POOR DOCUMENT

POETRY.

THE DARLING LITTLE CUPBOARD WHERE THE JAM POTS GROW.

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS.

[Master Jack's song, written by him after spending the holidays at Grandmamma's.]

You may talk about your groves,
Where you wander with your loves;
You may talk about your moonlit waves that fall and flow,
Something fairer far than these,
I can show you if you please:
'Tis the charming little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

CHORUS.

Where the jam pots grow,
Where the jam pots grow,
Where the jelly jolly, jelly jolly jam pots grow!
'Tis the dearest spot to me
On the land or on the sea,
Is the charming little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

There the golden peaches shine,
In their syrup clear and fine;
And the raspberries are blushing with a dusky glow;
And the cherry and the plum
Seem to beckon me to come
To the charming little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

There the sprightly pickles stand,
With the catsup close at hand,
And the marmalades and jellies in a goodly row:
And the quinces' ruddy fire
Would an anchorite inspire
To seek the little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

Never tell me of your bowers
That are full of bugs and flowers!
Never tell me of your meadows where the breezes blow!
But sing me, if you will,
Of the house beneath the hill,
And the darling little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

CHORUS.

Where the jam pots grow,
Where the jam pots grow,
Where the jelly jolly, jelly jolly jam pots grow!
'Tis the dearest spot to me
On the land or on the sea.
Is the charming little cupboard where the jam pots grow.

[Oh! what a greedy boy!]

SELECT STORY.

THE TWO SPIES.

Upon the outbreak of the war between the Orange River Free State and the Basuto Kaffirs in the 1865, the Republican Commanders had no sooner entered the territories of Moshesh, then chief of the Basutos, than they found out, to their sad experience, the necessity of being kept posted up in the movements of the enemy, who swarmed in the bush through which their march lay as they pressed on to Ta-Bosego, the stronghold of the Kaffir king. The country through which the Republican army were forced to march had the double disadvantage to the invader of being very mountainous and thickly wooded, the bush in many parts, to horsemen at least, being impenetrable. Throwing out an advance guard would only have been sending the men away to get murdered, as a small party would inevitably have been shot down from the bush by their unseen foes, if sufficient numbers of Kaffirs had been present to justify such a venture. In any case they would only have heralded their approach to the scouts of the enemy, who would have forwarded the information to their comrades, who would not fail to have used it to advantage at some convenient season.

What was utterly impracticable to attain with a considerable body of armed men, was easy of accomplishment by one or two daring individuals, could the men be found who would undertake such a desperate commission.

Among a troop of English volunteers were two persons who had already been marked by their comrades as men of an adventurous and daring character. In outward appearance there was little similarity between the two persons referred to. They were of different nationalities to begin with, the one being a Scotchman, and the other a German, the Scot being a stout fellow over six feet, while his companion in arms was of short stature and slight build; but drawn together by the sympathy of kindred dispositions, they had soon become fast friends.

It was the two men just described who one day appeared before the Commandant to offer their services as spies, and in which capacity they were accepted by that individual without a moment's hesitation. Two fitter men for the purpose could nowhere have been found. To the Scot especially, from long sojourn among them every *koppie* (small hill or natural landmark) and *vley* (a shallow sheet of water, or marsh) between Bloemfontein and Caledon River was familiar; while between there and Ta-Bosego itself, every bush-path was as well-known to him as those which in boyhood he had trodden among the heath-clad hills of his own native land; and like his companion, his knowledge of the Basuto tongue was so perfect, that when disguised as a native, he could personate such, especially after dark, without the slightest apprehension of betraying his identity.

Many were the adventures and hair-breadth escapes experienced by these men, who were almost hourly companions. On one occasion shortly after crossing the frontier into Basuto Land, the troops were saved from almost certain extermination by the bravery of these two spies, who, by an exercise of the greatest daring, discovered the presence of the enemy in large numbers among the bush which clothed the almost inaccessible sides of the mountains which invested the pass through which their route lay.

While away from the camp on one of their tours of inspection, they lighted a fire to prepare some *biltongue* (dried strips of flesh) for supper; while the ascending smoke, which might have betrayed their presence in the daytime, would be invisible in the darkness. They had reckoned too fast, however, for while they were so engaged, a party of three Basutos stepped up to the fire.

Never losing their presence of mind for a moment, they bade the new arrivals welcome, and learned from them that they had come from an advanced party of the Kaffirs to ascertain how matters stood with their Dutch foes; while on the other hand, under the pretense of the one being a Moroko and the other a Zulu Kaffir who had deserted from the Dutch camp to join the Basutos against the white men, they soon gained the confidence of their new acquaintances, and disarmed them of any suspicion with which they might have hitherto regarded them. Our friends were perfectly at their ease by this time, the Scotchman, who personated the Zulu, having at the outset extinguished the fire, as he explained, to diminish the risk of their being discovered by the Dutch, who were close at hand, the real motive being to prevent the Kaffirs from scrutinizing their features too closely.

It was unnecessary for the Kaffirs to proceed farther, as their new allies must be in possession of more information than they could hope to obtain, and they readily agreed to remain where they were for the night, and give their assistance in finishing two bottles of Cape smoke (Cape brandy), which the two deserters were supposed to have stolen from the Dutch, and in the morning proceed in company to the Kaffir camp. The tongues of the Basutos, under the influence of the brandy, ran too fast, and under the skillful guidance of the two spies—who pretended to supply information regarding the Dutch—they put into possession of the enemies of their tribe all the proposed and skillfully arranged plans of their chiefs, which timely information was the means of frustrating a meditated swoop by a body of the savages upon the Bradfort district, an almost undefended portion of the frontier; thereby saving the lives and property of a large number of the defenseless settlers.

While the three Basutos slumbered heavily under the influence of the liquor, they were quickly and quietly despatched by their two pretended allies.

Some months had now elapsed, and the Commando had been lying for some time in the vicinity of Ta-Bosego in a state of comparative inactivity, the German spy being for a short period unable to pursue his dangerous avocation through illness. He had made considerable progress towards recovery, when one afternoon his companion had a long conversation with him regarding a previously proposed visit to the camp of the enemy; and before leaving him had signified his intention of undertaking the mission alone that very night, much against the desire of the invalid. His resolution on the point was, however, not to be skaken; and a few hours after sundown, when the slumbers of the Kaffirs are generally at the heaviest, he quitted the camp for the purpose of carrying out his intention.

When about a mile beyond the utmost limits of the camp, and about to quit the waggon-track for the bush, he was suddenly confronted and challenged by a mounted Kaffir, who rode out from the bush, from where he had been silently watching the approach of the spy. The Scot perceived he was covered by the rifle of the horseman, and saw well that any offensive movement on his part might cost him his life. Although unexpectedly placed in this critical position, his coolness never forsook him for a moment, and he replied to the challenge of the native in a friendly manner, as he advanced towards him with a step of apparent ease and carelessness, inquiring at the same time where he was going; to which the Kaffir answered, to spy the camp of the Boers; the Scot in return informing him he had just been there himself, and was going back to Ta-Bosego.

During this parley the Kaffir had lowered his rifle; but the Scot did not fail to notice that the muzzle of the weapon had never for an instant been turned from his direction, nor did he fail to note the suspicious move of his enemy as he passed his right hand towards the lock of the piece.

Everything now depended upon his activity, for his identity was apparently suspected by the horseman. Springing quickly to one side, he discharged his own weapon almost at random at the native. Great was his astonishment when the black horseman struck his heels into the ribs of his steed, and dashed off at a furious gallop along the road in the direction of the Dutch camp. On sped the horse; and stranger still, its rider directed it along the narrow winding bushtrack, plainly showing that the native had not mistaken the road, and that the animal was completely under control.

Reloading his discharged rifle, the spy retraced his steps towards the camp, as he was well aware the report of the weapon upon the silent night air would put the enemy upon the alert, and would possibly bring a score of them about his ears in a few minutes, as the apparently solitary horseman might, for aught he knew, be one of many close at hand.

With sharpened ears and watchful eye, he hurried along, wondering at the strange proceeding of the Kaffir in his choice of direction, until he came to a small stream called Loop Spruit, a very short distance from his own lines. Here he halted to ascertain if the horseman had crossed the drift; for if he had done so the marks of his horse's feet would be easily discernable upon the soft sand by the side of the stream. He searched in vain, however, for no marks of a horse's feet could be found going in the direction of the camp; while plain enough there were fresh imprints coming from it and directed towards Ta Bosego. This puzzled him still more, and he remained awhile upon his hands and knees contemplating the marks, but getting no nearer the solution of the mystery. He was in the act of rising to his feet again, when he was startled by the whistle of a rifle-ball in close proximity to his ear, immediately followed by another, which cut two of the ostrich feathers, forming part of the native head-dress from his hair; half an inch lower, and it must have pierced his brain. Not doubting for a moment but the unseen foe who was so near putting an end to his existence, and the Kaffir he had encountered further back on the road, were one and the same person, the present position of his enemy was inexplicable to the Scot, who now began to feel the reverse of comfortable, his exact position being known to an enemy who had just given him ample proof of being no mean opponent. Having no particular desire to become a target for the invisible warrior, he plunged into the bush, and tried to circumvent his foe by remaining motionless upon the ground, so as to induce him by some movement to reveal his whereabouts, but the native had either retired upon firing the two shots, or was too wary to be caught by such a method.

Thoroughly disgusted by being so completely baffled, he made his way back to the camp, which he reached in safety, to find the inmates all astir, having been alarmed at the last two shots in their immediate neighborhood. The spy went straight to the Commandant, to whom he narrated his adventure; who upon hearing the story, concluded a night attack was meditated by the enemy, who no doubt were strong in force, as he believed, under cover of the surrounding bush; which circumstance would account for the daring on the part of the scout; although he was at a loss to comprehend how the hereditary cunning of the Kaffir allowed him to commit the egregious blunder of giving premature intimation of their intentions, for the gratification of his revenge upon a single individual. The outlying pickets were immediately doubled, and strict orders to report at once any circumstance, however slight, calculated to arouse suspicion; while the forces within the camp lay by their arms ready for instant action. Hour after hour of keen apprehension dragged slowly past; and as sunrise drew near, the faces of the men seemed to assume a more hopeful expression, as the chances of a midnight encounter seemed to be averted. Everyone began to think the Kaffirs had abandoned their intention, their chances of a successful surprise having been frustrated by the shots discharged by their scout, who would in all probability pay the penalty of his indiscretion with his life.

In the first grey dawn of the morning, a riderless horse, saddled and bridled, was found close upon one of the outposts, which, when sent into the camp, was recognized by the Scot as belonging to his brother-spy. Upon making this discovery, the Scot, with a foreboding of evil, repaired to the quarters of his comrade, only to learn that he had been absent since the previous night. Whither he had gone, or with what intent, no one could tell. It was by this time broad daylight; and a search-party left the camp, in the hope of finding the spy, of whose fate no one entertained a doubt. Coming to the drift on the stream where the Scot had been fired at on the previous night, they found the imprint of a horse's feet leaving the camp, which no one doubted were those belonging to the steed of the spy; but no returning prints were visible at the place. By an impulse which filled him with dread, the spy was drawn towards the spot whence came the shots of the night before; and there, still in death, lay the body of his comrade?

The truth was clear. The two men had met in the dark, and each had on that occasion personated the Kaffir but two well, resulting in the death of the one, and having all but a fatal termination in the case of the other. No one entertained for a second any suspicion of foul play on the part of either man. They had hitherto entertained the warmest friendship for each other and on the evening of the unfortunate occurrence, the Scot was under the firm conviction that his companion was safe in the camp; while in the case of the dead man, who knew his comrade to be out in that direction, his otherwise keen penetration was no doubt blunted and his nerves less steady than usual on account of recent illness from the effects of which he had by no means recovered. The enfeebled state of his system had in fact accelerated his death; for the shot which had taken effect in his shoulder, was insufficient of itself to have caused it; but it was supposed feeling faint, he had dismounted to drink, and had fallen forward with his face in the water and unable to rise again, had actually been drowned.

So ended the life of one of the most daring volunteers at that time serving in the Republican army; a man of the greatest value to the flag under which he served, and dangerous to its enemies. His comrade the brave Scot, was killed in action three months later.

CITY DIRECTORY.

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Meets at the Y. M. C. A. Rooms the second and last Tuesday in each month, at 8 p. m. Limit of insurance, $3,000.

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CHAS. H. LUGRIN Editor and Proprietor.

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