

taurants. And lo! burdened with all this accumulated knowledge, shackled by all these habits, associations, entrancements, I was yet moved by some mysterious and far-off atavism to pack up, harness the oxen, "trek," and go and live in "the country."

Of course I soon discovered that there is no such thing as "the country," just as there is no such thing as Herbert Spencer's "state." "The country" is an entity which exists only in the brains of an urban population, whose members ridiculously regard the terrene surface as a concatenation of towns surrounded by earthy space. There is England, and there are spots on England called towns: that is all. But at that time I too had the illusion of "the country," a district where one saw "trees," "flowers," and "birds." For me, a tree was not an oak or an ash or an elm or a birch or a chestnut; it was just a "tree." For me there were robins, sparrows, and crows: the rest of the winged fauna was merely "birds." I recognised roses, daisies, dandelions, forget-me-nots, chrysanthemums, and one or two more blossoms; all else was "flowers." Remember that all this happened before the advent of the nature-book and the sublime invention of week-ending, and conceive me plunging into this unknown, inscrutable, and recondite "country," as I might have plunged fully clothed and unable to swim into the sea. It was a prodigious adventure! When my friends asked me, with furtive glances at each other as in the presence of a lunatic, why I was going to live in