

**A SUBALTERN'S
LETTERS
TO HIS WIFE**

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A subaltern's letters to his wife by Reginald Rankin

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REGINALD RANKIN

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A SUBALTERN'S LETTERS
TO HIS WIFE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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A
SUBALTERN'S LETTERS
TO
HIS WIFE

James Reginald Rice Rankin

DISCITE VESANAE ROMAM NON TEMNERE GENTES'
CLAUDIUS

SECOND EDITION

(EIGHTH IMPRESSION)

UNIV. OF
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TO
MY WIFE

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PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION

By the kindness of a correspondent, Mr. John B. Curry, of Welgelegen, Rosebank, S. Africa, I am enabled to give the following correct spellings of words phonetically misspelt in the text. For the help of English readers the phonetic spelling is still retained.

Stembuck	should be	Steenbok
Veldt	„	Veld
Taibosch	„	Taaibosch
Merecat	„	Mierkat
Maanhaar	„	Manenhaar
Pow	„	Pauw
Koràn	}	„ Kuorhaan
Kurhaan		
Skimmel	„	Schimmel
Randte	„	Randje
Sikte	„	Ziekte
Vortrekker	„	Voortrekker
Spanspek	„	Spaanschespek

(i.e. 'Spanish bacon.' The Spaniards under Alva are said to have introduced the melon into Holland.)

REGINALD RANKIN

late Lieut. Rimington's Guides.

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A

SUBALTERN'S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

CHILDREN OF THE VELDT

THE first thing is to pronounce 'veldt' properly ; not with the slatternly English 'v' sound, but with the crisp German 'fow,' or its parallel the English 'f'—so that it recalls the stuff that hats are made of.

A gifted war-correspondent once wrote, at Bloemfontein, a long article in the 'Friend' newspaper on 'The Inexpressible Veldt.' I thought at the time, after a cursory consideration both of the internal and external evidence afforded by the length of the said article and the general physical features of South Africa, that the writer ought to have headed his screed 'The Expressionless Veldt.' A thing about which a correspondent, busied with other matters, and feeling the effects of the heat, can dash off four columns between sunset and sunrise, is hardly to be termed inexpressible. And yet one could sympathise with that author ; there is a fine flavour of the oxymoron about his title which whets the literary appetite, as though a man should say : 'This is not for mortals to express, and lo ! here are four columns.' But I have corrected my first impressions.

Do you remember the look on the faces of the Sphinx and the great Japanese Buddha ?—the look which the Eastern peoples with one accord have immortalised in stone