit him to court his daughter, but the father returns no answer, and while he goes to consult his vron, the youth joins the young folks. He is not noticed again during the day, but when it is time for the old folks to retire, the mother solemnly approaches the young man and maiden with a tallow candle in her hand. She places this on the table and bids the boy and girl an affectionate good night. By this sign the lover knows that his suit is successful, and he sits up in the kitchen with the young lady as long as the candle lasts.

And then comes, rather more quickly than in our country, the wedding day. Sometimes the parents can not afford to buy a wedding dress, so one is rented for the occasion. In one town there are two rival stores, and each has a wedding dress for rent, and one of the items of interest at the commencement of the ceremony is to find out which store has succeeded in

renting its dress. The young man may also hire his suit. The girls of the better class, however, dress in the regulation wedding costume, white satin, veil and wreath complete. The husband wears the ordinary Sunday suit of black broadcloth, and his large hands are encased in much larger white cotton gloves. The ceremony is performed in the church, and afterwards a reception is held at the home of the bride. She and her new husband sit on a bench in a room from which all the other furniture has been removed, and the guests are expected to come in singly and march up to the bench, from which the bride and groom, with a nervous motion, jump up and receive the congratulations with loose handshakings.

The industry of the Boer's daughter consists chiefly in fashioning the most inartistic bead and woolen mats one can imagine, with which the parlor tables are ornamented. Once a year a bazaar is held for the benefit of the church, at which the married women are most in evidence, but the hideous paper flowers and crocheted work is done by the daughters generally.

The younger girls of the family are quite fond of romping games with the clumsy boys. They are quite brimming over with animal spirits, in contrast with the apathy of the elder women, who have accumulated flesh at the expense of energy.

The daughter of the Boer is, above all things, sensible of the fact that she is a member of her father's house, and implicit obedience is rendered without any question of right. In the morning she arises at daybreak and joins the family in the main room. The father reads reverently a chapter from the Bible, generally from the Old Testament, and then he offers his simple manly prayer, which is followed by the observance of an old Bible custom. A colored handmaid, with a towel and a basin of water, enters the room and invites first the guest to wash his hands and face, and then the members of the family, beginning with the father. This is all the ablution probably that is indulged in during the day. After grace everybody eats, and each one helps himself, taking the piece of meat or other food that he may desire, and sometimes desires conflict. The fact that there are slaves in the family makes it unnecessary for the girls to exert themselves in doing manual labor, and the inertness thus engendered is augmented by the climatic conditions, so it is no wonder that the girls of the family are fat and fair long before they are 40, and as they grow older grow uglier.

Whatever may be their limitations, however, in the way of personal beauty, they are virtuous, kind and hospitable and as brave when it comes to using the gun or defending their homes as their fathers and brothers.

Those Foreign Fees.

Talking of fees for house servants, in Germany the servants expect tips from dinner and ball guests—"Trinkgeld," the same as the French "pour-boire." There is a servant question in Germany, and the servants are taking largely to the factories because, as people who know say, the house-frau is given by law too much authority over her maids to please them.

A Woman in It.

They talk about a woman's sphere As though it had a limit; There's not a place on earth or heaven There's not a task to mankind given, There's not a blessing or a woe, There's not a whisper, yes or no, There's not a life, or death, or birth That has a feather's weight of worth, Without a woman in it.

A Rain of Potatoes.

I often wonder we had not more accidents in our cooking school, considering the ignorance of our ladies, says Lady Broome, in the Cornhill Magazine. Oddly enough, the only alarming episode came to us from a girl of the people, one of the four who had begged to be allowed to act as kitchen maids. Their idea was a good one, for of course they got their food all day, and were at least in the way of picking up a good deal of useful knowledge. These girls also cleaned up after the class was over, so saving the poor weary cooks, who early in the undertaking remarked, with a sigh, "The young ladies do make such a mess, to be sure!" Well, this girl, who was very steady and hard working, but abnormally stupid, saw fit one morning to turn on the gas in certain stoves some little time beforehand. The sheds were so airy—to say the least of it—that there was not sufficient smell to attract attention, and the gas accumulated comfortably in the stoves until the class started work.

It chanced to be a lesson in cooking vegetables, and potatoes were the "object." About twenty-five small saucepans had been filled with water and potatoes, and the next step was to put them on to boil. I was not in that kitchen at that moment, or I hope I should have perceived the escape, and have had the common sense to forbid a match being struck to light the gas in certain stoves. But I was near enough to hear a loud "pouf," followed by cries of alarm and dismay, and I rushed in while the potatoes were still in the air, for they went up as high as ever they could get. Happily no one was hurt, though a good deal of damage was done to some of the stoves; but it was a very narrow escape, owing doubtless to the space and involuntary ventilation of these same sheds. In the midst of my alarm I well remember the ridiculous effect of that rain of potatoes. Every one had forgotten all about them, and their reappearance created as much surprise as though such things had never existed.

A Thousand Teapots.

Anyone in want of teapots should go to Japan. An Englishwoman, an artist, during a sojourn in that country made a collection of more than a thousand specimens, no two of them alike. According to the Northwest Magazine the collection is valued at five thousand dollars.

Some of the teapots are real curiosities. One huge, caldron-like affair holds three gallons, while at least a dozen specimens are so small that a thimbleful would cause them to overflow.

There are pots in the shape of birds, beasts and fowls. Fishes and frogs have lent their forms to some, and there is a beetle to be seen in the collection, as well as a fat, squirming eel. Buddha himself has been pressed into service as a model. Swans, correct to the last curl of neck and feathers, form teapots so small that they can be hidden in the palm of the hand. There are lotus-bud pots, and others in the form of a tea-house.

All materials are included in the collection. Inlaid silver, hammered copper, iron exquisitely wrought, and all the different kinds of Japanese pottery have been used in the manufacture of teapots. Several specimens cost one hundred dollars each, but so cheap is artistic handwork in the far East that many of the others were bought for a few cents.