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THOMAS EDWARD SPENCER (1845-1911)

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Consider this: " How M'Dougall Topped the Score"

A peaceful spot is Piper's Flat. The folk that live around,
They keep themselves by keeping sheep and turning up
the ground.
But the climate is erratic; and the consequences are
The struggle with the elements is everlasting war.
We plough, and sow, and harrow - then sit down and
pray for rain;
And then we all get flooded out, and have to start again.
But the folk are now rejoicing as they ne'er rejoiced
before,
For we've played Molongo cricket, and McDougall topped
the score!

Molongo had a head on it, and challenged us to play
A single-innings match for lunch - the losing team to pay.
We were not great guns at cricket, but we couldn't well
say No,
So we all began to practise, and we let the reaping go.
We scoured the flat for ten miles round to muster up our
men,
But when the list was totalled, we could only number ten.
Then up spoke big Tim Brady, he was always slow to
speak,
And he said - "What price McDougall, who lives down at
Cooper's Creek?"

So we sent for old McDougall, and he stated in reply
That "he'd never played at cricket, but he'd half a mind to
try.
He couldn't come to practice - he was getting in his hay,
But he guessed he'd show the beggars from Molongo
how to play."
Now McDougall was a Scotchman, and a canny one at
that,
So he started in to practise with a paling for a bat.
He got Mrs Mac. to bowl him, but she couldn't run at all,
So he trained his sheep dog, Pincher, how to scout and
fetch the ball.

Now, Pincher was no puppy; he was old, and worn and
grey;
But he understood McDougall, and - accustomed to obey
When McDougall cried out "Fetch it!" he would fetch it in
a trice;
But until the word was "Drop it!" he would grip it like a
vice.
And each succeeding night they played until the light
grew dim;
Sometimes McDougall struck the ball - sometimes the
ball struck him!
Each time he struck, the ball would plough a furrow in the
ground,
And when he missed, the impetus would turn him three
times round.

The fatal day at length arrived - the day that was to see
Molongo bit the dust, or Piper's Flat knocked up a tree!
Molongo's captain won the toss, and sent his men to bat,
And they gave some leather-hunting to the men of Piper's
Flat.
When the ball sped where McDougall stood, firm planted
in its track,
He shut his eyes, and turned him round, and stopped it -
with his back!

The highest score was twenty-two, the total sixty-six,
When Brady sent a yorker down that scattered Johnson's
sticks.

Then Piper's Flat went in to bat, for glory and renown,
But, like to grass before the scythe, our wickets tumbled
down.
"Nine wickets down for seventeen, with fifty more to win!"
Our captain heaved a heavy sigh - and sent McDougall
in.
"Ten pounds to one you lose it!" cried a barracker from
town;
But McDougall said "Ill tak'it, mon!" and planked the
money down.
Then he girded up his moleskins in a self-reliant style,
Threw off his hat and boots, and faced the bowler with a
smile.

He held the bat the wrong side out, and Johnson with a
grin,
Stepped lightly to the bowling crease, and sent a
"wobbler" in;
McDougall spooned it softly back, and Johnson waited
there,
But McDougall crying "Fetch it!" started running like a
hare.
Molongo shouted "Victory! He's out as sure as eggs."
When Pincher started through the crowd, and ran through
Johnson's legs.
He seized the ball like lightning; then he ran behind a log,
And McDougall kept on running, while Molongo chased
the dog.

They chased him up, they chased him down, they chased
him round, and then
He darted through a slip-rail as the scorer shouted "Ten!"
McDougall puffed; Molongo swore; excitement was
intense;
As the scorer marked down "Twenty," Pincer cleared a
barbed-wire fence.
"Let us head him!" shrieked Molongo. "Brain the mongrel
with a bat!"
"Run it out! Good old McDougall!" yelled the men of
Piper's Flat.
And McDougall kept on jogging, and then Pincher
doubled back,
And the scorer counted "Forty" as they raced across the
track.

McDougall's legs were going fast, Molongo's breath was
gone--
But while Molongo chased the dog--McDougall struggled
on.
When the scorer shouted "Fifty!" then they knew the
chase could cease;
And McDougall gasped out "Drop it!" as he dropped
within his crease.
Then Pincher dropped the ball, and, as instinctively he
knew
Discretion was the wiser plan, he disappeared from view.
And as Molongo's beaten men exhausted lay around,
We raised McDougall shoulder-high, and bore him from
the ground.

