

FOREWORD

Could I have known that the war would last so long, I might from the beginning have taken notes. They would have brought back memories in a way pleasant to me now, and perhaps also to those who have asked me to write down my adventures.

Often it occurred to me to keep a diary, but I was obliged to give up the idea because my clothes were sometimes so thoroughly drenched that the letters in my pocket were not readable. Later on, when clothes were scarce and pockets past mending, I often made the unpleasant discovery that caused the fool, on his journey from the land of Kokanje, to cry to the King: 'We have ridden at such a breakneck pace, see, everything has slipped through this little hole!' Now I am obliged to write down my adventures without any notes, so dates, numbers, and names of places will occasionally be missing. It stands to reason that I — being an exile in a strange country, in the fort of _____ in _____, cut off from the world outside and without any official reports — should simply limit myself to my own personal experience. And, lastly, I must apologize to my readers for so often speaking of myself and my friends; but that is inevitable in this tale.

I shall pass rapidly over the first part of my life on commando. If my memory plays me false — which is not very probable, as I still have a lively recollection of the events — I shall be grateful for correction.

July, 1901.

PREFACE

This book was written in 1901, while its author was a prisoner at Ahmednagar. It was written in Dutch, and has been put into English by a young lady from what was the Orange Free State.

The author is a friend and relation of mine, son of a clergyman in the Transvaal, and of old Afrikaner stock on both sides. His book is the more valuable because of the absence of all literary pretensions, and it may be taken as truly representative of the Afrikaner spirit, which has been so much misconceived in England.

FREDERIK VAN EEDEN
WALDEN, N. HOLLAND,
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