

Jim heard him, and turned toward him a stricken face, twisted with suffering and pleading. Spasm now followed spasm till he was in convulsions, rolling on the floor and yellowing his face in the mustard.

Matt laughed hoarsely at the sight, but the laugh broke midway. A tremor had run through his body. A new paroxysm was beginning. He arose and staggered across to the table, and clung to it, filled with the horror of going down to the floor.

Jim's paroxysm had passed, and he sat up, weak and fainting. He rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, and groans that were like whines came from his throat.

"What are you sniffin' about?" Matt demanded, out of his agony. "All you got to do is die, an' when you die you're dead."

"I—ain't—sniffin'—it's—the—mustard—stingin'—my—eyes," Jim panted. It was his last successful attempt at speech. Thereafter he babbled incoherently, pawing the air with shaking arms till a fresh convulsion stretched him on the floor.

Matt struggled back to the chair, and, doubled up on it, fought with his disintegrating flesh. He came out of the convulsion cool and weak. He looked to see how it went with the other, and saw him lying motionless. He tried to soliloquize, to be facetious, to have his last grim laugh at life, but his lips made only incoherent sounds. The thought came to him that the emetic had failed, and that nothing remained but the drug store. He looked toward the door, and drew himself to his feet. There he saved himself from falling by clutching the chair. Another paroxysm had begun. In the midst of it, with his body flying apart and writhing and twisting back again into knots, he clung to the chair and shoved it before him across the floor. The last shreds of his will were leaving him when he gained the door. He turned the key and shot back one bolt. He fumbled for the second bolt, but failed. Then he leaned against the door, and slid gently to the floor.

Election Day at Johannesburg.

A LADY'S IMPRESSIONS.

Dear Sybilla.—According to promise, I again send you a line. The past has been a most exciting week—even to those who, like myself, are debarred from voting. Perhaps on this account we enjoyed the elections all the more, as we had more time for personal observation. Johannesburg has been wildly excited over theirs, as party feeling ran strong. Go where you would, "Het Volk," "Labour," "Nationalist," "Progressive," were words that greeted you; all were deeply, personally interested, each, if not for himself, for herself. There is the interest of some stranded nephew, husband, cousin, or near relative, whose conditions could only be bettered by a change of Government, seeing they had petitioned all and sundry members of the last House for employment, and all in vain. On Wednesday last, the day of the election, Johannesburg was a sight. All the world and his wife were agog, motor-cars such as are never seen in New Zealand, for size and elegance, raced through the streets at a maddening pace, the chauffeurs seemingly utterly regardless of whom they ran down. Their name was legion. Where they all appeared from will remain a mystery for many days to come, and their occupants, in many cases ladies, who could have vied with Solomon in all his glory in the matter of dress, were a sight to be seen and remembered. In some instances these stood up in their cars and harangued the public, or such as would listen to them, for all they were worth, and how pleased and condescending they became all of a sudden, offering a seat to those they passed on the road—a seat as far, and no farther than the polling booth.

One of the funniest features to those who enjoy a joke was the important place the dogs held in the programme of the day. These were dressed for the occasion, and decked with party colours; each

had attached to his body a huge card, bearing the inscription, "Vote for Het Volk," "Labour," "Progressive," "Nationalist," or whatever constituent might be the particular fancy of the owners. These, from the huge dog with hanging jaws, to the slim greyhound and lion-triumped poodle, were alike so metamorphosed that I fear they failed to recognize each other; for this only surely could account for the manner in which they seemed to forget ancient friendships and everyday acquaintances. Many were the freeights they engaged in, much to the detriment of their fine clothing and the joy of onlookers, one old Dutch lady going so far as to dance round them while her canine was so employed, crying out while she swung her umbrella in the air, "Go it," "Give it him, Het Volk," and he did, too. But you should have seen that dog's surprise when he found he had disrobed an old elum of many years' standing. Some go the length of saying there were actually tears in his eyes as he slunk away, with his tail between his legs.

Then the rosettes of different party colours. Why, they were to be had by the bushel. My husband's small office boy amused the clerks by going in decked out in all the different colours, whether he was "Het Volk," "Progressive," "Labour," or "Nationalist" would have puzzled a Philadelphian lawyer to decide, for each party rosette held a place of honour on the mannikin's little coat, just beneath his little grinning countenance. "You little devil," said his master, "what's your party?" but racing had so monopolised what brains were contained in the crown of his small helmet as to exclude all other ideas on any subject whatever. Had you asked him what horse would be likely to win at the next races at Auckland Park he would, if he liked you, have given you the straight tip, but politics had little or no interest for this small exception of the Johannesburg community.

And to think that after all the excitement the elections are now a thing of the past! You can scarcely form an idea of the state of feeling here, for Africa has, and is still, suffering from acute depression. On the whole, I think, matters could not have been better arranged than they are; only the most bigoted Progressive could think otherwise, for the Het Volk party will no doubt banish the Chinese, thus giving white and Kafir labour an impetus. The Progressive party, too, with their numbers form by no means a despicable opposition party, who, combined with the Labour and Nationalist, would, at a crisis, be able to out-vote Het Volks on a great question affecting British interests. We feel assured that each and all have the well-being of Africa at heart.

I like to see the interest the voters take in their country. This was evidenced by the arrival of about 300 tired-out men, mostly old Dutch farmers, arriving at a country polling booth just in time to record their votes before closing time. There was a record for you! Three hundred solid votes for Het Volk! Goodness only knows how many weary miles over the veldt (pronounced "felt") they had travelled in the rain and storms. Such men surely deserve to have their interests well looked after, and a good many people share my opinion. Time will show whether our expectations will be blighted—whether the good times we all anticipated from a change of Government were merely a myth evolved from the depressed times and empty stomachs of a starving, out-of-employment community. God grant it may not be so. Let us hope that from this time forward better times are in store for Africa; that the absentees will not be the only or the greatest (at least) number of those to benefit by the immense output of gold which is being drawn from the mines.—Yours,

ARAMINTA.

One of the old governors of the Carolinas was a man who had lived a farmer's life most of the time until he was elected, and his wife, having never seen a steamboat or a railroad, and having no wish to test either one, refused to accompany her husband to the capital. When the governor reached his destination he found that almost all the other officials were accompanied by their wives, and he sent an imperative message to his brother to "fetch Melinda along." The brother telegraphed: "She's afraid even to look at the engine." The governor read the message and pondered over it for a few moments. At the end of that time he sent off the following command: "Bill, you blindfold Melinda and back her on to the train."

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