

Elandsriver Station.

East of Pretoria.

Aug 11 - 1900.

My dear Missie.

A regular blizzard is blowing, most uncomfortable, though fortunately it is not dusty here. We have had a few ^{excitements} ~~excursions~~ this week. On Tuesday two trains were fired on between here & Bronkhorstspuit, two men wounded, two horses killed and 7 wounded. Several beehive farms were blazing within a few hours of the firing on the train.

Yesterday the train brought in a man killed at the same place, three more beehive farms blazing in the afternoon. I am thinking of becoming a professional incendiary when I get home, I am really rather good at it now. A piece of paper and a few small sticks in one corner of ~~the~~ a room, on top of this

a chair, then a table smashed up and a few pieces of a bedstead, or for choice a harmonium, harmoniums burn particularly well, a match and you have a blaze in no time. That's this burning of farms but it is necessary. The country round here is infested with small parties of Boers, who are impossible to catch; here one ~~hovers~~ and you see next; a patrol goes out - pop pop comes from a hill, one goes over to it and no one is there, if one is lucky one sees a few men galloping away in the distance. Guerrilla war, it will be over some day I suppose, it will take a long time. The destruction of property is awful, the people in the north of Natal complained of their farms being wrecked it cannot be worse than the ~~boer~~ damage done to farms here, except that English farmers probably have more valuable furniture than Boers. There are two, or rather there were

two farms about a mile from here, inhabited by
a few women and children, they disappeared
one night, I passed by the houses on Tuesday
morning and looked in, they had evidently
been deserted the previous night as there were
a few remains of food about. The furniture
was plain but substantial everything of
course neat and tidy. In the afternoon
I passed again, the whole place was a wreck,
furniture smashed up cupboards and boxes
opened and the contents strewn on the floor.
Outside Kaffers busy packing up everything
they took a fancy to. I soon stopped that
one can't look after deserted farms, and Kaffers
are thieves by nature. The British soldier is not
blameless either. I am very sorry for the
poor women who will find everything gone when
they return, I cannot say I am sorry for the
men, for them it is the fortune of war. This
same thing has happened everywhere north of
Bloemfontein, with a few exceptions, but I
have been to.

Yours affly
John Spurgeon