

SEVEN YEARS

IN

SOUTH AFRICA



BY EMIL HOLUB



NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 1898.







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*Emil Mohr*

*Frontispiece.*

# SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

TRAVELS, RESEARCHES, AND HUNTING ADVENTURES,  
BETWEEN THE DIAMOND-FIELDS AND THE ZAMBESI (1872-79).

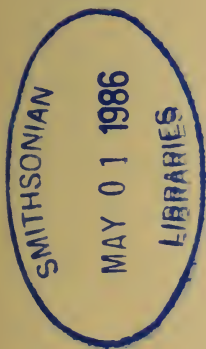
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BY

DR. EMIL HOLUB.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN E. FREWER.

WITH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.



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## PREFACE.

FROM the days of my boyhood I had been stirred with the desire to devote myself in some way to the exploration of Africa, and whenever I came across the narratives of travellers who had contributed anything towards the opening up of the dark continent, I only read them to find that they gave a more definite shape to my longings.

It was in 1872 that an opportunity was afforded me of gratifying my wish, and I then decided that South Africa should be the field of my researches. For seven years I applied myself to my undertaking with all the energy, and with the best resources that, as a solitary individual, I could command, and was enabled to make the three journeys which are described in the following pages.

On my third return to the Diamond-fields I was urged by my South African friends immediately to publish an account of my travels; my time, however, was so engrossed by my medical practice that I had no leisure for the purpose, and contented myself with merely sending a few fragmentary articles to some of the South African newspapers.

But on arriving in London I was again so repeatedly solicited to make public what I had seen, that, on reaching home, I determined to issue these volumes containing an account of the leading incidents in my travelling experiences. To enter into the details of all the scientific observations that I made would occupy me for at least three years, and would interfere altogether with my scheme for returning to Africa as soon as possible, so that I have been satisfied to leave these results of my labours to be worked out by the co-operation of the men of science to whom they may be of interest.

I cherish the hope that these volumes may tend to increase the public interest which is now so powerfully drawn to South Africa, and I trust that the time is not far distant when I may submit to the public some further researches relating to "the continent of the future."

EMIL HOLUB.

# CONTENTS.



## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
VOYAGE TO THE CAPE—CAPE TOWN—PORT ELIZABETH . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS . . . . .	24
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

### THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Ups-and-downs of medical practice—Mode of working the diggings—The kopjes—Morning markets—My first baboon-hunt—Preparation for first journey . . . . .	53
--	----

## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM DUTOITSPAN TO LIKATLONG.

My travelling-companions—Departure from the Diamond-fields—The Vaal River and valley—Visit to Koranna village—Structure of Koranna huts—Social condition of the Korannas—Klipdrift—Distinction between Bechuanas and Korannas—Interior of a Koranna hut—Fauna of the Vaal valley—A bad road—A charming glen—Cobras and their venom—Ring-neck snakes—The mud in the Harts River . . . . .	93
--	----

## CHAPTER V.

## FROM LIKATLONG TO WONDERFONTEIN.

	PAGE
Batlapin life—Weaver-birds and their nests—A Batlapin farmstead—Ant-hills—Travelling Batlapins—An alarming accident—Springbockfontein—Gassibone and his residence—An untempting dish—On the bank of the Vaal—Water lizards—Christiana—Bloemhof—Stormy night—Pastures by the Vaal—Cranes—Dutch hunters—A sportsman's Eldorado—Surprised by black gnu—Guinea-fowl—Klerksdorp—Potchefstroom—The Mooi River valley—Geological notes—Wonderfontein and its grottoes—Otters, birds, and snakes . . . . .	118

## CHAPTER VI.

## RETURN JOURNEY TO DUTOITSPAN.

Departure from Wonderfontein—Potchefstroom again—A mistake—Expenses of transport—Rennicke's Farm—A concourse of birds—Gildenhuis—A lion-hunt—Hall-water Farm and Saltpan—A Batlapin delicacy—Rough travelling—Hebron—Return to Dutoitspan—The Basutos . . . . .	182
---	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

## FROM DUTOITSPAN TO MUSEMANYANA.

Preparation for second journey—Travelling-companions—Departure—A diamond—A lovely evening—Want of water—A conflagration—Hartebeests—An expensive draught—Gassibone's kraal—An adventure with a cobra—A clamorous crowd—A smithy—The mission-station at Taung—Maruma—Thorny places—Cheap diamonds—Pelted by baboons—Reception at Musemanyana . . . . .	216
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MUSEMANYANA TO MOSHANENG.

	PAGE
Departure from Musemanyana—The Quagga Flats—Hyæna-hunt by moonlight—Makalahari horsemanship—Konana—A lion on the Sitlagole—Animal life on the table-land—Gnu-hunt at night—A missing comrade—Piles of bones—Hunting a wild goose—South African spring-time—Molema's Town—Mr. Webb and the Mission-house—The chief Molema—Huss Hill—Neighbourhood of Moshaneng—Illustrious visitors . . . . .	252

CHAPTER IX.

FROM MOSHANENG TO MOLOPOLOLE.

King Montsua and Christianity—Royal gifts—The Banquaketse highlands—Signs of tropical vegetation—Hyæna-dogs—Ruins of Mosilili's Town—Rock-rabbits—A thari—Molopolole . . . . .	294
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

FROM MOLOPOLOLE TO SHOSHONG.

Picturesque situation of Molopolole—Sechele's territory—Bakuenta architecture—Excursion up the glen—The missionaries—Kotlas—My reception by Sechele—A young prince—Environs of Molopolole—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Religious ceremonies—Linyakas—Medical practice—Amulets—Moloi—The exorcising of Khame—Rain-doctors—Departure from Molopolole—A painful march—Want of water—The Barwas and Masarwas—Their superstition and mode of hunting—New Year's Day in the wilderness—Lost in the woods—Saved by a Masarwa—Wild honey—The Bamangwato highlands—Arrival at Shoshong . . . . .	312
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

## FROM SHOSHONG BACK TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

	PAGE
Position and importance of Shoshong—Our entry into the town—Mr. Mackenzie—Visit to Sekhomo—History of the Bamangwato empire—Family feuds—Sekhomo and his council—A panic—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Circumcision and the boguera—Departure from Shoshong—The African francolin—Khamé's salt-pan—Elephant tracks—Puff-adders—A dorn-veldt—A brilliant scene—My serious illness—Chwene-Chwene—The Dwars mountains—Schweinfurth's pass—Brackfontein—Linokana—Thomas Jensen, the missionary—Baharutse agriculture—Zeerust and the Marico district—The Hooge-veldt—Quartzite walls at Klip-port—Parting with my companions—Arrival at Dutoitspan . . .	367



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. I.

	PAGE
Emil Holub . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
Cape-Town . . . . .	5
Euphorbia Trees . . . . .	17
Elephants on the Zondags River . . . . .	28
Springbock Hunting . . . . .	33
Antelope Trap . . . . .	36
The Country near Cradock . . . . .	37
On the Way to the Diamond-Fields . . . . .	40
Hotel on the Riet River . . . . .	49
Square in Dutoitspan . . . . .	63
Kimberley Kopje in 1871 . . . . .	67
Horse Whims in the Diamond Quarries . . . . .	68
Kimberley . . . . .	69
Kimberley Kopje in 1872 . . . . .	70
Kaffir Shepherd . . . . .	77
Baboon-hunt . . . . .	88
“Fore-spanning” . . . . .	95
Koranna Huts in the Valley of the Harts River . . . . .	96
Korannas . . . . .	96
Interior of a Koranna Hut . . . . .	103
Batlapin Boys throwing the Kiri . . . . .	109
Batlapin . . . . .	111
Batlapin Agriculture . . . . .	116
Nests of Weaver-Birds . . . . .	123
Batlapins on a Journey . . . . .	126
Accident in the Harts River Valley . . . . .	129
Batlapins sewing . . . . .	133
My Ambassador at King Gassibone’s . . . . .	134
Camp on Bamboes Spruit . . . . .	147

	PAGE
Return from the Gnu Hunt . . . . .	155
Startled by a Herd of Black Gnus . . . . .	156
Night-Camp . . . . .	168
Funnel-shaped Cavity in Rocks . . . . .	170
Grotto of Wonderfontein . . . . .	173
A Bird Colony . . . . .	190
Lion Hunt in the Maquasi Hills . . . . .	193
Hallwater Farm . . . . .	195
Koranna . . . . .	197
Batlapins returning from Work . . . . .	201
Easter Sunday in the Vaal River . . . . .	208
Meeting between Basutos returning from the Diamond Fields, and others going thither . . . . .	213
A Moonlight Evening in the Forest . . . . .	216
The Plains on Fire . . . . .	225
Hartebeest . . . . .	228
Head of the Hartebeest (Antilope Caama) . . . . .	229
Woods at the Foot of the Malau Heights . . . . .	231
Niger and the Cobra . . . . .	234
Mobbed for Spirits . . . . .	236
Caught by Thorns . . . . .	241
Cheap Diamonds . . . . .	242
Surprised by Baboons . . . . .	244
Reception in Musemanyana . . . . .	249
Musemanyana . . . . .	251
Barolong Maiden collecting Locusts . . . . .	253
A Hyæna Hunt . . . . .	256
A Yochoom of the Kalahari chasing a Bless-bock . . . . .	259
A Barolong Story-teller . . . . .	262
The Bechuana finds the Remains of his Brother . . . . .	265
Wild Animals on the Plains . . . . .	267
Barolongs chasing Zebras . . . . .	268
Gnu-hunting by Night . . . . .	270
Deserted Hunting-place of the Barolongs . . . . .	274
Egyptian-goose on Mimosa-tree . . . . .	275
Dispensing Drugs in the Open . . . . .	281
Nest of Weaver-birds . . . . .	284
Collecting Rain-water . . . . .	287
A Refreshing Draught . . . . .	288

*List of Illustrations.*

xi

	PAGE
Royal Visitors . . . . .	289
Barolong Women at Moshaneng . . . . .	297
Hyænas among the Cattle . . . . .	302
Hunting the Rock-rabbit . . . . .	306
The African Lynx . . . . .	309
White-ant Hills . . . . .	312
King Sechele . . . . .	318
Rain-doctors . . . . .	325
Khame's Magic . . . . .	335
Pit, the Griqua, discovers Leopard Tracks . . . . .	342
Native Postmen . . . . .	346
Masarwas around a Fire . . . . .	350
Masarwas at Home . . . . .	352
Mode of Hunting among the Masarwas . . . . .	353
Preparing the New Year's Feast in the Forest . . . . .	355
Succoured by a Masarwa . . . . .	360
A Bamangwato Boy . . . . .	368
Aprons worn by Bamangwato Women . . . . .	369
Bamangwato Huts at Shoshong . . . . .	372
Kotla at Shoshong . . . . .	374
Sekhomo and his Council . . . . .	376
Bamangwato House . . . . .	378
Court Dress of a Bamangwato . . . . .	379
Training the Boys . . . . .	397
Bamangwato Girls Dressed for the Boguera . . . . .	400
Khame's Salt-pan . . . . .	404
Buisport, Rocky Cleft in the Bushveldt . . . . .	413
Baharutse Drawing Water . . . . .	415
Chukuru, Chief of the Baharutse . . . . .	417
Baharutse Village . . . . .	419



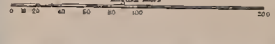






- Reference.
- British Territory
  - Orange Free State
  - Protectorate of Bechuanaland
  - Missionary Territory
  - Mosambique State, Kingdom
  - Mission Station
  - ▲ Abandoned Mission Station
  - △ L.M.S. London Missionary Society
  - W.M.S. Wesleyan
  - ◇ Z.M.S. Zions Missionary Society
  - Chief
  - River, Road, etc.
  - D'Holub's Routes

MAP ILLUSTRATING  
**D' HOLUB'S JOURNEYS**  
 in  
**SOUTH AFRICA**  
 1872-1879









# SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### VOYAGE TO THE CAPE—CAPE TOWN—PORT ELIZABETH.

HOWEVER fair and favourable the voyage between Southampton and South Africa, a thrill of new life, a sudden shaking off of lethargy, alike physical and mental, ever responds to the crisp, dry announcement of the captain that the long-looked-for land is actually in sight. As the time draws near when the cry of "Land" may any moment be expected from the mast-head, many is the rush that is made from the luxurious cabin to the deck of the splendid steamer, when with straining eyes the passengers eagerly scan the distant horizon; ever and again in their eagerness do they think they descry a mountain summit on the long line that parts sea and sky; but the mountain proves to be merely the topmast of some distant vessel, and disappointment is intensified by the very longing that had prompted the imagination.

But at last there is no mistake. From a bright light bank of feathery cloud on the south-south-east horizon there is seen a long, blue streak, which every succeeding minute rises obviously more plainly above

the ocean. That far-off streak is the crown of an imposing rock, itself a monument of a memorable crisis in the annals of geographical discovery; it is the crest of Africa's stony beacon, Table Mountain.

Out of the thirty-six days, from May the 26th to July the 1st, 1872, that I spent on board the "Briton" on her passage from Southampton to Cape Town,<sup>1</sup> thirty were stormy. For four whole weeks I suffered from so severe an attack of dysentery that my strength was utterly prostrated, and I hardly ventured to entertain a hope that I should ever reach the shores of South Africa alive. My readers, therefore, will easily understand how my physical weakness, with its accompanying mental depression, gave me an ardent longing to feel dry land once more beneath my feet, especially as that land was the goal to which I was hastening with the express purpose of there devoting my energies to scientific research. But almost sinking as I felt myself under my prolonged sufferings, the tidings that the shore was actually in sight had no sooner reached my cabin than I was conscious of a new thrill of life in my veins; and my vigour sensibly revived as I watched until not only Table Mountain, with the Lion's Head on one side and the Devil's Peak on the other, but also the range of

<sup>1</sup> Within the last few years the competition between the "Union Steamship Co." and "Donald Currie and Co." has reduced the length of the voyage from Southampton to Cape Town, *via* Madeira, to eighteen or twenty days.

the Twelve Apostles to the south lay outstretched in all their majesty before my eyes.

Before leaving the "Briton" and setting foot upon African soil, I may briefly relate an adventure that befell me, and which seemed a foretaste of the dangers and difficulties with which I was to meet in South Africa itself. On the 20th of June, after three weeks of such boisterous weather that it had been scarcely possible for a passenger to go on deck at all, we found ourselves off St. Helena. By this time not only had my illness seriously reduced my strength, but the weaker I became the more oppressive did I feel the confined atmosphere of my second-class cabin; my means not having sufficed to engage a first-class berth. On the morning in question I experienced an unusual difficulty in breathing; the surgeon was himself seriously ill, and consequently not in a condition to prescribe; accordingly, taking my own advice, I came to the conclusion that I would put my strength to the test and crawl on deck, where I might at least get some fresh air. It was not without much difficulty that I managed to creep as far as the fore-castle, splashed repeatedly on the way by the spray from the waves that thundered against the bow; still, so delightful was the relief afforded by the breeze to my lungs, that I was conscious only of enjoyment, and entertained no apprehension of mischief from the recurring shower-baths.

But my satisfaction only lasted for a few minutes; I soon became convinced of the extreme imprudence

of getting so thoroughly soaked, and came to the conclusion that I had better make my way back. While I was thus contemplating my return, I caught sight of a gigantic wave towering on towards the ship, and before I could devise any means for my protection, the vessel, trembling to her very centre, ploughed her way into the billow, where the entire fore-castle was quite submerged. My fingers instinctively clutched at the trellis-work of the flooring; but, failing to gain a hold, I was caught up by the retreating flood and carried overboard. Fortunately the lower cross-bar broke my fall, so that instead of being dashed out to sea, I slipped almost perpendicularly down the ship's side. The massive anchor, emblem of hope, proved my deliverance. Between one of its arms and the timbers of the ship I hung suspended, until the boatswain came just in time to my aid, and rescued me from my perilous position.

But to return to Table Mountain, the watch-tower of Cape Colony. In few other points of the coast-line of any continent are the mountains more representative of the form of the inland country than here. At the foot of the three contiguous mountains, Table Mountain, Devil's Peak, and Lion's Head, and guarded, as it were, by their giant mass, reposing, as it might well appear, in one of the most secure and sheltered nooks in the world, lay Cape Town, the scene of my first landing. It is the metropolis of South Africa, the most populous city south of the Zambesi, and the second in importance







CAPE-TOWN.

of all the trade centres in the Anglo-African colonies. Although, perhaps, in actual beauty of situation it cannot rival Funchal, the capital of Madeira, which, with its tiers of terraces on its sloping hill-side, we had had the opportunity of admiring in the course of the voyage, yet there is something about Cape Town which is singularly attractive to the eye of a stranger; he seems at once to experience an involuntary feeling of security as he steams slowly along the shores of Table Bay; and as he gazes on the white buildings (not unfrequently surmounted by slender towers) which rise above the verdure of the streets and gardens, he recognizes what must appear a welcome haven of refuge after the stormy perils of a long sea passage. But appearances here, as often elsewhere, are somewhat deceptive; and as matter of fact, both the town and the bay are at some seasons of the year exposed to violent storms, one consequence of which is that the entire region is filled with frightful clouds of dust. Even in calm weather, the dust raised by the ordinary traffic of the place is so dense and annoying that it is scarcely possible to see a hundred yards ahead; and to escape it as much as possible people of sufficient means only come into the town to transact their business, having their residences in the outskirts at the foot of the adjacent mountains.

This disadvantage is likely to attach to the town for some time to come; first, because there are no practicable means of arresting the storms that break in on the south-east from Simon's Bay; and secondly,



because no measures have yet been taken in hand for paving the streets. It must be acknowledged, however, that within the last few years, during Sir Bartle Frere's administration, the large harbour-works that have been erected have done much to protect the town from the ravages of the ocean,—ravages of which the fragments of wreck that lie scattered along the shores of Table Bay are the silent but incontestable witnesses.

At the time of my arrival, in 1872, our vessel had to be towed very cautiously into the harbour. Mail steamers are now despatched to the colony every week, but at that time they only reached South Africa about twice a month, and it was therefore no wonder that each vessel, as it arrived from the mother-country, should be hailed with delight, and that the signal from the station at the base of the Lion's Head should attract a considerable crowd to the shore. There were many who were expecting relations or friends; there were the postal officials, with a body of subordinates, waiting to receive the mail; and there were large numbers of the coloured population, Malays, Kaffirs, and Hottentots, as well as many representatives of the cross-breeds of each race, who had come to offer their services as porters. All these had found their way to the water's edge, and stood in compact line crowded against the pier. In a few minutes the steamer lay to, and the passengers who, after two days, were to go on to Port Elizabeth hurried on shore to make the most of their time in exploring the town.

At a short distance from the shore, we entered Cape Town by the fish-market. Here, every day except Sunday, the Malay fishermen display an immense variety of fish; and lobsters, standing literally in piles, seem especially to find a ready sale. Any visitor who can steel his olfactory nerves against the strong odour that pervades the atmosphere of the place may here find a singularly ample field for ethnographical and other studies. The Malays, who were introduced into the country about ten years since, have remained faithful to their habits and costume. Imported as fishermen, stone-masons, and tailors, they have continued their own lines of handicraft, whilst they have adopted a new pursuit adapted to their new home and have become very successful as horse-breakers.

Passing along, we were interested in noticing the dusky forms of these men as they busily emptied the contents of their boats into baskets. They were dressed in voluminous linen shirts and trousers; and their conical hats of plaited straw, rushes, or bamboo, were made very large, so as to protect their heads effectually from the sun. Their physiognomy is flat, and not particularly pleasing, but their eyes, especially those of the women, are large and bright, and attest their tropical origin. The women, who wore brilliant handkerchiefs upon their heads, and the fullest of white skirts over such a number of petticoats as gave them all the appearance of indulging in crinoline, were assisting their husbands in their work, laughing with high glee over a haul which

evidently satisfied them, and chattering, sometimes in their own language and sometimes in Dutch. A black-headed progeny scrambled about amongst their busy elders, the girls looking like pretty dolls in their white linen frocks, the boys dressed in short jackets and trousers, none of them seeming to consider themselves too young to do their best in helping to lug off the fish to the market.

On leaving the fish-market, we made our way along one of the streets which lie parallel to each other, and came to the parade, a place bordered with pines. Inside the town the eye of a stranger is less struck by the buildings, which for the most part are in the old Dutch style, than by the traffic which is going on in the streets, where the mixed breeds predominate. In every corner, in every house, they swarm in the capacity of porters, drivers, or servants, and Malays, Kaffirs, and half-breeds are perpetually lying in wait for a job, which, when found, they are skilful enough in turning to their own advantage. Much as was done during my seven years' sojourn in the country to improve the external appearance and general condition of the town, this portion of the population seemed never to gain in refinement, and the sole advance that it appeared to make was in the craftiness and exorbitance of its demands. Exceptions, however, were occasionally to be found amongst some of the Malays and half-breeds, who from special circumstances had had the advantage of a somewhat better education.

Cape Town is the headquarters of the Chief Com-

missioner for the British Possessions and Dependencies in South Africa, as well as for his Council and for the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly. It is also the see of an Anglican bishop. The town contains sixteen churches and chapels, and amongst its population, which is chiefly coloured, are members of almost every known creed. Amongst the white part of the community, the Dutch element decidedly preponderates.

At the head of the present Government is a man who has gained the highest confidence of the colonists, and who is esteemed as the most liberal-minded and far-seeing governor that England has ever entrusted with the administration of the affairs of her South African possessions. It is confidently maintained that many of Sir Bartle Frere's measures are destined to bear rich fruit in the future.

The public buildings that are most worthy of mention are the Town Hall, the churches, the Government House, the Sailors' Home, the Railway Station, and especially the Museum, with Sir George Grey's Monument, and the adjacent Botanical Gardens; but perhaps the structure that may most attract attention is the stone castle commanding the town, where the Commander-in-chief resides, and which has now been appointed as the temporary abode of the captive Zulu king, Cetewayo.

Whether seen from the sea, or viewed from inland, the environs of Cape Town are equally charming in their aspect. Approached from the shore,



the numerous white specks along the foot of the Lion's Head gradually resolve themselves into villas standing in the midst of luxuriant gardens, sometimes situated on the grassy slopes, and sometimes picturesquely placed upon the summit of a steep bare rock. The well-to-do residents, especially the merchants, are conveyed from this suburb into the town by a horse-tramway, which is in constant use from six in the morning until ten at night. The part lying nearest to the town is called Green Point, the more remote end being known as Sea Point. Between the two are the burial-grounds, the one allotted to Europeans being by no means dissimilar to the quiet cypress gardens in Madeira. The native cemeteries lie a little higher up the hill, and afford an interesting study in ethnography. That of the Mohammedan Malays cannot fail to claim especial attention—the graves marked by dark slate tablets, distinguished by inscriptions, and adorned with perpetual relays of bright paper-flowers.

Charming as is the scene at the foot of the Lion's Head, there is another, still more lovely, on the lower slopes of the Devil's Mountain. Here, for miles, village after village, garden after garden, make one continuous chain, the various farmsteads being separated and overshadowed by tracts of oaks or pines. Every hundred steps an enchanting picture is opened to the eye, especially in places where the mountain exhibits its own interesting geological formation, or forms a background clothed with woods or blossoming heath. The suburb is connected

with the town by the railroad, which runs inland for about a hundred miles.

On this railroad the third station has a peculiar interest as being the one nearest to the Royal Observatory, which is built in some pleasure-grounds near the Salt River. World-wide is the reputation of the Observatory through its association with the labours of Sir John Herschel, astronomical science being at present prosecuted under the superintendence of Professor Gill.

Our two days' sojourn at Cape Town sped quickly by, and the "Briton" left Table Bay. Rounding the Cape of Good Hope, she proceeded towards Algoa Bay, in order to land the majority of her passengers at Port Elizabeth, the second largest town in the colony, and the most important mercantile seaport in South Africa.

Along the precipitous coast the voyage is ever attended with considerable danger, and many vessels have quite recently been lost upon the hidden reefs with which the sea-bottom is covered.

Like the other bays upon the coast, Algoa Bay is wide and open, and consequently much exposed to storms; indeed, with the exception of Lime Bay, a side-arm of Simon's Bay, there is not a single secure harbour throughout the entire south coast of the Cape. This is a most serious disadvantage to trade, export as well as import, not simply from the loss of time involved in conveying goods backwards or forwards from vessels anchored nearly half-a-mile from the shore, but on account of the additional expense

that is necessarily incurred. Large sums of money, undoubtedly, would be required for the formation of harbours in these open roadsteads, yet the outlay might be beneficial to the colony in many ways.

Situated on a rocky declivity some 200 feet high, Port Elizabeth extends over an area about two miles in length, and varying from a quarter of a mile to a full mile in breadth. The population is about 20,000. Any lack of natural beauty in the place has been amply compensated by its having acquired a mercantile importance through rising to be the trade metropolis for the whole interior country south of the Zambesi; it has grown to be the harbour not only for the eastern portion of Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, and the Diamond-fields, but also partially for the Transvaal and beyond.

A small muddy river divides the town into two unequal sections, of which the smaller, which lies to the south, is occupied principally by Malay fishermen. At the end of the main thoroughfare, and at no great distance from Baker River, bounded on the south side by the finest Town Hall in South Africa, lies the market-place; in its centre stands a pyramid of granite, and as it opens immediately from the pier, a visitor, who may have been struck with the monotonous aspect of the town from off the coast, is agreeably surprised to find himself surrounded by handsome edifices and by offices so luxurious that they would be no disgrace to any European capital. Between the market-place and the sea, as far as the mouth of the Baker River,

stand immense warehouses, in which are stored wool ready for export, and all such imported stores as are awaiting conveyance to the interior.

My own first business upon landing was to select an hotel, but it was a business that I could by no means set about with the nonchalance of a well-to-do traveller. For after paying a duty of 1*l.* for my breech-loader, and 10*s.* for my revolver, my stock of ready money amounted to just half-a-sovereign; and even this surplus was due to the accidental circumstance of the case of my gun not having been put on board the "Briton." However, I had my letters of introduction.

A German merchant, Hermann Michaelis, to whom I first betook myself, directed me to Herr Adler, the Austrian Consul, and through the kind exertions of this gentleman in my behalf, Port Elizabeth proved to me a most enjoyable place of residence. He introduced me to the leading gentry of the town, and in a very short time I had the gratification of having several patients placed under my care. I had much leisure, which I spent in making excursions around the neighbourhood, but I had hardly been in Port Elizabeth a fortnight when I received an offer from one of the resident merchants, inviting me to settle down as a physician, with an income of about 600*l.* a year. The proposal was very flattering, and very enticing; it opened the way to set me free from all pecuniary difficulties, but for reasons which will hereafter be alleged, I was unable to accept it.

I generally made my excursions in the morning,



as soon as I had paid my medical visits, returning late in the afternoon. Sometimes I went along the shore to the south, by a long tongue of land partially clothed with dense tropical brushwood, and partially composed of wide tracts of sand, on the extremity of which, seven miles from the town, stands a lighthouse. Sometimes I chose the northern shore, and walked as far as the mouth of the Zwartkop River. Sometimes, again, I spent the day in exploring the valley of the Baker River, which I invariably found full of interest. Furnished with plenty of appliances for collecting, I always found it a delight to get away from the hotel, and escaping from the warehouses, to gain the bridge over the river; but it generally took the best part of half an hour before I could make my way through the bustle of the wool depôt, which monopolizes the 250 yards of sand between the buildings and the sea.

Towards the south, as far as the lighthouse, the coast is one continuous ledge of rock, sloping in a terrace down to the water, and incrustated in places with the work of various marine animals, especially coral polypes. Sandy tracts of greater or less extent are found along the shore itself, but the sand does not extend far out to sea in the way that it does on the north of the town, towards the mouth of the Zwartkop.

All the curiosities that I could fish up at low tide from the coral grottoes, and all the remarkable scraps of coral and sea-weed that were

cast up by the south-easterly storms, I carried home most carefully ; and after my return from the interior, I found opportunity to continue my collections over a still larger area, and met with a still larger success.

Accompanied by four or five hired negroes, and by my little black waiting-maid Bella, I worked for hours together on the shore, and brought back rare and precious booty to the town.

The capture of the nautilus afforded us great amusement. We used to poke about the pools in the rocks with an iron-wire hook, and if the cephalopod happened to be there it would relinquish its hold upon the rock to which it had been clinging, and make a wild clutch upon the hook, thus enabling us to drag it out ; of course, it would instantly fall off again ; if it chanced to tumble upon a dry place, it would contract its tentacles and straightway make off to the sea ; but if it lighted on the loose shingle we were generally able, by the help of some good-sized stones, to pick it up and make it a prisoner. The bodies of the largest of these mollusks are about five inches in length, but their expanded tentacles often reach to a measure of two feet. They are much sought after and relished by the Malays, who call them cat-fish.

Occasionally we saw young men and women with hammers collecting oysters, cockles, and limpets, to be sold in the town ; and every here and there were groups of white boys with little bags, not

unlike butterfly-nets, catching a sort of prawns, which some of the residents esteem a great delicacy. Diver-birds and gulls abounded near the shallows, the former rising so sluggishly upon the wing, that several of them allowed themselves to be captured by my dog Spot.

The coast, as I have already mentioned, here forms a wide tongue of land, half of which is a bare bank, whilst, with the exception of the extreme point, the other part, near the town and towards the lighthouse, is clothed with luxuriant vegetation. At least a thousand different varieties of plants are to be found in the district, and this is all the more surprising because they have their roots in soil which is mere sand. Fig-marigolds of various kinds are especially prominent; here and there citron-coloured trusses of bloom, as large as the palm of one's hand, stand out in gleaming contrast to the dark finger-like, triangular leaves; a few steps further, and at the foot of a thick shrubbery, appear a second and a third variety, the one with orange-tinted blossoms, the other with red; and while we are stopping to admire these, just a little to the right, below a thicket of rushes, our eye is caught by yet another sort, dark-leaved and with flowers of bright crimson. Another moment, and before we have decided which to gather first, something slippery beneath our feet makes us look down, and we become aware that even another variety, this time having blossoms of pure white, is lurking almost hidden in the grass. In the pursuit of this



diversified and attractive flora, the multiplicity of dwarf shrubs, of rushes, and of euphorbias, stands only too good a chance of being completely overlooked.



EUPHORBIA TREES.

For miles this sandy substratum forms shallow, grassy valleys from 10 to 20 feet deep, and varying from 100 to 900 yards in length, running parallel to each other, and alternating with wooded eminences rising 30 to 50 feet above the sea level.

Westwards from the lighthouse the shore is especially rich in vegetation. Its character is that of a rocky cliff broken by innumerable trickling streams.

Several farmhouses are built upon the upper level. The swampy places are overgrown by many sorts of moisture-loving plants, the open pools being adorned with graceful reeds, and not unfrequently with blossoms of brilliant hue. The slope towards the sea is well-nigh covered by these marshes, whilst the low flattened hills that intervene are carpetted with heaths of various species, some so small as to be scarcely perceptible, others growing in bushes and approaching four feet in height. Truly it is a spot where a botanist may revel to his heart's content. These heaths not only exhibit an endless variety of form in their blossoms, but every tint of colour is to be traced in their delicate petals. The larger sorts are ordinarily white or grey; the smaller most frequently yellow or ochre-coloured; but there are others of all shades, from the faintest pink to the deepest purple.

The heaths that predominate in the southern districts of Cape Colony are characteristic of the South African flora, though they are a type of vegetation that does not extend far inland. The largest number of species is to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Cape Town and of Port Elizabeth.

Besides the heaths, lilies (particularly the scarlet and crimson sorts) are to be found in bloom at nearly all seasons of the year. Gladioli, also, of the bright red kind, are not unfrequently to be met with, vividly recalling the red flowering aloe which grows upon the Zuurbergen. Mosses are to be found in abundance on the downs.

A stranger wandering through this paradise of flowers would be tempted to imagine that, with the exception of a few insects and song-birds, animal life was entirely wanting. Such, however, was far from being the case. Lurking in the low, impenetrable bushes are tiny gazelles, not two feet high, hares, jerboas, wild cats, genets, and many other animals that only wait for the approach of nightfall to issue from their hiding-places.

My excursions to the shore, along the tongue of land, were upon the whole, highly successful. During my visit I collected a large variety of fish, crabs, cephalopods, annelids, aphrodites, many genera of mollusks, corals, sponges, and sea-weeds, as well as several specimens of the eggs of the dog-fish.

Nor did I confine myself to exploring the south shore. I wandered occasionally in the opposite direction, towards the mouth of the Zwartkop. There the shore for the most part consists of sand, which extends far out to sea, making it a favourable stranding-place for any vessel that has been torn from its anchorage during one of the frequent storms. From the sea I procured many interesting mollusks. Dog-fish abound near the mouth of the stream, while the river itself seems to teem with many kinds of fish. The banks, more especially that on the left, are rich in fossils of the chalk period, and in the alluvial soil are remains of still extant shell-fish, as well as interesting screw-shaped formations of gypsum. The coast is flatter here than it is towards the south, and the large lagoons that stretch inland

furnish a fine field for the ornithologist's enjoyment, as they abound in plovers, sandpipers, and other birds. I observed, also, several species of flowers that were new to me, particularly some aloes, marigolds, and ranunculuses, and a fleshy kind of convolulus, which, I think, has not been seen elsewhere.

Generally I returned home by way of the salt-pan, a small salt lake about 500 yards long by 200 broad, which lies between the town and the river, and is for part of the year full of water. Here I found some more new flowers, besides some beetles and butterflies. The salt-pan lies in a grassy plain, bounded on the west by the slope on which the town is built. Both the plain and the rocky declivity produce a variety of plants, but the majority of them are of quite a dwarf growth; in August and September, the spring months, they abound in lizards, spiders, and scorpions, and of these I secured a large collection. On the slope alone I caught as many as thirty-four snakes. Just at this season, when the winter is departing, the beetles and reptiles begin to emerge from their holes; but, finding the nights and mornings still cold, they are driven by their instinct to take refuge under large stones. Here they will continue sometimes for a week or more in a state of semi-vitality; and, captured in this condition, they may easily be transferred to a bottle of spirits of wine without injury to the specimens.

My inland excursions, which for the most part took the direction of the valley of Baker River, had



likewise their own special charm. In its lower course the river-bed is bounded by steep and rocky walls, rising in huge, towering blocks; but higher up there are tracts of pasturage, where the tall grass is enlivened by a sprinkling of gay blossoms, that indicate the close proximity of the sea. Scattered over the valley are farms and homesteads, and in every spot where there is any moisture a luxuriant growth of tropical shrubs, ferns, and creepers is sure to reveal itself, and in especial abundance upon the ruins of deserted dwellings.

In one of the recesses of the valley there is an establishment for washing wool by steam. At a very short distance from this I found a couple of vipers rolled up under a stone, in a hole that had probably been made by some great spider. I seized one of them with a pair of pincers, and transferred it with all speed to my flask, which already contained a heterogeneous collection of insects and reptiles. I had caught the male first, and succeeded in catching the female before she had time to realize that her mate was gone. I kept them both in my flask with its neck closed for a time, sufficiently long, as I supposed, to stupefy them thoroughly, and went on my way. Finding other specimens I opened my receptacle and deposited them there, but it did not occur to me that there was any further need to keep the flask shut. I had not gone far before I was conscious of a strange thrill passing over my hand; a glance was sufficient to show me what had happened; one of my captive vipers had made an escape, and

was fastening itself upon me ; involuntarily I let the flask, contents and all, fall to the ground. I was not disposed, however, to be balked of my prize, and immediately regaining my presence of mind, I managed once again to secure the fugitive, and was careful this time to fasten it in its imprisonment more effectually.

One day, Herr Michaelis invited me to accompany him and another friend to the high table-land on a bee-hunt. It was an excursion that would occupy about half a day, and I was most delighted to avail myself of the offer. We started up the hill in a covered, two-wheeled vehicle, and turned eastward across the plain that extends in a north-easterly direction. The plateau was clothed with short grass, and studded with thousands of reddish-brown ant-hills, chiefly conical in form and measuring about three feet in diameter, and something under three feet in height. Those that were still occupied had their surface smooth, the deserted ones appearing rough and perforated. An ant-hill is always forsaken when its queen dies, and our search was directed towards any that we could find thus abandoned, in the hope of securing its supply of honey. In the interior of Africa a honey-bird is used as a guide to the wild bees' nests ; but in our case, we employed a half-naked Fingo, wearing a red woollen cap, who ran by the side of our carriage, and kept a sharp look-out. It was not long before a gesture from him brought us to a stand-still. He had made his discovery ; he had seen bees flying in and

out of a hill, and now was our chance. We lost no time in fastening up our conveyance, lighted a fire as rapidly as we could, and in a very few minutes the bees were all suffocated in the smoke. The ant-hill itself was next cleared away, and in the lower cells were found several combs, lying parallel to each other, and filled partly with fragrant honey, and partly with the young larvæ. I could not resist making a sketch of the structure. The removal of the earth brought to light two more snakes, which were added to my rapidly increasing collection.

With these and similar excursions, four weeks at Port Elizabeth passed pleasantly away. The time came when I must prepare to start for the interior. Tempting as was the offer that had been made to me to remain where I was, there were yet stronger inducements for me to proceed. Not only had a merchant in Fauresmith, in the Orange Free State, held out hopes of my securing a still more lucrative practice, but Fauresmith itself was more than sixty miles further to the north, and thus of immense advantage as a residence for one who, like myself, was eager to obtain all possible information about the interior of the country.

Besides advancing me the expenses of my journey, Herr Hermann Michaelis himself offered to accompany me to Fauresmith.

I need hardly say with how much regret I left Port Elizabeth, and all the friends who, during my visit, had treated me with such courtesy and consideration.



## CHAPTER II.

## JOURNEY TO THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

IT was in the beginning of August that I started on my journey from Port Elizabeth to Fauresmith, *viâ* Grahamstown, Cradock, Colesberg, and Philipopolis. My vehicle was a two-wheeled cart, drawn by four small horses, and the distance of eighty-six miles to Grahamstown was accomplished in eleven hours.

The beauty of the scenery and of the vegetation made the drive very attractive. The railway that now runs to Grahamstown also passes through charming country; but, on the whole, I give my preference to the district which was originally traversed by road. For the greater part of the way the route lies beneath the brow of the Zuur Mountains, which, with their wooded clefts and valleys, and their pools enclosed by sloping pastures, must afford unfailing interest both to the artist and to the lover of nature.

Occasionally the trees stand in dense clumps, quite detached, a form of vegetation which is very characteristic of wide districts in the interior of the

continent; but by far the larger portion of this region is covered by an impenetrable bush-forest, consisting partly of shrubby undergrowth, and partly of dwarf trees. Many of these appear to be of immense age, but many others seem to have been attacked by insects, and have so become liable to premature decay.

Every now and then our road led past slopes, where the stems of the trees were covered all over with lichen, which gave them a most peculiar aspect, and it was a pleasant reminiscence of the woods of the north to see a beard-lichen (*Usnea*) with its thick grey-green tufts a foot long decorating the forked boughs as with a drapery of hoar-frost. In other places, the eye rested on declivities covered for miles with dwarf bushes, of which the most striking were the various species of red-flowering aloes, and the different euphorbias, some large as trees, some low, like shrubs, and others mere weeds, but altogether affording a spectacle at which the heart of a botanist could not but rejoice.

Numerous varieties, too, of solanum (nightshade) laden with yellow, white, blue, or violet blossoms, climb in and around the trees, and in some parts unite the stems with wreaths that intertwine so as to form almost an impenetrable thicket, where the grasses, the bindweeds, the heaths, and the ranunculuses in the very multiplicity of their form and colour fill the beholder with surprise and admiration. Like a kaleidoscope, the vegetation changes with every variation of scenery; and each bare or grassy

flat, each grove or tract of bushwood, each swamp or pool, each slope or plain has ever its own rare examples of *liliaceæ*, *papilionaceæ*, and *mimosæ* to exhibit.

Here and there, in the midst of its own few acres of cultivated land, is to be seen a farm, and at no unfrequent intervals by the wayside are erections of brick or galvanized iron, which, although often consisting of only a couple of rooms and a store, are nevertheless distinguished by the name of hotels.

Throughout this district the fauna is as varied as the flora, and the species of animals are far more numerous and diversified than in the whole of the next ten degrees further north towards the interior. As I had opportunity in my three subsequent journeys to examine the different animal groups in detail, I shall merely refer here to their names, deferring more minute description for a future page. Ground squirrels and small rodents abound upon the bare levels where there is no grass, associating together in common burrows, which have about twenty holes for ingress and egress, large enough to admit a man's fist. In places where there is much long grass are found the retreats of moles, jackals, African polecats, jerboas, porcupines, earth-pigs, and short-tailed armadilloes. In the fens there are otters, rats, and a kind of weasel. On the slopes are numerous herds of baboons, black-spotted genets, caracals, jumping mice, a peculiar kind of rabbit, and the rooyebock gazelle; and besides the

edentata already mentioned, duykerbock and steinbock gazelles are met with in those districts where the trees are in detached clumps. The tracts of low bushwood, often very extensive, afford shelter to the striped and spotted hyæna, as well as to the strand-wolf (*Hyæna brunnea*); and there, too, amongst many other rodentia is found a gigantic field-mouse; also two other gazelles, one of them being the lovely little bushbock. The bushes on the slopes and the underwood are the resort of baboons, monkeys, grey wild-cats, foxes, leopards, koodoo-antelopes, bushvarks, blackvarks, buffaloes, and elephants, the elephants being the largest of the three African varieties. A hyrax that is peculiar to the locality, and lives in the trees, ought not to be omitted from the catalogue.

Leopards are more dangerous here than in the uninhabited regions of the interior, where they are less accustomed to the sound of fire-arms, and so desperate do they become when wounded, that it is generally deemed more prudent to destroy them by poison or in traps.

The capture of elephants is forbidden by law; consequently several wild herds, numbering twenty or thirty head, still exist in Cape Colony; whilst in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and the Bechuana country the race has been totally annihilated.

Their immunity from pursuit gives them an overweening assurance that is in striking contrast with the behaviour of the animals of their kind in Central and Northern South Africa. There a shot, even if

two or three miles away, is enough to put a herd to speedy flight, and they seldom pause, until they have placed the best part of twenty miles between themselves and the cause of their alarm; and although within the last twenty years 7500 elephants have been killed by Europeans, it is the very rarest occurrence for one of them to make an unprovoked attack upon a human being. Here, on the contrary, between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, it is necessary to be on one's guard against meeting one of the brutes. Just before I returned to Port Elizabeth on my homeward journey, a sad accident had happened in the underwood by the Zondags River, which flows partially through the forest. A black servant had been sent by his master to look for some cattle that had strayed; as the man did not return, a search was made for him, but nothing was found except his mangled corpse. From the marks all around, it was quite evident that a herd of passing elephants had scented him out, and diverging from their path, had trampled the poor fellow to death. It should be mentioned, that although ordinarily living under protection, these ponderous creatures may be slain by consent of the Government.

To enumerate all the varieties of birds to be seen hereabouts would be impossible; an ornithologist might consume months before he could exhaust the material for his collection; I will only say that a sportsman may, day after day, easily fill more than his own bag with different kinds of bustards, guinea-fowl, partridges, sand-grouse, snipes and plovers,





ELEPHANTS ON THE ZONDAGS RIVER.





wild ducks and wild geese, divers and other water-fowl. The wonderful and beautiful productions of the vegetable kingdom that excite the admiration of the stranger as he makes his excursions in this district, whether in pursuit of pleasure or of science, derive a double charm from the numerous graceful birds and sparkling insects that hover and flit about them. Here are long-tailed *Nectariniæ* or sun-birds, now darting for food into the cup-shaped blossoms of the iris, and now alighting upon the crimson flower-spike of the aloe; and there, though not the faintest breath of air is stirring, the branches of a little shrub are all in agitation; amidst the gleaming dark-green foliage, a flock of tiny green and yellow songsters, not unlike our golden-crested wren, are all feasting busily upon the insects that lie hidden beneath the leaves.

On the tops of the waggon-trees, hawks and shrikes, beautiful in plumage, keep their sharp lookout, each bird presiding over its own domain; and no sooner does a mouse, a blindworm, or a beetle expose itself to view, than the bird pounces down upon its prey; its movement so sudden, that the bough on which it sat rebounds again as though rejoicing in its freedom from its burden.

The leafy mimosas, too, covered with insects of many hues, attract a large number of birds. Nor are the reedy districts at all deficient in their representatives of the feathered race, but reed-warblers, red and yellow finches, and weaver-birds keep the

lank rushes in perpetual motion, and make the valleys resound with their twittering notes.

As representatives of the reptile world, gigantic lizards are to be found near every running water; tortoises of many kinds abound on land, one sort being also met with both in streams and in stagnant pools; there are a good many poisonous snakes, such as buff-adders, cobras, horned vipers, besides coral snakes; likewise a species of green water-snake, which, however, is harmless. Venomous marine serpents also find their way up the rivers from the sea.

We reached Grahamstown late at night on the same day that we left Port Elizabeth, and started off again early the following morning. During the next two days we had some pleasant travelling in a comfortable American *calèche*, and arrived at Cradock, a distance of 125 miles. At first the country was full of woods and defiles similar to those we had passed after leaving Port Elizabeth, but afterwards it changed to a high table-land marked by numerous detached hills, some flat and some pointed, and bounded on the extreme north-east and north-west by mountain chains and ridges. The isolated hills rise from 200 to 500 feet above the surrounding plain, and are mostly covered with low bushes, consisting chiefly of the soil-exhausting lard-tree. The valleys display a great profusion of acacias, hedge-thorns and other kinds of mimosa, but the general type of vegetation which is conspicuous hereabouts disappears beyond Cradock, and is not seen again in

any distinctness until near the Vaal River, or even farther north.

On our way to Cradock I had my first sight of those vast plains that stretch as far as the eye can reach, and which during the rainy season present an illimitable surface of dark green or light, according as they are covered with bush or grass, but which, throughout all the dry period of the year, are merely an expanse of dull red desert. They abound in the west of Cape Colony, in the Free State, in the Transvaal, and in the Batlapin countries, and are the habitations of the lesser bustard, the springbock, the blessing, and the black gnu. Where they are not much hunted all these animals literally swarm; but on my route I saw only the springbock, which is found in diminished numbers on the plains to the north. I did not observe one at all beyond the Salt Lake basin in Central South Africa; along the west coast, however, as far as the Portuguese settlements, they are very abundant.

The springbock (*Antilope Eudore*) is undeniably one of the handsomest of the whole antelope tribe. Besides all the ordinary characteristics of its genus, it possesses a remarkable strength and elasticity of muscle; and its shapely head is adorned with so fine a pair of lyrate horns that it must rank *facile princeps* amongst the medium-sized species of its kind. The gracefulness of its movements when it is at play, or when startled into flight, is not adequately to be described, and it might almost seem as if the agile creature were seeking to divert the evil pur-

poses of a pursuer by the very coquetry of its antics. Unfortunately, however, sportsmen are proof against any charms of this sort; and under the ruthless hands of the Dutch farmers, and the unsparing attacks of the natives, it is an animal that is every day becoming more and more rare.

The bounds of the springbock may, perhaps, be best compared to the jerks of a machine set in motion by watch-spring. It will allow any dog except a greyhound to approach it within quite a moderate distance; it will gaze, as if entirely unconcerned, while the dog yelps and howls, apparently waiting for the scene to come to an end, when all at once it will spring with a spasmodic leap into the air, and, alighting for a moment on the ground six feet away, will leap up again, repeating the movement like an indiarubber ball bounding and rebounding from the earth. Coming to a stand-still, it will wait awhile for the dog to come close again; but ere long it recommences its springing bounds, and extricates itself once more from the presence of danger. And so, in alternate periods of repose and activity, the chase goes on, till the antelope, wearied out as it were by the sport, makes off completely, and becomes a mere speck on the distant plain.

But the agility of the nimble creature cannot save it from destruction. Since the discovery of the diamond-fields thousands of them, as well as of the allied species, the blessbock and the black gnu, have been slain. The Dutch farmers, who are owners of the districts where the antelopes abound,







are excellent shots and their worst enemies. On their periodical visits to the diamond-fields they always carry with them a rich spoil; and whilst I was there, in the winter months, from May to September, I saw whole waggon-loads of gazelles brought to the market. Nevertheless, in spite of the slaughter, it is a kind of game that as yet has by no means become scarce, and it is sold in the daily markets at Kimberley and Dutoitspan at prices varying from three to seven shillings a head.

Springbock hunting is rather interesting, and is generally done on horseback. The horses, which have been reared on these grassy plains, are well accustomed to the burrow-holes and ant-hills with which they abound, so that they give their rider no concern, and allow him to concentrate all his attention upon his sport. A gallop of about two miles will usually bring the huntsman within a distance of 200 yards of a herd of flying antelopes. A slight pressure of the knees suffices to bring the horse to a standstill, when its rider dismounts and takes a deliberate aim at the victim. Amongst the Dutch Boers the most wonderful feats of skill are performed in this way; and I have known an expert marksman bring down two running antelopes by a single shot from his breech-loader. Other instances I have witnessed, when, both shots having missed, or the second having been fired too late, the herd has scampered off to a distance of 700 yards or more and come to a stand, when a good shot has made a selection of a special victim for his unerring



aim. Well do I recollect one of these experts pointing to a particular antelope in one of these fugitive herds, and exclaiming, "Det rechte kantsche bock, Mynheer!" He brought the creature down as he spoke.

There is another method of hunting these springbucks, by digging holes two or three feet deep and three feet wide, in proximity to ponds or pools in half-dried-up river-beds; in these holes the hunter crouches out of sight, and shoots down the animals as they come to drink. This kind of chase, or rather *battue*, is very common in the dry season, when there are not many places in which the antelopes can quench their thirst, and is especially popular with the most southerly of the Bechuanas, the Batlapins, and the Baralongs, who are, as a rule, by no means skilful as shots.

On the plains between the Harts River and the Molapo a different plan is often followed. Several men lie down flat on the ground, either behind ant-hills or in some long grass at intervals of from 50 to 200 yards, and at a considerable distance—ordinarily about half a mile—from the herd. A large number of men then form themselves into a sort of semicircle, and, having encompassed the herd, begin to close in so as to drive them within range of the guns of the men who are lying in ambush. As the weapons are only of the commonest kind, often little better than blunderbusses, the success of the movement of course depends entirely on the first shot. When the party is small,

they not unfrequently spend a whole day waiting most patiently for the springbocks to be driven sufficiently within range. I have myself on one occasion seen a party of six of these skirmishers, after watching with the sublimest patience for many hours, take their aim at an animal that had been driven within the desired limits; the old muskets went off with a roar that made the very ground tremble; the volume of smoke was immense; six dusky faces of the Bechuanas rose from the grass; every eye was full of expectation; but as the cloud rolled off, it revealed the springbock bounding away merrily in the distance. The six shots had all missed.

I feel bound, however, to confess to a performance of my own, about equally brilliant. After watching one day for several hours, I observed a few springbocks scarcely more than twenty yards away from me. I felt quite ashamed at the thought of doing any injury to the creatures, they were so graceful, but we were really in want of food, and it was only the remembrance of this that made me overcome my scruples. I could not help regarding myself almost as a murderer; but if I wanted to secure our dinner, there was no time to lose. My trembling hand touched the trigger; the mere movement startled the springbocks, and before I could prepare myself to fire, they were far away, totally uninjured.

The snare called the hopo-trap, described by Livingstone in his account of gazelle-hunting

amongst the Bechuanas, I never saw anywhere in use. It would probably be now of no avail, as the game is much wilder and less abundant than it was in his time.

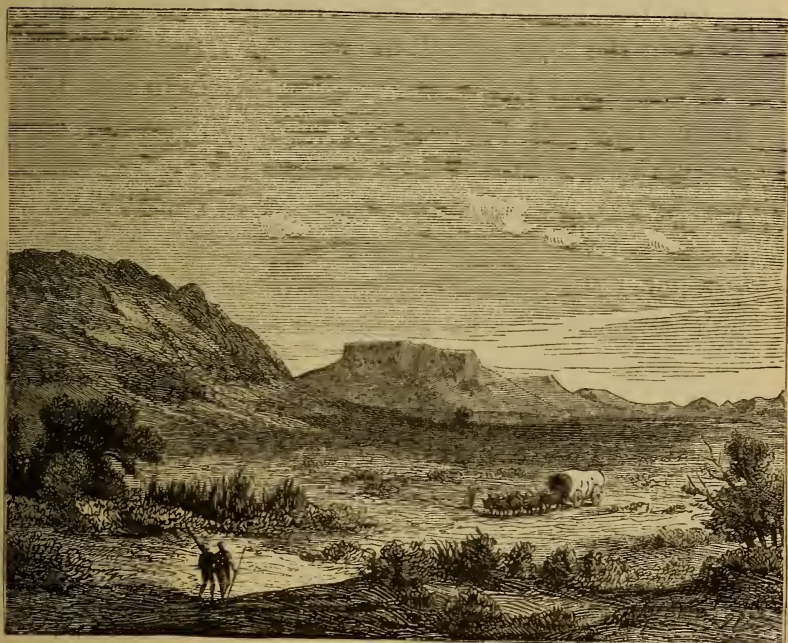


ANTELOPE TRAP.

A still different mode of chasing springbucks has been introduced by the English, who hunt with greyhounds, not using fire-arms at all. Mounted on



horses, that in spite of being unaccustomed to the ground, do their work admirably, the pursuers follow on until the gazelles are fairly brought down by the dogs; although it not unfrequently happens that the dogs get so weary and exhausted by the run, that the chase has to be abandoned.



THE COUNTRY NEAR CRADOCK.

We only remained in Cradock one day. The town is situated on the left bank of Fish River, a stream often dried up for months together, so as to become merely a number of detached pools; but a few hours of heavy rain suffice to overfill the

channel with angry waters, that carry ruin and destruction far and wide. The great bridge that spanned the river at the town was in 1874 swept right away by the violence of the flood, the solid ironwork being washed off the piles, which were themselves upheaved. The new bridge was erected at a securer altitude, being about six feet higher.

On the second day after leaving Cradock we reached the town of Colesberg. Our travelling was so rapid that I had scarcely time properly to take in the character of the scenery; but seven years later, on my return in a bullock-waggon, and when progress was especially slow on account of the drought, I had a fairer opportunity of examining, at least partially, the geological structure of the district, and of gaining some interesting information about the adjoining country.

Towards Colesberg the isolated, flattened eminences gradually decrease both in number and in magnitude, the country becoming a high table-land. One of the prettiest parts is Newport, a pass in which is seen the watershed between the southerly-flowing streams, and the affluents of the Orange River. The heights in the district are haunted by herds of baboons, by several of the smaller kinds of antelopes, and by some of the lesser beasts of prey of the cat kind, principally leopards. On the tableland itself are to be counted upwards of fifty quaggas, belonging to the true species, the only one I believe to be met with in South Africa. I was delighted to find that latterly they had been spared by the

farmers ; ten years previously their number had been diminished to a total of about fifteen heads.

The town is distinguished by a hill, which has the same name as itself, and which exhibits the stratification of the various rocks of which the district is composed. Colesberg itself is somewhat smaller than Cradock, and is situated in a confined rocky vale. The contiguous heights are for the most part covered with grass and bushwood, of so low a growth that from a distance they have the appearance of being almost destitute of vegetation. In summertime the radiation of heat from the rocks is so intense that the town becomes like an oven, and is by no means a pleasant place of residence.

Proceeding northwards, a journey of a couple of hours brought us to the Orange River, the boundary between the Orange Free State and Cape Colony. Two hours later we reached Philipopolis. The aspect of this place was most melancholy. The winter drought had parched up all the grass, alike in the valley and on the surrounding hills, leaving the environs everywhere brown and bare. Equally dreary-looking were the square flat-roofed houses, about sixty in number, and nearly all quite unenclosed, that constituted the town ; whilst the faded foliage of a few trees near some stagnant pools in the channel of a dried-up brook, did nothing to enliven the depressing scene. The majority of the houses being unoccupied, scarcely a living being was to be seen, so that the barrenness of the spot was only equalled by its stillness.



Hence, for the rest of the way to Fauresmith, we had to travel in a mail-cart, a two-wheeled vehicle of most primitive construction. A drive of three hours in such a conveyance over the best paved highway, and in the most genial weather, could hardly have been a matter of any enjoyment ; but in



ON THE WAY TO THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

the teeth of a piercing cold wind, and along a road covered with huge blocks of stone, and intersected by the deep ruts made by the streams from the highlands, and over which, in order to exhibit the mettle of his horses, our driver persisted in dashing at a break-neck pace, the journey was little

better than martyrdom. The seat on which three of us had to balance ourselves was scarcely a yard long and half a yard wide, and in our efforts to preserve the equilibrium of ourselves and our luggage, our hands became perfectly benumbed with cold ; and, to crown our discomfort, snow, which is of rare occurrence in these regions, began to fall.

We held out till man and beast were well-nigh exhausted, and had accomplished about three-quarters of the distance, when the barking of a dog, the sure symptom of the proximity of a dwelling-house, fell like music on our ears. The most miserable of Kaffir huts would have been a welcome sight ; my friend declared himself ready to give a sovereign for a night's lodging in a dog-kennel ; but we were agreeably surprised at finding ourselves arrive at a comfortable-looking farmhouse, where the lights seemed to beam forth a welcome from the windows. We were most hospitably received, and sitting round the farmer's bountiful board, soon forgot the troubles of the way.

After the meal was over we went to the door to ascertain the state of the weather. The snow had ceased almost before our horses were unharnessed, and, except in the south-east, the direction of the departing storm, the sky was comparatively clear, and there was a faint glimmer of moonlight. As I stood listening, I caught again the screeching note of a bird which already I had heard while sitting at the table. My host informed me that it proceeded



from "det grote springhan vogl," and I thought I should like to take my chance at a shot. The bird was really the South African grey crane, to which the residents have given the name of "the great locust bird," on account of the great service it performs in the destruction of locusts. It is so designated in distinction to the small locust bird, which migrates with the locust-swarms. The great cranes (*C. Stanleyi*) never leave their accustomed quarters.

In the prosecution of my design I crept slowly along, but very soon became aware that the birds were not wanting in vigilance. The first rustle made the whole flock screech aloud and mount into the air. I did not want to fire promiscuously among them all, and so abandoned my purpose, and came back again. I afterwards observed that these cranes, together with the crowned cranes (*Balearia regulorum*), and the herons, as well as several kinds of storks, are accustomed to pass the night in stagnant waters in order that they may rest secure from the attacks of hyænas, jackals, foxes, hyæna-dogs (*Canis pictus*), and any animals of the cat tribe. As soon as darkness sets in the birds may be observed standing in long rows right in the midst of the pools, and until the break of day they never quit their place of refuge. But not even the security of their position seems to throw them off their guard. I observed during my many hunting excursions, both in the neighbourhood of the salt-water and of the fresh-water lakes, that a certain number of sentinel

birds were always kept upon the watch, and that at intervals of about half an hour there was a short chatter, as if the sentries were relieving guard. A similar habit has been noticed both amongst the black storks in the Transvaal, and amongst the various herons in the Molapo river, and in the valleys of the Limpopo and the Zambesi.

The time came only too soon for us to leave our hospitable quarters. We set out afresh, and after a miserable jolt of several hours' duration, we reached our destination at Fauresmith.

In its general aspect, Fauresmith is very like the other towns in the Free State. Although consisting of not more than eighty houses, it nevertheless covered a considerable area, and the clean white-washed residences, flat-roofed as elsewhere, peeping out from the gardens, looked altogether pleasant enough. The town is the residence of a kind of high sheriff, and must certainly be ranked as one of the most considerable in the republic. The district of the same name, of which it is the only town, is undoubtedly the wealthiest in the Free State, and deserves special notice, both on account of its horse-breeding and of its diamond-field at Jagersfontein.

Like various other towns in South Africa, Fauresmith is enlivened four times a year by a concourse of Dutch farmers, who meet together for the combined purpose of celebrating their religious rites and making their periodical purchases. At these times the town presents a marked contrast to its

normal condition of silence and stagnation; large numbers of the cumbrous South African waggons make their way through the streets, and form a sort of encampment, partially within and partially on the outskirts of the place, the farmers' sons and the contingent of black servants following in the train. Many of the wealthier farmers have houses of their own in the town, sometimes (where water is to be readily procured) adorned with gardens; but such as have inferior means content themselves with a hired room or two, whilst the poorest make shift for the time with the accommodation afforded by their own waggons. These recurring visits of the farmers are regarded as important events by the townspeople, and are looked for with much interest; in many respects they are like the fairs held in European cities. Especially are they busy seasons to the medical men, as, except for urgent cases, all consultations are reserved for these occasions and the majority of ordinary ailments that befall the rural population abide these opportunities to be submitted to advice.

Here in Fauresmith, just as in similar places with limited population, the sheriff, the minister, the merchant, the notary, and the doctor, form the cream of the society.

Nothing could exceed the hopefulness of the temper in which I had started for this town. Not only had I satisfied myself that I should be so much farther inland than I was at Port Elizabeth, and consequently that my advantages would be great in

ascertaining what outfit would be really requisite for my progress into the interior, but I had been sanguine enough to anticipate that I should be in a position to earn the means that would enable me to carry out my design. So favourably had the prospect been represented to me, that I had accepted the proposition of the Fauresmith merchant in all confidence; perhaps my helplessness and complete want of resources had made me too trusting; I was, perchance, the drowning man catching at a straw.

A very few days of actual experience were enough to dispel any bright anticipation in which I had indulged. I could not conceal from myself that I was a burden upon the very man who had offered to befriend me, and induced me to come; his good offices in my behalf necessarily placed him in a false position with an older friend, a physician already resident in the town, and to whom he was now introducing a rival; it was only to be expected that his long-established friendship with him should prevail over his recent goodwill towards myself; he saw his mistake, and soon took an opportunity of telling me that if I proceeded to the diamond-fields I should find myself the right man in the right place.

I took the counsel into my best consideration, and quickly came to the conclusion that nothing else was to be done. Accordingly, I made arrangements to start.

But my difficulties were great. I had hardly



any clothes to my back, my boots were in holes, and I had no money to replace either. I had no alternative but to get what I required upon credit. I succeeded in this, and set out forthwith, my pride not permitting me to remind my Port Elizabeth friend of the kind offer of assistance which he had made me.

Herr Michaelis once again rendered me the kindest of service; after advancing me money to forward me on my way, he undertook to convey me as his guest to the diamond-fields, which he had himself made up his mind to visit. We were joined by a third traveller, Herr Rabinsvitz, the chief rabbi for South Africa, from whom I received marked courtesy and consideration.

Although for the time I was disappointed, I could not feel otherwise than grateful for the hospitality shown me during my short residence in Fauresmith, by the worthy merchant. I acknowledge my obligation to him by this record, and rejoice to remember how I quitted the place with no ill-will for the past, but with the fullest confidence for the future.

Very monotonous in its character is the district between Fauresmith and the diamond-fields, the only scenery at all attractive being alongside the Riet River and in the valley of the Modder, which we had to cross. At this spot there seemed to be a chance of getting some sport, and I employed the few minutes during a halt after dinner in exploring the locality. The Riet River, like a fine thread, flowed north-westwards in a deep clear channel to



its junction with the Modder, and, as is the case with most of the South African streams in the dry winter season, there were large pools, nine or ten feet deep and full of fish, extending right across the river-bed.

The whole valley is thickly covered with weeping willows (*Salix Babylonica*), and amongst these I found some very interesting birds. Pushing my way through the brushwood, with the design of making a closer inspection of one of the pools, I was startled by a great rustling, and by a chorus of notes just over my head. I stepped back, and a whole flock of birds rose into the air and settled in a thorn at no great distance. They were the pretty long-tailed *Colius leucotis*. I afterwards saw two other varieties of the same species. One of the flock that I had disturbed perched itself upon a bough almost close at hand, as if resolved to make a deliberate survey of the strangers who had intruded on its retirement, but all the rest had taken refuge in the bush, and were completely hidden from my view. They are lively little creatures, but very difficult to keep in confinement; the only caged specimens I ever saw were in Grahamstown, in the possession of a bird-fancier, who kept them with several kinds of finches, and fed them with oranges.

The most common birds in the Riet River valley are doves, and those almost exclusively of two sorts, the South African blue-grey turtle-dove, and the laughing-dove; of these the latter is found even beyond the Zambesi; it is a most attractive little

creature, that cannot fail to win the affection of every lover of birds. I had a couple of them, which I had succeeded in catching after slightly wounding them. I kept them for years, and they afforded me much amusement. As early as three o'clock in the morning the male was accustomed to greet his brooding mate with his silvery laughing coo, and she would reply in low and tender notes that were soft and melodious as distant music. I eventually lost them through the negligence of one of my black servants.

On the plains on either side of the river I found the white-eared bustard, the commonest kind of wild-fowl in all South Africa; its cry, from the first day of my journey through the Orange Free State and the Transvaal to the last, rarely ceased to be heard. It affords a good meal, and may easily be brought down by the most inexperienced marksman. As soon as it becomes aware of the approach of a pursuer, it turns its head with an inquiring look in all directions, and suddenly dives down; just as suddenly it rises again, shrieking harshly, and after an awkward flight of about a couple of hundred yards, sinks slowly to the earth with drooping wings and down-stretched legs. Its upper plumage is of a mixed brown; its head, with the exception of a white streak across the cheeks, is black, as are also the throat and chest; its legs are yellow. Its habitat does not extend beyond the more northerly and wooded districts of South Africa, and, like other birds to which I have referred, it is extremely difficult to keep in confinement.

Our road through the valley led us past Coffeefontein, the second diamond-field in the Free State, where the brilliants, though small, are of a fine white quality. Late in the evening we crossed the river by the ford, spending the night in an hotel on the opposite bank.

It is just as well for me to disabuse the reader's mind of any idea he might form, that the



HOTEL ON THE RIET RIVER.

building designated by the name of an hotel had any pretensions answering to the title it claimed. A couple of wooden huts, covered with canvas, and serving alike for dwelling-rooms and business-offices,

with a few sheepskins and goatskins laid upon the ground for sleeping accommodation, may be said to be a fair representation of the average arrangements, external and internal, of such establishments. A violent draught penetrating every cranny kept some tattered curtains—so old, that it was impossible to say what their original texture had been—in continual motion; and so intense was the cold, that I was sorely tempted to drag down the ragged drapery, stop its fluttering, and wrap it round me for a covering.

In such quarters, anything like refreshing sleep was not to be expected, and we were glad enough next morning, after an untempting breakfast, to turn our backs upon the place. In the afternoon we arrived at Jacobsdal, another comfortless looking place, consisting of about five-and-twenty houses, scattered over a scorched-up plain. A long drive on the following morning was to bring us to the central diamond-fields. The nearer we approached, the more dreary did the landscape become; the bushes dwindled gradually, and finally disappeared, so that a few patches of dry grass were alone left as the representatives of vegetation.

The first day on which I set my eyes upon the diamond-fields, I must confess, will ever be engraven on my memory. As our vehicle, drawn by four horses, made its rapid descent from the heights near Scholze's Farm, and when my companion, pointing me to the bare plains just ahead, told me that there lay my future home, my heart sank within



me. A dull, dense fog was all I could distinguish. A bitter wind rushing from the hills, and howling around us in the exposure of our open waggon, seemed to mock at the protection of our outside coats, and resolved to make us know how ungenial the temperature of winter in South Africa could be; and the grey clouds that obscured the sky shadowed the entire landscape with an aspect of the deepest melancholy.

Yes; here I was approaching the Eldorado of the thousands of all nations, attracted hither by the hope of rich reward; but the nearer I came, the more my spirit failed me, and I was conscious of a sickening depression.

Immediate contact with the fog that had been observed from the distant heights, at once revealed its true origin and character. It proved to be dense clouds of dust, first raised by the west wind from the orange-coloured sand on the plains, and then mingled with the loose particles of calciferous earth piled up in heaps amidst the huts on the diggings. So completely did it fill the atmosphere, that it could require little stretch of imagination to fancy that it was a sandstorm of the Sahara. As we entered the encampment the blinding mist was so thick that we could only see a few yards before us; we were obliged to proceed very cautiously; and before we reached the office of my friend the Fauresmith merchant, another mile or so farther on, our faces and our clothes were literally encrusted. We only shared the fate of all new-comers, in feeling



much distressed and really ill; the very horses snorted and sneezed, and showed that the condition of things was no less painful to them than to their masters.

Both at Bultfontein and Dutoitspan these accumulations of the commingled ferruginous and calciferous sand fill the atmosphere to a height of a hundred feet, and involve everything in dim obscurity. Here and there, on both sides, right and left, wherever the gloom would permit me to see, I noticed round and oblong tents, and huts intended for shops, but now closed, built of corrugated iron. Under the fury of the wind, the tent-poles bent, and the ropes were subject to so great a strain that the erections threatened every moment to collapse. Many and many a sheet of the galvanized iron got loose from the roofs or sides of the huts, and creaking in melancholy discord, contributed, as it were, to the gloominess of the surroundings. In many places, too, the pegs that had fastened the tents to the ground had yielded to the pressure, and sheets of canvas were flapping in the air like flags of distress; whilst the only indication of human life was a few dim figures in the background, which on closer inspection proved to be some natives, resting their half-naked bodies after their toil in the diggings.

Truly it was a dreary scene—and I sighed at my dreary prospect.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

Ups-and-downs of medical practice—Mode of working the diggings—The kopjes—Morning markets—My first baboon-hunt—Preparation for first journey.

I HAD a still further cause to be downcast. It was not only that the aspect of the diamond-fields was altogether unattractive, and that the weather was so rough and changeable that I felt it depressing in the extreme, but I was perplexed at what seemed to me the hopeless state of my finances.

Relying upon the promises of the Fauresmith merchant who had befriended me, I had not taken the precaution, before leaving Port Elizabeth, to obtain from Herr Adler the letters of introduction which would have been of service to me on my first arrival at the diamond-fields; and I found myself in the predicament of having only a few shillings of ready money, barely sufficient to pay for a night's lodging and a day's victuals. I had to gain the means of subsistence, and I had to provide for my further journey. One of two courses lay open to me: I must either dig for diamonds, or I must at once secure a practice, or at least earn some fees

among the heterogeneous and often doubtful characters of which the population was composed. My difficulty was increased by the very slight knowledge I had of either Dutch or English; the few words I had acquired barely sufficed to enable me to make myself understood, and were quite inadequate to allow me to carry on a conversation upon the most ordinary matters, far less to offer my services to a patient whose sickness required advice. But on the horns of a dilemma I was not long in coming to a decision. I knew that even to commence the avocation of digging necessitated the possession of at least some capital, which I could not command, whilst, by borrowing a few simple articles of furniture for a week or two, and starting as a doctor, in a tent for a surgery, I might hope to be consulted by clients who would pay me fees enough to ward off starvation.

I had one letter in my pocket which was the means of introducing me to an opening. The person to whom it was addressed was out of health, and was contemplating a visit to Europe for the medical advice which he could not obtain in the diamond-fields. By good fortune he understood German, and having ascertained from the letter which I forwarded to him that I was a doctor, and being of a practical and frugal turn of mind, he came to the conclusion that, before incurring the delay and expense of the long journey, he would try whether I could do him any good. In the course of a week he found my treatment of his

disorder so successful that he professed himself quite satisfied as to my capability, and definitely abandoned his projected return to Europe. I, for my part, had not quite the same practical qualities as my patient; and not having made any precise terms as to remuneration, was obliged to submit to whatever payment he chose to make. Under the circumstances I was only too thankful to accept an old half-rotten tent-hut and a few items of common furniture; although I should not omit to mention that, at the solicitation of my friend of Fauresmith, he subsequently consented to advance me the sum of 5*l.* by way of loan.

The hut of which I had thus become the proprietor was about eleven feet wide by ten feet long and seven feet high. It consisted simply of deal laths covered with canvas so decayed by damp that it kept out neither wind nor dust. The laths creaked and rattled with unintermitted vibration; and had it not been for the shelter afforded by a substantial warehouse erected by its side, I am certain it would not have survived the gusts that beat upon it; as it was, it seemed to be warped and twisted out of shape as often as the wind blew with any violence from the south. It was situated in the direct road leading to Kimberley, which is the chief settlement of the district, but it was separated from the highway by a broad gutter, over which it was necessary to jump in order to reach the door; and this was nothing more than a light framework covered with canvas, which I endeavoured by night



to make somewhat secure by supplementing its fastening with an iron bar that I happened to find on the bare earth which formed the floor of my apartments. A piece of old sheeting that flapped backwards and forwards with every breeze did duty as a window.

The interior was partitioned into two chambers by a dilapidated green curtain. The larger compartment was my work-room and surgery, the furniture consisting of an unpainted table, two old chairs, and a couple of chests, one of which held my drugs and the other my books. If patients happened to flock in unusual numbers, as they would when a farmer brought his whole family of children, these chests were the best substitutes I could provide for the comfortable arm-chairs and lounges with which my European colleagues are accustomed to furnish their consulting-rooms. The second apartment, considerably smaller than the other, was my kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom all in one, and necessarily the place where, until I could afford to keep a servant, I was obliged to perform the most menial offices in my own behalf. The bed, in which during the cold weather I spent many a sleepless night, corresponded only too well with the rest of the furniture, the only article with the least pretension to respectability being a little case which I had brought with me from Europe.

My desire to get away into the interior grew stronger and stronger. However, before I could gain the means to start, I had first to pay off my

liabilities, which included 300 florins owing to the Holitzer Savings Bank, and 16*l.* due to Herr Michaelis. I resolved accordingly to limit myself to the barest necessities of life, and for some months, in spite of being absolutely compelled to incur the expense of changing my abode, I practised the most rigid economy, and lived in the completest seclusion. The high price of provisions, and the low value of money considerably alarmed me, and I made a point of transacting all my housekeeping myself. My rule was to wait until it was dark, and the streets were empty, and then to go out, and after making my few purchases to get in a sufficient supply of water for the next day; of this I always required plenty, not only because it was necessary for the preparation of my drugs, and the general demands of my profession, but because I was my own laundress and my own cook. It is almost superfluous to add, that I was likewise my own tailor.

But I have no wish to dwell upon any further details of my household difficulties at that time, beyond making the remark that all my proceedings had to be carried on with the utmost secrecy. Any revelation of the true state of my private affairs would have seriously affected my position as a medical man. It was with no little satisfaction that I found myself working my way, little by little, into a very fair practice. Between the 26th of August, the date of my arrival, and the beginning of October, I had accumulated enough to discharge my liabilities.

By degrees I was able to launch out a little in my expenditure, and to emerge in some measure from my seclusion; and although I was obliged still to reside in a tent-hut, which was a source of personal inconvenience to myself, I never found it any detriment to my public position. It was a very great relief to me that a considerable number of Germans, on hearing of the arrival of a new doctor who could speak their language, were glad to make their way to my quarters. Their visits were a mutual advantage to both parties, for while they had the benefit of my German, I managed, from my intercourse with them, to make a wonderful progress in my knowledge of Dutch.

The diamond-fields of South Africa lie chiefly in the English province of Griqualand West, a district that simultaneously with the discovery of its subterranean treasure became an apple of discord among the native princes. The Griqua king Waterboer, and the Batlapin chiefs Yantje and Gassibone, all strove for an absolute possession, though it was very certain that none of them had any definite or just claim to assert. Waterboer possessed the principal part of the land on each side of the lower course of the Vaal and Modder Rivers; Yantje held the territory north of the mouth of the Harts River; while Gassibone made good his sway over the district that lay between the Vaal and the Harts on the north-east. The Korannas occupied the Vaal valley from Fourteen Streams to the mouth of the Harts.

Although the first diamonds that were found were by the Boers somewhat contemptuously called "pebbles," the discovery stirred up amongst them a keen desire for the acquisition of territory; and when the annexation of the diamond-fields was subsequently effected by the English, the controversy that was waged between the Boers and the Government of the Orange Free State was very bitter, both sides claiming to be the rightful possessors by virtue of concessions that had been made to them by one or other of the native chieftains, Waterboer, Yantje, and Gassibone.

As the weakest must always go to the wall, so the Orange Free State, after a brief effort to assert the rights of ownership, was obliged to yield; nevertheless it did not cease to insist upon the justice of its original claim. All attempts of England to arbitrate between the new province and the Republic, all efforts to gain recognition for laws that should compass on equal terms the mutual benefit of the conflicting States, were altogether unavailing, until at last England herself, either prompted by her own magnanimity, or impelled by some sense of justice, finally purchased the claims of the Free State by a compensation of 90,000*l.*, besides giving a pledge to contribute 15,000*l.* towards the extension of a railroad which should connect the Free State with one of the lines in the eastern portion of Cape Colony.

The whole region of the diamond-fields may be subdivided into three districts. The oldest fields are on the Vaal River, and extend from the town of

Bloemhof, in the Transvaal, to the river-diggings, at the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts; next to them are the dry-diggings, so called because the "pebbles" were originally obtained by sifting the earth and not by washing it—these lie around the town of Kimberley; and thirdly, there are the fields at Sagersfontein and Coffeefontein, in the Orange Free State, beyond the English dependency in Griqualand.

The settlement at the river-diggings sprang up with a rapidity as marvellous as those of California. At first, Klipdrift, opposite Pniel, a mission station, was regarded as its capital and centre; but within the last nine years, Kimberley (formerly known as New Rush) has become so important, that it necessarily holds first rank.

Within a year after the discovery of the first "crystal stone" in the valley of the Vaal, where the indolent Korannas alone had dragged on a dreamy existence, long rows of tenements had started up, although for the most part they were merely unsubstantial huts; but very soon South Africa, from end to end, became infected with the diamond-fever. Young and old, sick and healthy, servants and masters, country-folk and townsmen, sailors and soldiers deserting their calling; and Dutch Boers, with their whole families, yielded to the impulse to migrate to the alluring scene that had suddenly become so famous. The encampments that they made were transformed with incredible speed into regular towns of 4000 or 5000 inhabitants; and



when the intelligence was circulated that the "Star of Africa," a diamond of eighty-three carats and a half, had been picked up, every European steamer brought over hundreds of adventurers, all eager to take their chance of securing similar good fortune for themselves.

Thus in addition to Klipdrift grew up the town of Hebron, River Town, Gong Gong, Blue Jacket, New Kierk's Rush, Delpportshope, Waldeck's Plant and others, the glory of many of them, however, being destined to be very transient, some of them passing away as suddenly as they had risen. The report was no sooner spread that on the plain of the Dutoitspan Farm, below the river-diggings on the Vaal, diamonds had been found in abundance on the surface of the earth, than the old stations were forthwith abandoned, every one hurrying off in hot haste to the dry-diggings, which were supposed to be much more prolific.

Out of the large number of those who succeeded in quickly realizing large fortunes, a large proportion squandered their wealth as rapidly as they had acquired it; and as the new settlements soon developed themselves into dens of vice and demoralization, the majority of the population, being mere adventurers, came utterly to grief.

On the Vaal itself the diamonds are collected from the alluvial rubble. This rubble consists of blocks of greenstone, containing fine, almond-shaped chalcidies and agates, some as large as a man's fist and like milk quartz, others smaller and of a pink

or carmine tint, and occasionally blue or yellow ; it covers the district between Bloemhof and Hebron, and is known distinctively as Vaal-stone. But besides greenstone, the rubble includes a number of other elements ; it consists partially of fragments of the trap-dyke that is characteristic of the district between Hebron and the mouth of the Harts, as well as of nearly all the hills in the east of Cape Colony, in the Orange Free State, and in Griqualand ; it contains likewise a certain proportion of milk-quartz, clay-slate, sand yielding magnetic iron, and numerous pyropes ; these vary in size from that of a grain of millet to that of a grain of maize, and were awhile mistaken for garnets and rubies ; moreover, it contains portions of the limestone that extends both ways from the Vaal, though not forming the actual valley of the river ; it is a stone in which I never discovered any fossils.

The diggers, after obtaining their portion of diamond rubble from the "claims," as the parcels of ground allotted them by the authorities were called, had first to convey it down to the river ; they had next to sift it from the heavier lumps of stone, and then to wash it in "cradles," three or four feet long and about one and a half wide, until they had entirely got rid of the clay. In the residuum they had finally to search carefully for the treasure. The stones found in this locality were, as a general rule, very small, but their colour was good and their quality fine ; they were called "glass-stones," whilst the larger and more valuable brilliants obtained in

the two other districts were distinguished as "true river-stones."

The second, and hitherto the most important diamond-field, is that which I have called the central-diggings; they are what formerly were understood by the dry-diggings. They include the four mines



SQUARE IN DUTOITSPAN.

in the Kimberley district, and form two separate groups, the north-western containing Kimberley, and Old de Beers adjoining it on the east, and the eastern group containing Dutoitspan, with Bultfontein closing it in on the south and west. This eastern group lies about two miles from Kimberley,

and about one mile from Old de Beers. Kimberley itself is about twenty-two miles to the south-east of Klipdrift, and is the most important of the four mines I have mentioned, being that where the greatest numbers of diamonds of all qualities are found. The stones found at Dutoitspan are valued very much on account of their very bright yellow colour, those obtained at Bultfontein being generally smaller, but equal in purity to the "river-stones."

Diamond-mines vary in depth from forty-five to 200 feet, and may be from 200 to 700 yards in diameter. The diggings are locally called "kopjes," being divided into "claims," which are either thirty feet square, or thirty feet long by ten feet wide; of these a digger may hold any number from one to twenty, but he is required to work them all. For the ordinary "claim" the monthly payment generally amounts to about twenty florins for ground-rent and for water-rate, made to the Government and to a Mining Board, which consists of a committee of diggers appointed to overlook the working of the whole. In Dutoitspan and Bultfontein there is an additional tax paid to the proprietors, i. e. the owners of the farms; but in the Kimberley and Old de Beers group the Government has purchased all rights of possession from the firm of Ebden and Co.

I have little doubt in my own mind that these pits are the openings of mud craters, but I am not of opinion that the four diggings are branches of the same crater; it is only a certain resemblance



between the stones found in Old de Beers and those found in Kimberley that affords the least ground for considering that there is any subterranean communication between the two diggings. At the river-diggings I believe that one or more crater-mouths existed in the vicinity of the river bed above Bloemhof.

The palmy days of the diamond-diggings were in 1870 and 1871, when, if report be true, a swaggering digger would occasionally light his short pipe with a 5*l.* note, and when a doctor's assistant was able to clear 1100*l.* in seven months. But since 1871 the value of the diamonds has been constantly on the decline; and although the yield has been so largely increased that the aggregate profits have not diminished, yet the actual expenses of working have become tenfold greater. Notwithstanding the fall in the value of the stones, the price of the land has risen immensely. At the first opening of the Kimberley kopje, the ordinary claim of 900 square feet could be had for 10*l.* It is true that the purchase only extended to the surface of the soil; but now that the excavations are made to the depth of about 200 feet, some of the richer pits fetch from 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.*, a proof that the real prosperity of the diamond-fields has not deteriorated, because (just as in the gold diggings) the rush of adventurers eager for sudden wealth has been replaced by the application of diligent and systematic industry.

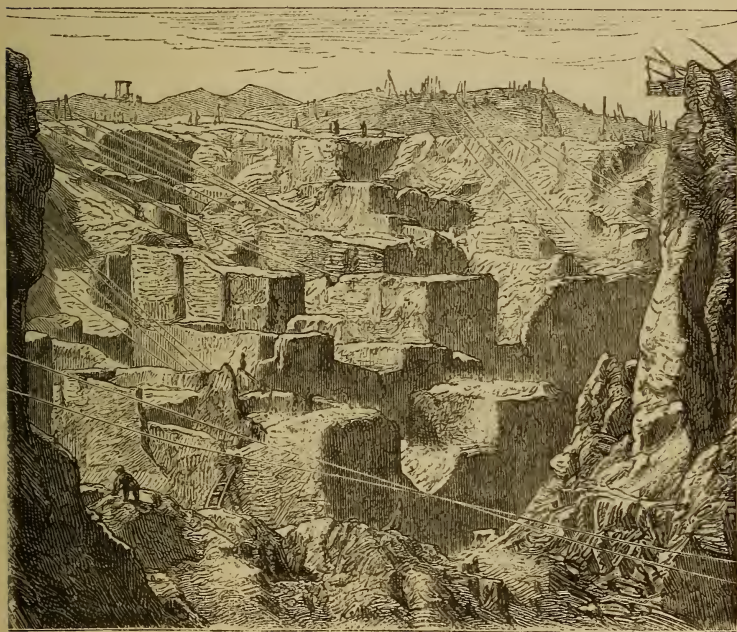
As time has progressed, the mode of obtaining the



diamonds has gradually become more skilled and scientific. As the diggers at first worked in their allotments with the assistance of what hired labourers they could get, Hottentots, Kaffirs, and Bechuanas, their apparatus was of the rudest character. It consisted only of a stake, driven into the ground at the upper edge of the pit, with an iron or wooden pulley attached, enabling them to draw up the buckets of diamond-earth by hand. This acted very well as long as the walls of the mine were perpendicular; but when they were at all on the incline, or when, as would sometimes happen, the earth had to be carried a hundred yards or more over the heads of other workers, one stake was driven in at the bottom of the pit and three at the top, and between two of these a cylinder, two or three feet in diameter, or a great wheel, was kept in motion, by natives turning handles at both ends; by this means the full buckets were lifted, and the empty lowered simultaneously; a rope of stout iron-wire connected the third upright stake with the one at the bottom of the pit, and along this there ran two grooved iron rods, that supported a framework, provided with a hook to which the bucket could be attached. As the excavations grew deeper, and the diggers became the owners of more than one claim apiece, the expense of raising the larger quantities of earth, and the waste of time, began to be seriously felt, and led to the introduction of wooden whims—great capstans worked by horse-power. Many of these cumbrous machines are still in use; but the

more wealthy diggers, as well as the companies that have recently been formed, now generally employ steam engines.

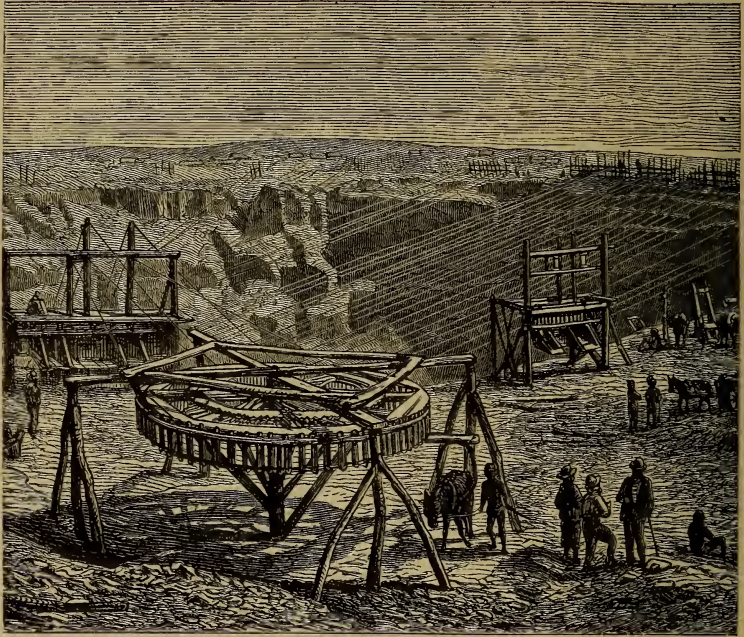
This is specially the case at the Kimberley kopje. Although these are the smallest of the diamond-mines, they are the richest, and consequently attract



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1871.

the largest proportion of diggers. It soon became impossible to find space for the separate hand-pulleys to stand side by side, and huge deal scaffolds were erected, three stories high, so that three distinct lifting-apparatus could be worked one above another, without requiring a basement area of much

more than six square feet. At present, however, the edge of the embankment is almost entirely covered with horse-whims and steam-engines that have been brought from England.



HORSE-WHIMS IN THE DIAMOND QUARRIES.

It is no longer allowable for the diamond-earth to be sorted near the place where it is brought up, a practice that was found to lead to much annoyance and disagreement; but the owners are obliged to subject their earth to scrutiny, either within the limits of their own allotments, or to have it conveyed to a piece of ground hired outside the town for the purpose.









The process of sorting is also more complicated than it used to be. Formerly the earth containing the diamonds was cleared of its coarser parts by means of sieves; it was then turned over and shaken out on to a flat table, where it was merely examined by the help of a stick, or a little piece of iron. It necessarily resulted from this rough-and-ready method that many diamonds were overlooked, and the earth thus examined was afterwards sold as being very likely to yield a number of small stones, and often proved very remunerative to the buyer.

Now, however, washing-machines, some of them very elaborate, worked by steam-power, horse-power, or hand-labour, according to the means of the claim-owners, are almost universally employed. The earth is gradually cleared of clay, until only the stony particles remain; and these are rinsed repeatedly in water until they are thoroughly clean; then they are placed, generally every evening, in sieves for the moisture to drain off, and after a slight shaking, they are turned on to a table before the claim-owner or overseer. Whatever diamonds there may be, are generally detected at first sight; being heavier than other stones, they gravitate to the bottom of the fine-wire sieve, and consequently come uppermost when the contents are turned out for the final inspection.

In proportion as the machinery has become more elaborate, and the modes of working more perfect, so have expenses increased, and diamond-digging now requires a considerable capital. This of course

has tended to clear the work of a large crowd of mere adventurers, and made it a much calmer and more business-like pursuit than it was originally. The authorized rules and regulations for the protection of the diggers and of the merchants have likewise materially improved the condition of both.



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1872.

As viewed from the edge of the surrounding clay walls, the appearance of one of the great diamond-fields is so peculiar as almost to defy any verbal description. It can only be compared to a huge crater, which, previously to the excavations, was filled to the very brink on which we stand with

volcanic eruptions, composed of crumbling diamond-bearing earth, consisting mainly of decomposed tufa. That crater now stands full of the rectangular "claims," dug out to every variety of depth. Before us are masses of earth, piled up like pillars, clustered like towers, or spread out in plateaus; sometimes they seem standing erect as walls, sometimes they descend in steps; here they seem to range themselves in terraces, and there they gape asunder as pits; altogether they combine to form a picture of such wild confusion, that at dusk, or in the pale glimmer of moonshine, it would require no great stretch of imagination to believe them the ruins of some city of the past, that after the lapse of centuries was being brought afresh to light.

But any illusion of this sort is all dispelled, as one watches the restless activity of the throngs that people the bottom of the deep dim hollow. The vision of the city of the dead dissolves into the scene of a teeming ant-hill; all is life and eagerness and bustle. The very eye grows confused at the labyrinth of wires stretching out like a giant cobweb over the space below, while the movements of the countless buckets making their transit backwards and forwards only add to the bewilderment. Meanwhile to the ear everything is equally trying; there is the hoarse creaking of the windlasses; there is the perpetual hum of the wires; there is the constant thud of the falling masses of earth; there is the unceasing splash of water from the pumps; and

these, combined with the shouts and singing of the labourers, so affect the nerves of the spectator, that, deafened and giddy, he is glad to retire from the strange and striking scene.

To this brief and general description of the diamond-fields, I would be allowed to add one or two characteristics of the street-life in the settlements.

The morning-markets, or public auctions, which are held every day, except Sunday, in the open places in Kimberley and Dutoitspan, are very interesting. They are presided over by a market-master or auctioneer, appointed by the Government, with permission, however, to hold private sales for his own benefit. The office may be somewhat trying to the lungs, but it has the reputation of being very lucrative. From six to eight a.m., the whole of the unpaved market-place, which lies in the heart of the iron and canvas dwellings, is covered with ox-waggons, laden not only with flour, fruit, vegetables, potatoes, maize, butcher's meat, poultry, and other items of consumption, but with firewood, forage, wood for thatching, and all the other necessaries of domestic economy. The sales are exclusively by auction. Five per cent. of the proceeds goes to the Government, and two per cent. to the market-master. The prices of the commodities are very fluctuating, demand and supply being continually out of proportion. I have known the cost of a sack of potatoes vary from 15s. to nearly 4l.

Besides the ordinary morning-markets, public



auctions are held on all days except holidays in halls erected for the purpose; and in the evenings, sales of articles not included in the usual routine of business are carried on in the canteens, to which purchasers are invited by announcements on large placards, notifying that drink will be distributed gratis during the proceedings.

In former years, the majority of the canteens were shocking dens of vice, forming the worst feature of the district; latterly, however, there has been a considerable diminution in their number. The wells that have been made in various parts of the streets, and in the outskirts of the settlements, have been an inestimable boon, and the throngs that ever surround them show how highly they are appreciated. The water is drawn up in buckets by Kaffirs, or by horses; it is sold, not given away, and many hundreds of pounds are readily expended for the supply of that which is as indispensable for the diamond-washing as for the common offices of life.

A residence in the diamond-fields undoubtedly has various inconveniences, but nothing is so trying as the atmosphere. Every day during the dry winter season, lungs, eyes, and ears are painfully distressed by the storms of dust that impregnate the air with every conceivable kind of filth, which, penetrating the houses, defiles (if it does not destroy) everything on which it rests. The workers in the diggings, the drivers of waggons, and all whose occupations keep them long in the open air, are especially sufferers from this cause.

Nor is the summer much less unpleasant. During the rainy season the country is flooded by the violent downpour; the rain often fills up the shallow brack-pan (one of the salt lakes that dry up every year, lying in a depression about half a mile long at the south end of Dutoitspan, in a single day; and as the immediate consequence, the streets of Kimberley become so deluged that the traffic is impeded, and foot passengers can only with difficulty proceed at all. The new corporation has endeavoured to remedy this difficulty by laying down gutters, and taking other measures for draining the thoroughfares.

For a few days' recreation at Christmas, 1872, I agreed to go on an excursion, baboon hunting, on the neighbouring hills in the west of the Orange Free State—the party consisting, besides myself, of a young German merchant, who found more opportunity for such diversion here than at home; a young Pole from Posen, whose mere love of adventure had brought him to the diamond-fields; and a Fingo, engaged to carry our baggage, and whose burden kept him in a perpetual vapour-bath. The Pole and myself were both duly equipped in proper hunting-costume.

I was very anxious to make myself acquainted with the animal-world on the hills that bounded the eastern horizon; and, having visited my patients, and ascertained that they could dispense with my services for a short time, I started off from Dutoitspan early in the afternoon of Christmas Eve.

Involuntarily the memories of former Christmas Eves rose up within my mind, and I could not help comparing the past with the present, contrasting the festivities of the cheerful room, well warmed to defy the wintry rigour, with the tropical glow of an African sun, where not a single external circumstance recalled an association with the season.

Our way led at first across a plain covered with dwarf bushes, few of them exceeding eighteen inches high. Here and there, in depressions of the soil, were patches of soft green turf, long grass only growing upon higher and more rocky places.

All over the wide flats were innumerable swarms of insects, of which several species of locusts especially attracted our notice. Some of these were very beautiful in colour, and were armed with a kind of projecting shield. Varying from two to three inches in length, their cylindrical bodies were either of light or dark green, the wing-sheaths being bordered with red. In quite a sluggish condition thousands of them had settled on the milk-bushes (*Euphorbiaceæ*), and the least touch made them fall to the ground, apparently lifeless. On my journey from Port Elizabeth I had wondered how it was that the locusts, subject to the attacks of almost countless enemies of the feathered tribe, from the eagle to the wild duck, should venture so constantly to settle in the most exposed parts of the bushes; and I now solved the mystery by discovering through my sense of smell that they eject a most offensive fluid, the disgusting odour of which we had the

greatest difficulty in removing from our hands even after a thorough scrubbing with sand.

Besides the locusts, we found several kinds of beetles—some sand-beetles, two large ground-beetles, and a leaf-beetle that gleamed amidst the foliage with a metallic sheen. The small variety of the vegetation, and its scorched-up condition, was quite enough to explain the entire absence of butterflies, although moths of many kinds were present to supply their place.

We saw hardly any quadrupeds. Excepting some great shrew-mice, we came across nothing but a bright red rodent (*Rhizæna*) and a ground-squirrel. These were sitting up on their hind quarters, close to the aperture of their underground retreats; only waiting a moment, as if to scrutinize the new comers, they made off with all speed, the *Rhizæna* grunting softly, the squirrel giving a shrill, sharp whistle.

The bird of which we saw the greatest numbers was the small dark South African starling, which ever hovers over the numerous ant-hills or perches on the top of solitary thorns. It is a lively little creature, careful to survey a stranger only from a prudent distance, and given to frequent the deserted holes of rodents and ground-squirrels, especially betaking itself thither when chased or wounded.

After we had proceeded about an hour and a half we reached the border of one of the rectangular "pans" which are the miniature representatives of the large shallow salt-lakes that are so characteristic of South Africa. The salt-pan itself was dry, but



close beside it was a small rain-pool full of greenish water, a little of which, mixed with a spoonful of brandy, we found palatable enough. Hereabouts we fell in with a Kaffir tending some sheep; and



KAFFIR SHEPHERD.

having purchased his goodwill by a little present of tobacco, we induced him to give us what information he could about the various farms lying further eastward. We had fixed upon a farm known both as Kriko Farm and as Kuudu Place for our headquarters, from which we could make excursions to the hills.

Towards evening we reached the first spur of the heights in the Free State, running due north and south. The vegetation was already becoming more luxuriant. A large number of shrubs that from the diamond-fields had looked mere specks turned out to be camel-thorn acacias, their broad-spreading crowns and great flat seed-pods declaring them akin to the mimosas. Since that date most of them have fallen under the axe, and they have been reduced to ashes as fuel at the diggings. Their trunks are often two feet thick, covered with a rough dark-grey bark, full of knots, and yielding a sound hard wood. Two things particularly arrested our attention; first, the great thorns growing in pairs three inches long, with their points far asunder, and at the base as thick as a man's finger; and, secondly, the collections of strange birds' nests hanging down from the branches. These nests belonged to a colony of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*), and their construction was very singular. When the birds have found a suitable branch, the whole flock sets to work with the industry of bees to make a common erection that may shelter them all. Each pair of birds really builds its own nest of dry grass and covers it in; but so closely are the nests fitted together, that when finished the entire fabric has the appearance of one huge nest covered in by a single conical roof, the whole being often not less than three feet high and from two to five feet in diameter. The boughs which project beyond the structure are not unfrequently known to break under

the accumulated load. The entrances to all the separate nests are from below, an arrangement by which they might be presumed to be sheltered, not merely from the rain, but from attacks of any kind; this, however, is by no means the case, and they are liable to be invaded by the larger kinds of snakes, such as the cobra. I myself, some years later, was successful in killing a great snake just as it had crept into one of these weaver-birds' nests. I was at Oliphantfontein Farm, and happened to catch sight of its tail just as the huge reptile was beginning its work of depredation. It had killed and thrown out several birds, and was commencing to devour the eggs and fledglings inside; it snapped viciously at every parent bird that was not scared away by its hissing. I was afraid, if I fired, that I might only kill the birds that I was desirous to save; accordingly, I took up a stone, and flung it with so good an aim that I brought the creature down to the ground, where a couple of shots soon despatched it before it could make good a retreat.

As evening drew on we arrived at a grassy plain that extended to the hills, three miles away. Here, beneath a jutting eminence, were two small huts, forming a canteen kept by a native; but its existence was a proof to us that we were in the road between the diamond-fields and the Free State. We declined an invitation from the host to sleep here; and although we had to make our way through deep sand-drifts, we resolved to go on further.

It was quite late when we reached the Kriko Farm.

I had made up my mind to spend the night in the open air; and as we were all very thirsty, we followed out the glimmer of some water until we reached a half-dry pool, at the edge of which was a level spot that we selected as our camping-place for the night.

Supper was soon ready. A few red-legged plovers and some small bustards (of the kind that the Boers call "patluperks"), which we had shot in the course of the day, afforded us a meal that we thoroughly enjoyed; nor had we a less hearty relish for a cup of tea, although it was made from the water of the pond which, when we came to see it by daylight, we were compelled to confess that nothing but the most agonizing pangs of thirst could have induced us to taste. Even in the fire-light it flickered with all the colours of the rainbow, but by the light of day it revealed putrescence itself, and even the cattle refused to drink it.

While we were sitting round our fire, talking over the incidents of the afternoon, we were favoured by a visit from three Korannas. They had seen our light from the farmhouse, about a hundred yards away, and had supposed that we were a body of Basutos, from the west of the Free State, travelling in search of work, and were not a little surprised to come upon a party of white men enjoying themselves in an encampment. They did not stay long with us; and as soon as they were gone, and the barking of the dogs at the farm had ceased, a dead silence ensued, broken only by the chirping of a little grass-



hopper. After the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, the pure, fresh air was most delightful to us all, and we soon resigned ourselves to sleep.

Early in the morning we explored the immediate neighbourhood of the farm. It lies in a wide valley, into which open several cross-valleys formed by outlying chains of hills. The hill-sides are steep, often almost perpendicular, exhibiting huge blocks of trap. It was a refreshing thing for our eyes to look upon such a rich expanse of vegetation, even the flat summits of the hills being clothed with arborescent mimosas. Except some striped mice, we saw no mammalia at all, but birds of many sorts—turtle-doves, plovers, long-tailed black and white shrikes, and a whole flock of common brown carrion hawks—were perching upon the rocks, which were so white with the guano that they could be seen fifteen miles away. Besides these, we came across some small red falcons and several handsome fork-tailed kites. Altogether it was a favourable opportunity, of which we did not fail to take advantage, of filling our bags betimes with some dainty morsels for dinner. Meanwhile we were able to make some additions to our entomological spirit-flasks, in the way of curious frogs, spiders, lizards, and chameleons.

On our way back from our morning ramble we met the farmer. In answer to my inquiry how we ought to proceed to get at the baboons on the hills, he was extremely communicative. He said that there were two herds in the neighbourhood, the

smaller and wilder of which generally went in the morning to drink in an adjoining glen, but the other was not so shy, and ventured every day to the second pool beyond where we were standing. He complained of them as a great and perpetual nuisance. They were always on the look-out, and no sooner was a field or a garden left unguarded, than they would be down at once, break through the hedges, and devour the crops. They were likewise very destructive amongst the sheep. If a shepherd happened to leave his post for ever so short a time, or even to fall asleep, the baboons, who had been watching their chance from the heights, would be down upon the flock in the valley, and seizing the lambs, and ripping up their stomachs with their teeth, would feast upon the milk they contained; then leaving the poor mangled victim writhing on the ground, would lose no time in repeating the terrible operation upon another. This was a statement that I have since often had confirmed.

So pitiable was the farmer's account of the losses he had in various ways sustained through the baboons, that we could quite understand the grin of satisfaction with which he learnt our object. He became more and more loquacious in his desire to render information; and when I further explained to him that we were anxious to get some of their skins to stuff, and to carry off some of their skulls, he was quite astounded; he had never heard of such a thing, and exclaiming, "Allmachttag, wat will ye dun?" he walked off, shaking his head, to tell his

wife of the doctor's "wonderlijke" proposal to shoot a "babuin," and to send its skin and its skull all the way to "Duitsland."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Free State farmers are simple and thoroughly good-hearted people, requiring only a little more culture to make them most agreeable companions. Among all my patients I never found any more grateful.

About the middle of the morning we left Kuudu Place and started eastwards, in the hope that we might be in time to catch the smaller herd at their drinking-place. We passed several huts occupied by Basutos and Korannas employed as labourers on the farm. The Basutos come from their homes in the east, with their wives, to hire themselves to the farmers; in return for which they receive their food, and an annual payment of a stipulated number of sheep, or occasionally one or two oxen, or a mare and foal, being moreover allotted a certain portion of land, where they may grow sorghum, maize, gourds, or tobacco.

During my subsequent travels, I learnt that many of the better class of farmers are really owners of small Basuto villages, from which they hire the population in this way. Mynheer Wessels, the proprietor of the canteen we had passed the day

<sup>1</sup> The Dutch spoken by most of the South African farmers is not pure, as in Europe; it is a mixture of English, Low-German, French, &c. That, however, which is spoken by the more educated Dutchmen in Cape Town, Bloemfontein, and other towns, is for the most part very good.

before, was a type of this class; his farm had a circumference of many miles, although he did not cultivate a thirty-sixth part of it. To provide himself with labourers, he had obtained the ownership of a district where the harvest had been lost through drought, and had found the residents only too glad to leave their homes on the Caledon River, and to migrate to more favourable quarters.

One very marked ethnographical distinction exists between the tribes of the Basutos and the Korannas in the way they build their huts; those of the Basutos being made of boughs in a cylindrical form, about three feet in diameter, and protected by conical roofs of reeds and dry grass, while the Korannas usually adopt the form of a hemisphere, and construct them of dead branches loosely covered with mats.

We had the honour of being surveyed by one of the black ladies; she wore nothing but a short petticoat of grey calico, and her forehead, cheeks, and breasts were tattooed in dark-blue ochre with a complication of wavy lines. She only looked at us from the boundary of her own domain.

Outside one of the Koranna huts my attention was caught by a man shabbily dressed in European costume, towards whom an old woman, also in dirty European dress, was hastening, brandishing a huge firebrand, from which a volume of smoke was pouring into the air. I was curious to know what the enormous firebrand could be wanted for, and could hardly believe that it was merely to light the man's short pipe; he did not move a muscle of his counte-



nance, but lowering it steadily with his hand, brought it into its due position and completed his object. I advanced towards the phlegmatic smoker, and found him courteous enough to answer a few inquiries as to what was the best route we could take to the hills.

It took little more than half an hour to reach the top of the hill, which proved to be an undulating plain, covered with bushes and blocks of stone. When we had advanced some distance along it, we found ourselves approaching the pool of which the farmer told us, and could distinctly hear the hoarse barking of the baboons. Looking across to the opposite side, about 300 yards away, we caught sight of a herd of seven, only four of them full grown, that seemed to pause and scan us carefully before they decamped to a glen on the right. With all speed we followed them for a little way, observing how the wet footprints showed that they were just returning from their drinking-place.

We did not, however, go very far in pursuit, being more desirous of falling in with the other and larger herd. Having knocked over another brace or two of doves, as a further contribution to our larder, we sat down to enjoy a mid-day repast, keeping up a careful scrutiny of the slopes all around us. We seemed to be watching all in vain, when suddenly, in the direction of the farm, there was to be heard an outcry, which as suddenly again died away. Some tall mimosas prevented us seeing to any great distance one way towards the farmhouse, and a stone

wall, some twelve feet high, hindered us the other way from getting a view of the bottom of the hills, so that we really had not the chance of ascertaining the cause of the commotion. By way of a joke, I said that perhaps the baboons had taken advantage of our dinner-hour to go and pay the farmer a visit. Scarcely had I said the words when a big baboon came springing up, not much more than 200 yards away, to the left; then another, then another and another, until there was a whole herd of them, going leisurely enough, and squatting down ever and again upon the stones. The farmer, with a bevy of servants, was in full chase; they were armed with sticks and stones, and kept shouting vehemently. Here we thought was a good chance for us; we would mount the hill across the line of the retreat, without diverting the attention of the baboons from the noisy crowd that was following them; and thus I hoped we might be able to get within gunshot unobserved.

As one of our party had only small shot, and the other nothing but a stick, I insisted upon their remaining close at my side, knowing that a full-grown baboon, when infuriated, is as dangerous a foe as a leopard.

We were more than half-way up the hill before there was a chance at all; and when a baboon did appear at last above us, it managed so adroitly to be always either beneath a bush or behind a stone, that to take a fair aim was simply impossible.

When the brute had gained the top of the hill, of

course it was hidden from view ; but we persevered, in hopes that on reaching the summit, if we did not catch sight of the same one again, we might see another. So far we were not disappointed. We had hardly finished our ascent when we spied a full-grown female, scarcely fifty yards in front of us. By ill-luck, however, I failed to secure a shot at it ; first, one of the black farm-servants came between me and my mark just at the very instant when I was about to fire ; and when I next managed to get within fair range, one of my friends raised such a prodigious shout that the creature bounded far away ; so that I had to go on in a prolonged pursuit, only at last to find that the chase must be abandoned as fruitless.

It may well be supposed that it was not quite in the best humour that we retraced our steps. It was not only that the last chance for that day had been missed, but it was most unlikely that so favourable an opportunity for getting near that herd would occur again.

On our return the Korannas informed us that what I had spoken of only in jest, had really transpired in fact ; the baboons, at the very hour when we were taking our refreshment, had been attracted by the bleating of some lambs, and began to make an attack upon the sheep-kraal. Detected in time, they were driven off ; and in order to prevent them from repeating their visit, a pursuit had been set on foot.

The men told us, however, that so far from being

effectually scared away, the baboons would be sure to come and drink at the other pond. Upon hearing this all our disappointment and fatigue were forgotten at once, and we were off without delay to the spot that was pointed out.

The pond, full of rain-water, lay in the valley; on



BABOON-HUNT.

the left, not a quarter of a mile off, were the hills we had just quitted; and opposite, on the right, was another ridge of hills, perhaps a mile away. Three sides of the pond were embanked, the embankment facing the house being of stone; the soil was sandy; the muddy water in one place was running in a



little creek ; some shrubs were growing between the clefts of the stones, and behind one of these, high enough to conceal our heads, we took up our position.

Only a few minutes had elapsed when one of the farm-boys drew our attention to what seemed little more than a couple of dark specks on the slope of the hills to the right ; but we could soon see that they were moving, and when they came within half a mile of us, we could distinctly recognize them as a herd of baboons. The boy said he was quite sure that they were on their way to the water ; but to our surprise they did not make any further advance. A quarter of an hour elapsed ; half an hour ; still no symptom of their approach. All at once, as if they had started from the earth by magic, at the open end of the pond, not sixty yards from our place of ambush, stood two huge males. When or how they had got there no one could tell ; probably they had come by a circuitous way through the valley, or it might be that they had crept straight down through the grass ; they had certainly eluded our observation.

Being anxious to watch the movements of the animals, and to ascertain whether they belonged to the herd playing under the mimosas, I refrained from firing, and determined to see what would follow next. Both baboons sprang towards the water, and leaning down, drank till they were satisfied ; then, having gravely stretched themselves, they stalked away solemnly on all fours in the direction of the herd. There was little doubt, therefore, that they

belonged to them, and had been sent forward to reconnoitre; for as soon as they got back, the entire herd put itself in motion, and made its way towards the pond. There were mothers taking care of their little ones; there were the half-grown animals, the boys and girls of the company; but there did not seem to be more than three or four full-grown males. At first only one baboon at a time came to the water's edge, and having taken its draught retired to the rest; but when about ten of them had thus ventured separately, they began to come in small groups, leaving the others rolling and jumping on the sand.

Our amusing study was very nearly being interrupted by the approach of two Koranna women, who came from the farm with their pitchers, to fetch water; but we were able to make signs to them not to come on, and thus continued to abide our time till we could get a shot. It was not long before two males—the same, I had no doubt, which we had noticed before—came and squatted themselves one on each side of the little creek, which certainly was not more than two feet across. When they stooped to drink, their heads could not have been four inches apart. Here was my chance. Crack went my rifle. But instead of either of them dropping, the two baboons started up; by a mutual instinct they both clutched their noses, gave a ringing bark, and scampered off. The whole herd took the alarm, and joining in the shrieking clamour, were soon lost to sight. One or two, however, of the larger animals

seemed to lag behind, and to look inquiringly, as if to ascertain the true condition of affairs.

We went down and examined the spot where the baboons had been drinking, and could come to no other conclusion than that the bullet had passed exactly through the narrow interval that had parted their heads; it had lodged just about three feet behind them.

Until the evening we waited and watched, coming to the conclusion that we would make our night encampment upon the spot; but nothing more was seen of the herd, although their noise could be heard all night long. Again next morning we kept a steady look-out, but they did not allow themselves to be seen. Likely enough they could spy us out from their position on the heights, and they were not inclined to venture from a retreat where their instinct told them they were masters of the situation.

After the exertions and disappointments of the day, all my companions seemed only too glad of their repose, and were soon fast asleep. I could not sleep at all; the perpetual barking of the baboons disturbed me; but beyond that there was not a sound to be heard; the breeze even was hushed. It was one of those nights which, under South African skies, never fail to leave a lasting impression upon the traveller's mind. Although the sky was dark the atmosphere was clear, and countless little clouds, varying in tint from milk-white to a brownish grey, hovering everywhere overhead,

formed a canopy so exquisite in its beauty that it could never fade from the memory.

Our Christmas excursion thus came to an end.

My medical practice continued to increase so rapidly, that I was able to lay by considerable sums towards the undertaking on which I was resolved. During the month of January, 1873, I purchased a waggon and a good many of the requisites for travelling; and early in February I considered my resources such as to justify my setting out on my first long journey, which, however, was to a certain extent to be only one of reconnoissance.



## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM DUTOITSPAN TO LIKATLONG.

My travelling companions—Departure from the diamond-fields—  
 The Vaal River and valley—Visit to Koranna village—  
 Structure of Koranna huts—Social condition of the Korannas  
 —Klipdrift—Distinction between Bechuanas and Korannas  
 —Interior of a Koranna hut—Fauna of the Vaal valley—A  
 bad road—A charming glen—Cobras and their venom—  
 Ring-neck snakes—The mud in the Harts River.

HAVING completed my equipment, and made all necessary preparations, I had next to make a decision, most important in expeditions of this kind, as to the individuals who should accompany me. My first idea had been to take with me only a few black servants; but on due consideration, I found it advisable to abandon this, and to travel with a party of white men. Without any hesitation my choice fell upon the same two young men who had been my companions in the baboon-hunt at Christmas; and, as a third associate, I invited Friedrich Eberwald, a native of Thuringia, to join us. He was an excellent fellow, who subsequently proved one of my most faithful friends, and in my second journey afforded me very valuable assistance; he had always had an irresistible love of seeing foreign

lands, and after having visited nearly all Europe and Asia Minor, and many parts of North and South America, he had come to try his luck in the diamond-fields, where, however, he had been very moderately successful.

The real object that I contemplated in my first journey was to accustom myself to the climate by spending a few weeks in the open air, as well as to ascertain by actual experience what amount of provisions and other necessaries would be required for a more prolonged expedition into the interior. My scheme was to go direct to Klipdrift, then down the valley of the Vaal River as far as the mouth of the Harts River, and after making our way north-east up the Harts valley, so as to get some acquaintance, if we could, with the Batlapin tribes, to return and reside again for a time in my old quarters at the diamond-fields.

In a party consisting of four men, five horses, and five dogs, we quitted the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, and after several *contretemps* not worth recording, we reached the heights that border the banks of the Vaal River beyond Hebron, and with much satisfaction gazed upon the refreshing green of the valley, being very shortly afterwards gratified by the view of the river itself, then moderately full of water. On the southern bank we could discern the scattered huts of Pniel, a small Koranna village and a German missionary station.

This village had a most melancholy aspect, and a visit there convinced me that amongst no other

native race, with the exception, perhaps, of the Matabele, have missionary labours been so ineffectual as among the Korannas. Their circumstances, their



"FORE-SPANNING."

social condition, and their culture are all of the very lowest grade; and without accepting any of the benefits of civilization, they seem only to have adopted its vices; and drunkenness, entailing disease

and its other terrible consequences, prevails most lamentably amongst them.

Of all South African races, the Korannas bestow the least labour upon the structure, and the least care upon the internal arrangements of their dwellings. Their indolence may be attributed to, or aggravated by, the climate; but in want of energy the two Hottentot tribes, the Korannas and



KORANNAS.

the Griquas, surpass even the calumniated Bushmen, who, at any rate, contrived to decorate the walls of the natural caves they inhabited with drawings in ochre, and to adorn their stone roof with figures, however roughly chiselled, of men and animals, and other objects of nature. It is only when he is utterly without the means of procuring the brandy which is his sole and engrossing desire,



KORANNA HUTS IN THE VALLEY OF THE HARIJ RIVER.





that a Koranna is ever known to rouse himself from his habitual sloth, and inaptitude for endurance, to make an effort to hire himself out to an employer.

The huts may be seen either singly or in small groups, sometimes on the bare hillside, sometimes on the river-bank, or at the edge of a saltpan, or more rarely in the rocky glen of the river; they scarcely ever exceed twelve feet in diameter, and five feet in height; their shape, as far as its general want of symmetry allows it to be defined, may be said to be hemispherical; and they are all quite unenclosed. Their construction, as their appearance suggests, is of the most primitive order; the women build them by simply taking a number of branches, about six feet in length, arranging them in a circle, tying their upper ends all together in a bundle, and throwing some rush mats over the framework thus hastily put up. The external fabric is then complete. An aperture is left large enough to admit a man on all-fours; but this, which is the only communication with the open air, is often closed by another mat hung over it from the inside, where everything is as squalid and comfortless as can be conceived. A hollow dug out in the centre is the only fireplace; a pole, supported by two forked uprights, supports the entire wardrobe of the household, which rarely consists of more than a few tattered rags of European attire, and some sheepskins and goatskins; half a dozen pots and pans complete the inventory of the furniture. Although, as I have said, the huts ordinarily have no enclosure,

yet where the cows and goats are exposed to the nocturnal attacks of hyænas or leopards, a sort of shelter is occasionally made of dry mimosa branches, but as a general rule they have only a dunghill for their accommodation. In these dreariest of abodes a dull, dumb silence usually prevails; and it is only when brandy has been brought in from the neighbouring town, or procured from some itinerant dealer, that there is any animation or excitement. Morning and evening, as the naked children drive the cattle to their pasturage, or bring them back, there is some transient exhibition of vitality in the community; otherwise all is stillness and stagnation.

As an exceptional case, when a Koranna of somewhat superior means can afford himself the luxury of a few Makalahari and Masarwa as servants and slaves, a little agriculture is carried on, but it is well-nigh always on a very limited scale. No doubt many parts of the country offer great natural advantages for farming operations; and if a little labour were spent in forming embankments, and in judiciously diverting the streams of the Harts and Vaal rivers, the produce in all likelihood would be very abundant.

As a distinct race, the Korannas are dying out. In this respect, they are sharing the lot of the Hottentots proper who dwell in Cape Colony and Griqualand West, and of the Griquas whose home is in New or East Griqualand, or what is called Noman's-land round Rockstadt. So continual has been the diminution of their number, that they are not half what they formerly were, and their



possessions have diminished in a still greater proportion. Lazy and dirty, crafty, and generally untruthful, living without a thought beyond the immediate present, capable of well-nigh any crime for the sake of fire-water—to my mind they offer an example of humanity as degraded and loathsome as can be imagined. Employ them in the far wilderness, where no European is at hand to supply them with spirits, and it is possible that they might be found more desirable than Kaffirs for cattle-drivers or horsebreakers; but after making several trials of them myself, and using every effort to keep them sober, I was always compelled to give up in despair.

We stayed in Pniel nearly three hours, our road, after we quitted it, lying across some high bushy plains covered with drifts of loose sand, which tried our horses sorely. Nothing could be much more comfortless than our encampment at night; and we were glad to start off at early dawn next morning on our way to Klipdrift.

The road, which had hitherto been somewhat monotonous, was now varied by little valleys alternating with bushy plains. Steinbocks and duykerbocks also enlivened the scene, and numbers of small bustards gambolled in the thickets that in some places rose from six to twelve feet in height. The gazelles conceal themselves throughout the day beneath the low bushwood, the steinbock (*Tragulus rupestris*) especially very rarely leaving its retreat, except at night or at the approach of danger; it is consequently unaccustomed to exposure to broad

daylight, a circumstance to which I attribute the blindness of nine out of ten of those which have been kept in confinement; with the duykerbock (*Cephalolophus mergens*) the blindness is not so common, as it often issues forth in the daytime in search of food. Practised shots hunt both these gazelles with a rifle, but under any circumstance it requires a very skilful hand to bring down one of the little creatures, which are under two feet high, at a distance of 300 yards.

There are sportsmen, as they call themselves, who hunt these graceful animals with greyhounds—a rough method of torture that has been introduced by white men into all parts of the world. Formerly dogs were only employed by the natives of South Africa in hunting ferocious and dangerous animals, or such as were required for the sake of their skins. Amongst these may be reckoned the South African jackal (*Canis mesomelas* and *cinereus*), the caama-fox, the earth-wolf (*Proteles Lalandii*), and the genet.

The steinbock—or “steenbuck,” as it is called by the Boers—and the duykerbock are represented all along the wooded slopes of the plateaus of South and Central Africa down to the coast by the grysbok (*Tragulus melanotis*) and the small blauwbock (*Cephalolophus cæruleus*); whilst towards the north their place is taken by the orbeki, that are found living in pairs on the plains in the salt lake district, and in small herds beyond the Zambesi.

Travelling here across the wooded hills was a business that in itself occupied all our attention;

for the road was full of stones, just like the dry bed of a torrent, and our waggon was jolted about with such violence that it cost us the life of one of our dogs that was caught unawares under the wheel. It was a relief to find ourselves at the Vaal River ferry, where, for the sum of ten shillings, we were all taken across.

On reaching the right bank of the Vaal, we made our encampment at the foot of a hill not far from Klipdrift. Compared with the other towns in South Africa, Klipdrift may be called pretty. About 150 little houses, built partly of stone and partly of iron, are all that remain of what was once the capital of the river-diggings, which had a population of 5000 or more. They lie upon the slope of some low hills that are scarcely eighty feet above the level of the river-bed, and are covered with countless blocks of dark brown trap.

Coming from the south-south-east, the river here makes a bend to the west, and in various places, both above and below the town, its murmuring stream is broken by a number of little islands, sometimes rocky, sometimes overgrown with grass, and occasionally covered with trees, all contributing an air of pleasantness to the general scene. At the time of my visit tall trees were growing on both banks, the left bank being considerably higher than the right.

The inhabitants of the native quarter of Klipdrift, consisting of Batlapins and Barolongs, are very industrious. The men get their living as day-labourers, while the women earn their share of the

housekeeping expenses by doing laundry-work ; and when they are engaged in washing linen on the banks of the river, they give a picturesque and animated character to the scene.

Even the most cursory glance is sufficient to detect the difference between the Koranna and Bechuana races ; and there can be no hesitation in affirming that the representatives of the Bechuanas, the Batlapins and Barolongs, are by far the more comely, both in face and form. Varying in complexion from a dull black to a deep brown, their features, if not handsome, could hardly be called plain, whilst the yellow-brown countenances of the Korannas are literally ugly, the eyes being deeply sunk, the nose scarcely developed at all, the jawbone thick, the lips far protruding. The skull corresponds with the ignoble profile, and is small and narrow. The Koranna women, too, are especially disfigured by an awkward gait, which seems to arise from some singular formation of the lower vertebral column. Either their cheeks or their foreheads are usually daubed with red ochre or tattooed with a labyrinth of blue lines ; and I have seen many of them with both forehead and cheeks so covered with brown and black streaks that they had precisely the appearance of monkeys.

During a visit to the Koranna quarter I entered one of the huts. The scene was truly strange. In a hollow in the middle of the hut were some glowing embers ; in the midst of the embers was a fleecy object, which on a second glance I perceived to be a



lamb in the process of roasting. Two women, naked to their waists, were lounging on some mats smoking. Several children, quite naked, their skins, naturally yellow, begrimed with the blackest dirt, were playing about; while the head of the family, in the tattered remnants of an old European coat,



INTERIOR OF A KORANNA HUT.

was sitting close to the hearth, stirring the ashes, and intently watching the cooking. All of a sudden he made a very loud smack with his tongue—a signal, I imagined, that the meal was ready, an opinion in which I was confirmed by seeing him

expel from his mouth the lump of tobacco which is never dispensed with except for the purpose of eating. As soon as the lamb had been removed from the fire, and the scorched fleece had been torn off, the carcase was cut up and distributed rapidly in allotted rations. The children gnawed away greedily at their portions, but the elders had knives with which, close to their lips, they cut off morsels of the lump, which was held, one end in the left hand, and the other between their teeth.

Besides the flesh of animals, of which the favourite parts are the entrails and the brains, the Korannas take meal-pap, boiled gourds, and milk; but they hold fish, crabs, and mollusks generally in utter abhorrence. In this respect they are like most of the tribes in the interior, although along the sea-coast many natives have been known who for a long period have subsisted upon fish as the chief article of their diet.

The whole neighbourhood doubtless abounds with many rare species of animals. The valleys, with their rich tropical vegetation, the marshes contiguous to the river, the densely wooded banks, the river-bed, alike where it is stony and where it is muddy, must all be equally prolific; but I am sorry that I had no leisure to make proper investigation. My stay at Klipdrift was necessarily very short, and I could only get a superficial acquaintance with the environs as we hurried through them. But the place is like an oasis in the bare monotony of the South African highland, and would be sure to yield

a rich harvest to any naturalist who could linger there for some time. Even during my rapid transit I observed several interesting kinds of falcons and sparrow-hawks, as well as owls of different sorts, horned owls, dwarf owls, and owls whose special haunts seemed to be hills, and trees, and swamps. I noticed, likewise, several distinct varieties of crows, and in the thickets on the river-bank and near the farms I reckoned no less than five different species of starlings, two of which, one quite small, the other larger with a long tail, struck me as being very pretty. Shrikes abounded, but were even surpassed in numbers by the granivorous song-birds, amongst which were several of the long-tailed finches. Thrushes and other insectivorous birds, such as the wagtail and the reed-sparrow, were likewise to be seen. Of the woodpecker tribe I only noticed two examples, but I saw several of the sunbirds, and a kind of bee-eater, as well as two sorts of kingfishers and cuckoos. Swallows and a kind of goatsucker were occasionally seen skimming along; and in addition to all these there were representatives of nearly all the feathered races of South Africa, especially of the doves, lesser bustards, plovers, ducks, and divers.

Amongst the reptiles, three kinds of land-tortoises were frequently to be turned up between the stones in the hills; they were the common tortoise, the common South African tortoise, and another of a flat shape, with square green marks in the middle of its shell.

Of fish I observed five species, one of which, the South African silurus, with its flat smooth head, is found as far north as the other side of the Zambesi in fresh water as well as in the salt-pans and the salt rivers.

In the neighbourhood of Klipdrift I made an exchange which seemed to me advisable. I bartered four of my horses for a team of six oxen, and although I was a pecuniary loser by the transaction, I could not be otherwise than satisfied when the bargain was concluded, as the horse disease, which rages every year, had broken out in the district, and I had observed several carcasses bleaching in the sun. Had it not been for this disease, I could have obtained a far better price for my horses, but under the circumstances the owner of the oxen hesitated long before he would entertain the proposal for exchange at all. He assured me that I should find the whole six to be quiet and docile, and all that draught-oxen ought to be; however, I soon discovered that two of them were so wild as to be almost unmanageable. My change of team consequently involved me in engaging two additional black servants—one to lead the foremost of the three pairs, another to urge them on by the free use of the whip.

I had no difficulty in finding what I required. In the Koranna village, one of my companions had fallen in with a German, who had taken up his residence there, and I applied to him to inquire among the natives for a couple of strong young men, who would come up the country with me for a few weeks. In



the course of the day he brought me a Koranna lad of about sixteen, and a Koranna half-breed, named Gert, both of whom professed themselves ready to engage themselves to me for the work I wanted. I was to pay them at the rate of 8s. 6d. a week each.

After laying in an adequate stock of tea, sugar, and meal, we left Klipdrift, and, according to my scheme, proceeded northwards towards the confluence of the rivers, to the district inhabited by the western Batlapins—where I wished to explore the deserted river-diggings—taking Gong Gong on the way. The country over which we passed was a high table-land, wooded in parts, and dotted at intervals with settlements, both of Korannas and Batlapins; it was slightly undulated, and sloped sharply down on the west towards the Vaal.

A special interest, both to the sportsman and the naturalist, is awakened by the fact that the district lying between the Harts and Vaal Rivers is the first in which, approached from the south, herds of the striped grey gnu (*Catoblepas Gorgon*) are to be seen. By the Boers called “the blue wildebeest,” and by the Bechuanas known as the “kokon,” this animal ranges northwards all over the Orange Free State, and beyond the Zambesi. It is, although larger, less wild than the black or common gnu, and its horns are of a different shape, being bent downwards and forwards, more like those of our own shorthorns. Huntsmen distinguish the two species by the colour of their tails; the black gnus have white tails, whilst the blue-grey gnus can be recognized at a

great distance by their black tails, and by the black stripes on the upper and front parts of their bodies. They must rank with the springbock and blessbock gazelles, in being the most common game on the treeless plains, from the western region of Cape Colony as far as lat. 23° north.

Late in the afternoon we turned into a small glen, at its opening into the Vaal valley. A few little canvas huts, and some tents, could be seen peeping gracefully from the dark green foliage, and constituted all that now remained of the once flourishing town of Gong Gong.

Hence we proceeded still northwards. Some white specks in the distance, on the steep rocky cliffs overhanging the Vaal, marked the sites of New Kierke Rush, and other places that a few years since had been the prosperous settlements of the river-diggings. The journey from Gong Gong to Delpportshope, which is about a mile from the mouth of the Harts, was one of the most uncomfortable that I have ever made in a bullock-waggon, and I was at a loss to comprehend how, in the flourishing times of the diggings, such a road could have sufficed for the requirements of a population of some thousands. It was no better than the channel of a boulder-stream, and travelling along it was equally difficult and painful. No sooner had one of our back wheels, by the combined efforts of the six oxen goaded on mercilessly by the driver's whip, been dragged out of a hole left by a rain-pool, than one of the front wheels would come in contact with a huge stone a foot high, which it was impos-







BATLAPIN BOYS THROWING THE KIRI.



sible to surmount. To add to our difficulties, the oxen began to be restive, and to get beyond control; and so violent was the jolting, that my barometer was ruined. It was not surprising that the journey occupied about three times as long as we had calculated; nor was it much consolation to perceive, from the fragments of broken waggons which we passed, that others before us had fared even worse than ourselves.

My attention was for a while diverted from my own affairs, by meeting a Batlapin carrying a leveret, and the "kiri" with which he had killed it. This is a very favourite weapon of both the Zulus and the Bechuanas. It is generally made of wood, but amongst the northern Bamangwato it is sometimes formed of rhinoceros horn; it varies from a foot to a yard in length, having at one end a knob, either plain or carved, as large as a hen's egg, or occasionally as large as a man's fist. In hand to hand conflicts it is a very effectual and deadly weapon, but it is chiefly used for hunting, and is hurled, by some tribes, with a marvellous precision. It was with the "kiri" that the Matabele Zulus dashed in the skulls of the male adult population of the rebel Makalaka villages.

The country now sank gradually toward the Harts River, and the valley lay broad and open, bounded on the far north by the N'Kaap, the rocky and wooded slope of the highland. The scenery at the confluence of the rivers had always been described to me as pretty, but I found that the term was only

comparative, the district of Griqualand West appearing to me singularly deficient in natural beauty.

After rushing on their way from the south in numerous rapids, the waters of the Vaal here subside into a broad muddy channel, and flow peacefully on to the mouth of the Harts River, which comes from the north-east. Just before the streams unite, the Vaal makes a sudden turn to the west, and so flows on for a little distance, when it bends away in a south-south-west direction. Where it makes this last bend, the bank of the river is swampy and overgrown by trees, and is the haunt of wild cats, lynxes, and other beasts of prey, besides herds of wild swine.

The southern portion of the right-hand bank is a fertile plain, though it is only close to the river-mouth that trees grow to any considerable size. The upper layer is loam upon a substratum of clay. The opposite shore of the Harts River is much higher, rising in a rocky cliff composed of stratified schist, underlying chalk-beds poor in fossils, and forming the table-land connected with the N'Kaap. This highland descends abruptly to the Vaal River, just above the bend, and is intersected by a glen which lies above 300 yards from the mouth of the Harts River, but which must not be confounded with the Klippdachs grotto, discovered by Hübner. Formerly both shores on the lower part of the river were in the possession of the Batlapin chief, Yantje, who resides at Likatlong, three miles from the right bank, and now receives an annual payment of 200*l.*, as a dependent of the British Government.

Beneath some fine spreading trees at the bottom of the glen our eyes were refreshed by the verdure of a luxuriant sward, whereon we could watch the gambols of the jumping-hares, gazelles, rock-badgers, and wild ducks. The cackle of a chenalopex, a kind



BATLAPIN.

of goose, could be heard as it roosted in the foliage above our heads ; and the rushing sound of a waterfall in the upper part of the glen enhanced the charm of this retired nook. The stream was almost hidden by the bushes, laden with berries, with which it was overhung ; and its banks, which were of sand-

stone, with an upper stratum of limestone, were hollowed out into little grottoes. In the winter season, no doubt, it would be quite dried up, but now it contributed a beautiful feature to the landscape. My delight in finding this charming spot was complete when, at the bottom of the ravine, I discovered a thick layer of fossils of the latest alluvial period, amongst which I picked out a species of tiger-snail.

On one of the trees that overhung the glen I noticed an enormous nest, which at first I imagined must be an ape's; but I subsequently learnt that it belonged to the hammerhead (*Scopus umbretta*), one of the largest nest-builders of the feathered tribe. The bird is about eighteen inches high, and is distinguished by its fine brown plumage, and a long tuft at the back of its head. It generally builds in the forks of trees that overhang precipices or rivers, although it not unfrequently makes selection of the clefts of a rock. The nest may be described as a truncated cone, inverted. It varies very much in height, being sometimes a yard, although sometimes only half as much, from its lower circumference to its upper, which is often as much as six or seven feet. It is a structure equally commodious and substantial; it is entered by an aperture in the side, something less than a foot square, and its interior is generally found to contain a number of bones. Twigs are the chief material of its construction.

This exquisite little spot, so contrasted in its character with its surroundings, might almost fairly



be compared to a diamond hidden in rubble. It must be owned, however, that it was a paradise infested with snakes. I found no less than seven different species, amongst which were two of the cobras that are common throughout South Africa. The first of these I encountered as I was lifting a great stone in search of insects. I did not observe it for some moments, my attention being drawn to a mouse's nest that I had uncovered; but a sunbeam glanced through the foliage, and revealed to me the glistening body of the venomous reptile. Having no weapon at hand, it seemed to me that my most prudent course was to wait quietly for the cobra to make an escape, before I began rummaging the mouse's nest for insects. I had not to wait long, as, aroused by the warmth of the sun's rays thus suddenly admitted, it begun to uncoil itself, displaying a body some four feet in length. It quickly caught sight of me, and, in the well-known cobra fashion, having erected about a third of its length it began to hiss violently, the dark neck all the while becoming greatly inflated, and the forked tongue quivering with ominous menace. However, it did not attack me; and something in my attitude, I suppose, making it forebode danger to itself, it presently turned away, and disappeared in the bushes.

Of all the poisonous snakes in South Africa I consider three of the cobras—a green sort, a black, and a yellowish—to be the most venomous. Instances have been known of the first two of these

species making an unprovoked attack upon human beings. One case happened within my own knowledge. A party of Kaffir children were playing near some bushes, about a hundred yards from the huts where they lived, when they caught sight of a cobra creeping towards them. Being aware of its venomous character, they ran away from the bushes with all speed into the road, where, thinking themselves secure, they slackened their speed. Suddenly one of the children uttered a piercing scream. Unperceived, the cobra had followed him, and bitten his heel; in a quarter of an hour the child was dead.

The dingy yellow cobra of the warmer and more northerly parts of Central South Africa, often to be seen in the mapani-woods of the Sibanani plains, exhibits the murderous propensity of its race in another fashion.<sup>1</sup> It will choose a spot where two mapani-trees with their bushy tops over-arch a track by which the wild cattle pass on their way to drink, and rolling its tail firmly round a bough, will let its body hang suspended, straight as an assegai, ready to make its attack at the proper instant. Unlike the green or the black species, its colour is so nearly identical with the tints of the foliage that it is very likely to be unobserved, and, consequently, Europeans may be exposed to a danger against which it is difficult to guard.

Just after my rencontre with the cobra in the glen, on the same day, one of the black boys, who

<sup>1</sup> I use the term "murderous propensity" advisedly, as the cobra is quite unable to devour what it has thus destroyed.

was looking for a dove which had been shot, came running to me in a state of great excitement, and calling out, "A slang, sir! a slang!" He had been startled by a cobra in the grass. All the natives, except the Zulu magicians, or "medicine men," are mortally terrified at these reptiles.

Two days afterwards, while I was again exploring the bottom of the glen, I shot one of the short black snakes that are known to the Dutch farmers as "ringnecks," on account of the white mark on their throat. When I told a storekeeper in the neighbourhood that I had done so, he related to me several anecdotes about the species, the particulars of one of which was confirmed by my own subsequent observation. He told me that a few months previously a farmer had noticed, when his cows returned to the farmyard after grazing by the river-bank, that one of them always came back an hour or more after the rest. As there was no danger from wild beasts, it was not usual to have the cows watched; but unable to understand what could be the reason of this habitual lingering of one of the herd, he sent a servant to look. The man soon came running back, shouting, "Bas, Bas, fat det rur!" (Master, master, bring your gun! a ringneck is sucking your cow!). The farmer called together some of his neighbours, and, hastening down to the river-side, witnessed the curious sight of the snake coiled round one of the hind legs of the cow, and while the animal continued to graze quietly, sucking greedily at the udder. It was almost satiated, and its body, like a

great leech, was gradually loosening its hold. Before the astonished spectators could take any measures to destroy it, it had dropped off and disappeared in the grass; but the next day the farm-servants managed to creep up, after it had had its fill, and killed it without injury to themselves.

In the interests of geographical science it was always my wish to ascertain the depth of the various rivers I explored. Having no boat, or other apparatus, my only resource in order to get the measurements I wanted was to wade right into the streams. I persevered in doing this wherever I could feel perfectly secure from the attacks of crocodiles, until an adventure befell me which gave me such a distaste for experiments of this kind that I abandoned them altogether. It was a hazard that almost cost me my life. I was anxious to find a fording-place for the waggon somewhere near our encampment by the Harts River, which, where we were, was some twenty feet wide. After I had found what appeared a suitable spot, where the shore was high and dry, and the water only eighteen inches deep at the edge, I undressed, threw my clothes across the stream to the opposite bank, and then proceeded to wade through the water. At my very first step my foot sank into mud, but I proceeded cautiously till I reached the middle of the stream. I there found myself standing in two feet of mud and two feet of water, and every farther step I took showed me only too plainly that the mud was getting deeper and deeper, and that I could not reach the bottom.





BATLAPIN AGRICULTURE.



I came to the conclusion that if matters should not improve, I must turn back again ; but when I tried to return I experienced unlooked-for difficulty ; I kept sinking lower and lower, till only my chin was above the level of the water. To cry for help was of no avail ; the waggon in the encampment was much too far away to allow me to be heard. I became quite aware of the peril of my position, but I had only my own exertions on which to rely. With a violent jerk I flung myself forward, spreading out my arms as if I were swimming ; the effort brought my body to the upper surface of the mud, but my chest and mouth were under water. I managed, however, by another spring to extricate one of my legs from the slime ; but as I was in imminent danger of being suffocated I had to pause, to raise my head above water to draw breath. There was not an instant to be lost if I were to maintain the advantage I had gained, and with one desperate effort more I succeeded in liberating my other foot. Happily I had just strength enough left to enable me to grasp the soil of the opposite shore, and ultimately to drag myself on to dry land. My state, both of mind and body, needs no description.

We remained in our halting-place for several days, before proceeding up the Harts River valley on our way to Likatlong.

## CHAPTER V.

## FROM LIKATLONG TO WONDERFONTEIN.

Batlapin life—Weaver-birds and their nests—A Batlapin farmstead—Ant-hills—Travelling Batlapins—An alarming accident—Springbockfontein—Gassibone and his residence—An untempting dish—On the bank of the Vaal—Iguanas—Christiana—Bloemhof—Stormy night—Pastures by the Vaal—Cranes—Dutch hunters—A sportsman's Eldorado—Surprised by black gnus—Guinea-fowl—Klerksdorp—Potschefstroom—The Mooi River valley—Geological notes—Wonderfontein and its grottoes—Otters, birds, and snakes.

LIKATLONG, the residence of the chief Yantje, is the capital of the most southerly of the Batlapin tribes. The name signifies "union," probably in reference to the junction of the two rivers. The town consisted of three groups of farmsteads, each farmstead containing from two to four huts, generally six feet high, enclosed by hedges made of dry branches. The huts in the central groups exhibited the greatest appearance of life and industry, and extended as far as the river. In the middle of them was an open space, marked by the ruins of a mission-house that had been burned down some years previously. A short distance from the mission-house stood the church, a long but insignificant-looking edifice, built



of unbaked bricks, with a gabled roof covered with dry grass. At the time of my visit there was no missionary there, but the London Missionary Society, in whose district it lies, have since sent out one of their body.

Seen from the right bank of the river, the town, with its groups of farmsteads arranged symmetrically in rows, looked very neat. The streets, as the open spaces between the enclosures might be called, were full of life; women were hastening down to the water with great clay pitchers on their heads, or toiling along towards their homes breathless under loads of dried grass or brushwood; while children, all naked, were either tending the cattle in the pasture-land, or playing in swarms upon the river's edge. To the activity and plodding industry of the women, the *dolce far niente* of the men offered a striking contrast; as a general rule, they were to be seen idly basking in the sun, like snakes recovering from the exertion of swallowing their last meal.

The jackets and stockings of many of the men were of European make, but some of them had garments of leather, imperfectly tanned; on their heads they had small hats, made of plaited grass or rushes. They were mostly of middle height, neither so tall as the Zulus, nor so powerfully built as the Fingos, their complexions striking me as remarkably clear and bright. Their features are spoilt by the excessive width of the nose—a disfigurement which is to be attributed very much to the use of an iron spoon

for the purposes of a pocket-handkerchief. Most justly they deserved their general reputation for idleness, as, in spite of the natural fertility of their country, they took scarcely any trouble to cultivate cereals, and rarely had any transactions at the Kimberley market.

In a moral point of view, the late war between the English and the Batlaros, a kindred tribe of the Batlapins, has had a very beneficial effect. Previously, especially at the time of the first discovery of the river-diggings, the arrogance of Yantje's demands knew no bounds; and his people were encouraged to make such repeated encroachments into the province, that the British rule on the Vaal River was never perfectly settled. The English victory, however, brought all these disturbances to an end.

After leaving the outskirts of Yantje's town we found ourselves in a part of the Harts valley which was much more lonely, there being no other native settlements of any importance for some considerable distance. The two next are Taung and Mamusa. Taung, not unfrequently retaining its name of Mahura's Town, after a former governor, is about seventy miles from the mouth of the river, and is the residence of an independent Batlapin chief, Mankuruane. Mamusa, the abode of an independent Koranna chief, is another forty miles higher up the river. I did not visit it on this journey, but I was told that the chief's name was Mashon, that he was called Taibush by the Boers, and that he was a very

old man—some saying that he was 112, others even asserting that he was 130 years of age.

Between Likatlong and Mamusa there are numerous insignificant native villages, nine out of ten of them being occupied by Batlapins; though above Taung there are several belonging to the Barolong people, the Korannas appearing only eastward of Mamusa. With the exception of the Koranna villages, they are generally found either on, or only just below the summit of the heights adjoining the river, and rarely contain more than eight farmsteads. Amongst the very few that lie in the valley is Mitzima, the largest of all, containing about thirty huts. The fields and gardens belonging to the people lie partly in the valley and partly on the hill-sides, the crops being kaffir-corn, maize, and sugar-cane, which grows seven or eight feet in height.

All along our way up the Harts valley the numerous defiles crossing our path had compelled us to make many deviations that involved considerable loss of time. We were halting for rest, not many miles from Likatlong, when we were visited by an old man and a youth, who wanted to do a little business with the "makoa," white man. The high prices that they demanded for their goods greatly surprised me, until I found that the natives even of these parts had learnt the value of English money.

As we went on we had several good chances of sport in the woods and long grass of the valley, and in the bushes by the river-banks. Near the river

we found four different kinds of bustards, the two smaller sorts congregating in flocks; the two larger, one of which was of unusual size, rising from the bushes in pairs; and, near the thorns, we saw several pairs of the great cape-partridge scratching up the ground. Sand-grouse, too, were basking on the sandy spots by the shore and on the slopes; the reedy places being haunted by wild ducks, of which we secured a plentiful supply. On the more open spots, where the river was overhung by mimosas, the lovely weaver-birds, yellow, with a black spot on the throat, had stripped off the leaves from the ends of the branches, and replaced them by their wonderful nests, that hung suspended like some curious fruit.

These nests were about four or five inches long, and were constructed in the shape of an elliptic cone, the small end of which was attached to the bough, the transverse diameter being between two and three inches in length. The aperture, on the flat side of the nest, underneath, was crescent-shaped, and only just large enough to admit one bird at a time. The material was blades of grass, collected fresh and pliant, and so cunningly woven together as to give the finished work all the appearance of the best-skilled art. The construction of the nests was so firm that they would defy the most violent storms, but yet they were hung so delicately that the gentlest breeze would put them in motion. As they swayed to and fro they made the prettiest of reflections in the mirror of the peaceful stream, darkened already by its carpet of tender water-plants—a picture ren-



dered still more striking when one of the bright little birds would issue from its home, and, hovering about, would seem to add the radiancy of some sparkling gem. The birds themselves did not show



NESTS OF WEAVER-BIRDS.

any timidity, and towards evening we found that we could take them in their nests, any that we had startled soon flying back and settling down in patient curiosity to watch our movements.

On the third day of our travelling we came in sight of a range of hills to the east of us, running from the south, and projecting some way into the Harts valley. I was told that they were in the district of the chief Mitzima, and that the point at the extreme end was called Spitzkopf by the Boers.

In various parts of the plains we were crossing there were patches of bright red, giving the effect of crimson carpets spread upon the ground. On closer inspection they proved to be masses of free-blooming lilies. Other spots were distinguished by a different species of lily, growing very luxuriantly, and having very dark green leaves, which were perpetually found covered with many varieties of weevils.

Near a sugar-plantation that we passed I saw four women at work; and as we wanted some milk I asked them if they could get some, without my waiting until we reached Mitzima. They all seemed pleased at being asked, and sticking their hoes into the ground ran off, laughing and shouting, to their huts, about 300 yards away. They were not long in returning, two of them carrying earthenware pans, and the third, a lean old hag, bringing a wooden bowl, all full of sweet new milk. The only remuneration they required was a lump of tobacco. I was rather surprised at the choice; but my man, Gert, who acted as interpreter, told me that they were very fond of snuff—an assertion which was confirmed by their taking the tobacco, and after rubbing it in their hands, stuffing it into their capacious

nostrils, chuckling out "Monati! monati!" (That is fine! that is fine!)

In the course of the afternoon we passed a farmstead composed of three huts, which in cleanliness surpassed anything I ever saw amongst the Batlapin tribe. They were built of strong stakes, and were very spacious. Beneath a shed formed of rushes stood a good substantial waggon, and in the courtyard was another smaller waggon, to which the farmer and his labourers were doing some repairs. Besides this I noticed—what was a great rarity in the Batlapin country in 1873—a good, useful plough. Half a dozen leathern milk-bags, too, were hanging in the cattle-enclosure. In the shed, two Batlapin men were busy making a waggon-tilt out of an old piece of canvas; and I do not remember ever having seen any of the tribe working so industriously. Fifteen little black children were playing merrily enough in the immediate neighbourhood of the farm, none of them having the least pretence to clothing beyond a narrow strip of leather serving for an apron; a few elder children were minding the cattle on the river-bank a mile away; and altogether the place had a singular air of comfort and prosperity.

Nearer and nearer we approached the heights that had opened before us in the morning. They were the most northerly branch of the chain of hills beginning near Hebron, on the right bank of the Vaal. I found the geological formation especially interesting, the rocks sometimes standing in up-

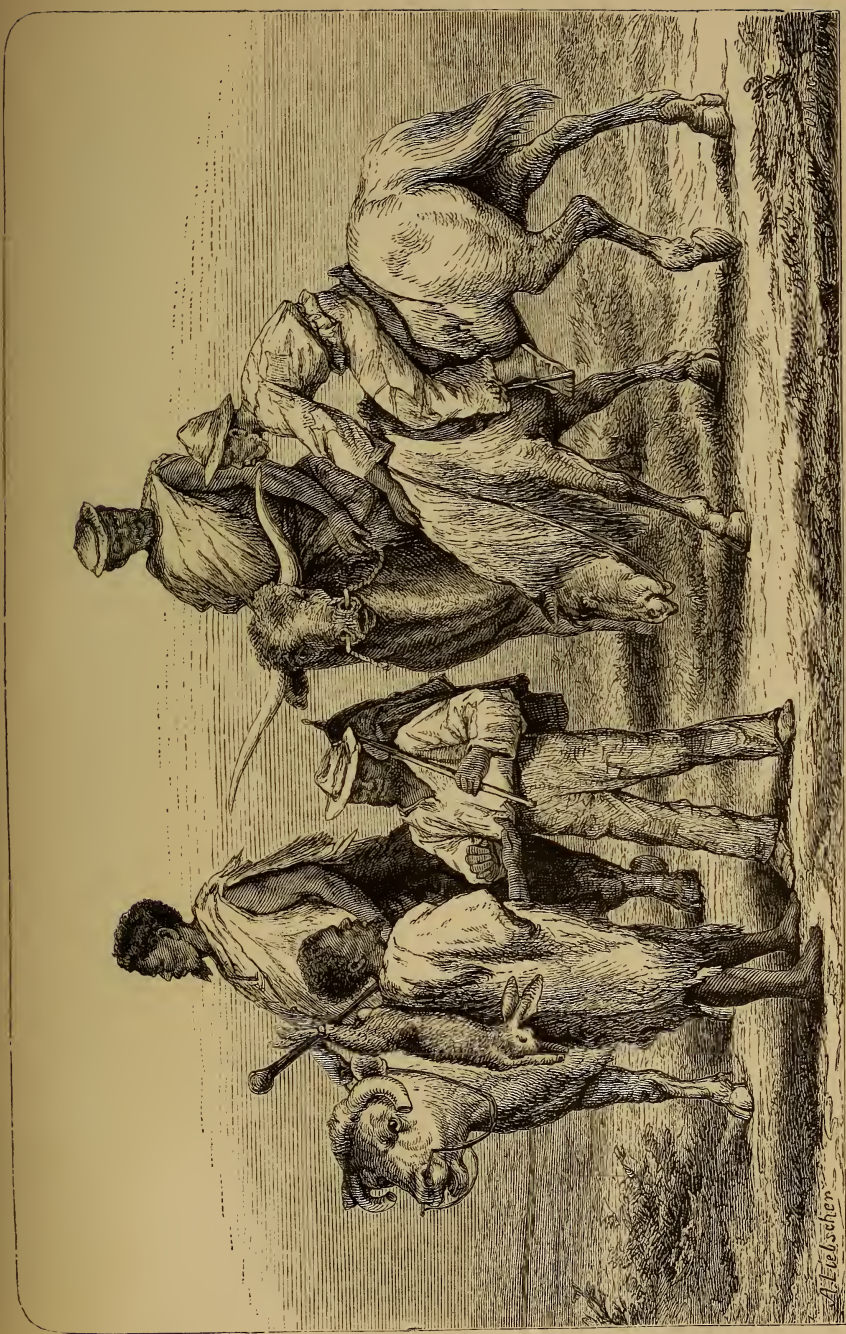
right blocks, ranged side by side in pillars almost like petrified human forms, and sometimes lying piled up horizontally, like the steps of a gigantic staircase.

Mitzima's village was on the nearer side of the Spitzkopf. We did not stay long, but started off again late in the afternoon. The number of the glens, however, that we had to cross delayed us so much, and tried the strength of our animals so severely, that it proved impossible for us to proceed far that night, and we came to a halt about a mile and a half short of the mountain-head, not far from three little Batlapin farms. A storm that seemed to be gathering at our back made us cautious in our movements, as we knew that a rainfall of even half an hour would be enough to convert any one of the defiles into a rushing and dangerous torrent. In spite of the evening being so far advanced, our arrival did not escape notice at the farms, and several of the occupants hurried out to pay us a visit.

The night spent here was bright and fine, although decidedly cold. The rocks on the hill-side cast long, deep shadows, falling like phantoms across the plain; the Spitzkopf, like a giant on guard, seemed to keep perpetual watch; while the shrill voices of the Batlapins, chanting their wild songs, echoed from the distance, and completed the weird effect of the general scene.

Next morning, after purchasing some gourds from the owner of one of the farms, we pushed on still to





BATLAINS ON A JOURNEY.

A. Heilscher



the north. The further we ascended the Harts River, the more fertile we found the country. Nothing attracted my attention more than the small plantations of sugar-cane, but I was surprised to hear that the only use to which the natives put the prolific crop is to cut the lower and more juicy section of the stem into morsels that they can chew.

We had now to travel across a plain devoid alike of trees or shrubs, but where I noticed some ant-hills of a peculiar form. Instead of being of the ordinary hemispherical type, about four feet high, and with two or three apertures, such as may be seen by thousands on many of the South African levels, these were open funnels six feet high, with diameters ranging from three to ten inches long, and made of a kind of cement formed by grains of sand agglutinated by the help of the mucous saliva of the ant. Generally they stood in groups of not less than three, and the soil all round them was quite bare for several feet. Outside these, again, were funnels of the same design, but not yet completed, and consisting merely of a conical pile of earth without the aperture at the top.

About noon we made a halt near the river, but were disappointed to find that the only water we could obtain was from the pools, which were rendered disgustingly foul by the cattle driven into them day by day by the natives. It may well be imagined that the food we had to prepare for ourselves with this water did not prove particularly savoury.

In the middle of our meal some Batlapins, from

the villages on the hills to our right, came riding up. They were mounted on huge oxen; but seeing us, they alighted, and came and sat down near our fire, making themselves at once quite at home. Their beasts, without being unsaddled, stood by perfectly still, as if rooted to the ground.

The appearance of these travelling parties of Batlapins is extremely grotesque. The oxen came scrambling along as if they were running for a wager. A stick is thrust through a hole in their nostrils, to each end of which is tied a thong about two yards long; this is the bridle; a sack or piece of leather girded on the back serves for a saddle; a pair of leather or iron stirrups, fastened to a strap, generally completes the trappings.

Our visitors were very friendly and disposed to be communicative. In answer to my inquiry how far it was to Springbockfontein, one of them pointed to the sun above our heads, and said, "Start your waggons at once, and before yon ruler sinks to his rest, you may draw your water from the stream where the springbocks quench their thirst."

In the neighbouring fields of gourds and maize, I found what seemed to me a good opportunity for enriching my entomological collection, but it ended in a misfortune. I succeeded in finding some fine specimens of tiger-beetles (*Cicindelidæ*), but I was so engrossed in my pursuit that I did not observe that a storm had been gathering, and was quite taken by surprise when the lightning flashed a few hundred yards lower down the stream, and the heavy rain-







ACCIDENT IN THE HART'S RIVER VALLEY.

drops began to fall. I was very soon wet through. Scampering back towards the waggon, I found three of the natives still huddling round the all but extinguished fire, but my own people gone to a little distance to secure some plants that had been left out to dry, and to bring in the guns that happened to be outside against a tree close by. I jumped into the waggon, and almost immediately my friends returned. They handed me the plants all right, and were just passing me the guns, when a flash of lightning struck the ground close behind us; the crash of thunder that followed was terrific. In eager haste to hang my gun in its proper place inside the waggon, I had caught hold of the barrel with my left hand, but the shock of the thunder so startled my friend that he jerked one of the triggers, and the charge of hare-shot with which it was loaded went off. I can remember nothing beyond the glare and the noise and a momentary sensation of pain; stunned by the injury, I lost my balance and fell out of the waggon.

It was at first supposed that I was dead; and most providential it was that the wounds were not fatal. The shot had passed right through my left hand, and grazing my left temple, had pierced the brim of my hat, leaving the holes blocked up with my hair. For two days I was completely blind with the eye, and suffered from acute inflammation in it for more than a fortnight.

A native view of the occurrence should not be left without record. While my friends in the pre-



sence of the three Batlapins were discussing whether it would not be possible to reach Springbockfontein that night, another old Batlapin, who had witnessed what had happened, came up, and addressing one of the three, apparently his son, said, "Go, lad, and look inside that waggon; there lies a Bas dying or dead; he is killed for his wickedness; he was storming against his friends for being so slow in giving him his gun, and the great Morena struck him with lightning and thunder. He fell from the waggon. Never more will he eat his maize or suck his sugar-cane, if he is not dead already."<sup>1</sup>

Although Springbockfontein was really at no great distance, my condition was such that it proved quite impossible for us to reach it that night; the suffering that I endured from the jolting of the waggon made us abandon our intention, and after two hours' travelling we halted for the rest which was indispensable. However, next morning, quite early, we accomplished the rest of the way.

Springbockfontein is a settlement of white men, consisting of nothing more than some tents and reed-huts, occupied by four Dutch families, who, apparently, had been driven by debt to flee from their former homes in the Transvaal. I found similar settlements in other Bechuana districts, the occupants supported partly by hunting, and partly by wood-cutting or leather-dressing. As a general rule they appear to lead a miserable existence, and may be said to be about the most uncivilized portion

<sup>1</sup> "Bas," a lord, a master: "Morena" ruler.



of the Dutch population of South Africa; being without the means of procuring medical assistance, their condition when attacked by sickness is very deplorable.

The Springbock streams were quite insignificant, and as they made their way towards the Harts River, they passed through a morass where I found large numbers of the common South African tortoise.

During the morning I had rallied considerably, and determined to proceed up the valley without delay. My plan was to pass through the district under the control of the Batlapin chief, Gassibone, at that time independent; but owing to the wrong directions given us by some Dutchmen at the springs, we wandered on till nearly evening, when two natives that we chanced to meet informed us of our mistake, telling us, moreover, that our only way to get where we wanted was by going right back again to the Harts River. All day long the toil had been very great, the soil in many places being so sandy that it was necessary to give the cattle continual rests to recover from their exhausting labours. The country as we advanced became more and more wooded, covered in many spots with small tracts of camel-thorns. To compensate in a degree for the loss of time, there was no lack of good sport.

Striking next, according to the directions of the natives, right across the woods to the east-south-east, we made for the chain of hills where the principal kraal of the chief was said to lie. The road, I

think, was even worse than any we had yet seen, and it required both skill and vigilance to keep the team from injuring themselves, and the waggon from toppling over. A monotonous bush country brought us to a mimosa-forest, where we met some of Gassibone's people, who took every trouble to explain the nearest way to their chieftain's home. We had to cross a depression in the hills, which brought us to a deep circular hollow; in the background of this, there was a meeting of mountain ridges, forming a number of valleys, in one of which the kraal was situated. As we entered the valley it could not but strike us how fairly it was cultivated.

But it was now growing late. The day had been long and unusually toilsome. We were all fatigued, and I ordered a halt for the night.

After allowing our bullocks to graze awhile, we started off in good time next morning for Gassibone's quarters. The women were already busy at their work; the children, as usual, driving the cattle to their pasture. With fine warm weather, our whole party was refreshed and in the best of spirits.

The full title of this chief is Morena Botlazitse Gassibone. Two years after this time, he voluntarily submitted himself to the Transvaal Republic, and since the annexation of the republic by the English, he has become a British subject. He is said to be addicted to many vices, of which drunkenness is not the least.

The houses in the place were very similar in

character to those at Likatlong, the population being about 2500.

My scheme was now to strike out towards the Vaal River, and thence to proceed north-eastwards into the Transvaal. Uncertain how to discover the best road, I resolved to send to the chief, and ask for a guide. I entrusted one of my friends with the



BATLAPINS SEWING.

message, and told him at the same time to try and procure us some milk. In return for a shilling the negro potentate willingly promised us as many pans of milk as we wanted, and in consideration of another shilling undertook to supply us with a guide, who should put us on our way upon the open plains.

His hut was cylindrical, about sixteen feet in diameter, with a conical roof, the highest point of which was about ten feet from the ground, and supported by a mimosa-stem in the centre. At the foot of this was seated one of the wives of the magnate, dressed in a gown of European calico, and holding on her lap a wooden platter full of a favourite Batlapin delicacy. By means of Gert as an interpreter, the chief invited my friend to partake of the dish, and he, in his desire to be courteous, accepted the proffered hospitality; but no sooner had he discovered what he had taken than he let it fall again; it consisted of dried locusts, the very sight of which was enough to disgust him. On his return, he vowed that nothing should induce him a second time to undertake the office of ambassador to a Bechuana prince.

The inside of the hut was lined with clay, the floor being smoothly cemented; hanging on posts all round was a variety of garments made of the skins of aard-wolves, grey foxes, jackals, and black-spotted genets; opposite the doorway on the main pillar hung an American breech-loader; and on the floor, close to the wall, were beds, formed in the most primitive way of sheepskins and goat-skins.

In the course of the conversation Gassibone expressed his regret that the gourds were not ripe enough to send me, and that he was unable to give me any meat, as on account of the deficiency of water close at hand he had sent all his own herds



to the pastures by the Vaal River. My own observation soon afterwards confirmed what he had said, and I found that there was really no water fit to drink between the Harts and the Vaal. In the settlement itself the stream was so reduced that the spring was always besieged by a crowd of women, waiting their turn to get what supply they could, and when my servant made his appearance they hooted him so lustily that he had no alternative than to make a retreat with his bucket empty. Our only resource was to purchase our water of the women, and to make good the defect by laying in a stock of a native fruit something like a medlar, by which we might at any time temporarily allay our thirst.

Only waiting to procure a stock of maize from some of the people, we were soon ready to proceed on our way. It was our wish to fill all our vessels with water before starting, but the guide provided by the chief assured us that there was no necessity whatever for this precaution, as there would be many available places where we could get plenty as we went along. Naturally enough, we took his word, but found ourselves thoroughly deceived; until we reached the Vaal not a drop of drinking water was to be seen, and for the whole of that day and the following we had to endure, throughout the burning heat, all the miseries of increasing thirst. The country between Gassibone's kraal and the river is an uniform table-land, partly covered with trees and bushes, and partly,

in damp years especially, overgrown with long grass.

Pointing to a tall acacia that stood out conspicuously over the plain to the south, our guide informed us that it was situated beside a rushy spot, which we should reach before sunset, and where there was no doubt we should find water. We did, indeed, reach the place in the course of the afternoon, but it proved a mere dried-up rain-pool, the only semblance of water which it contained being a thick green semi-fluid full of tadpoles, insect larvæ, and infusoria, and smelling strong of ammonia. The very look of it was enough ordinarily to excite disgust, but so intense was our thirst that we ladled out the stuff, teeming with visible and invisible life as it was, into a napkin, and tried to filter it into a tumbler. We managed to get about a glass and a half of slimy liquid which we divided amongst our whole party, but in spite of the craving for more drink, we were not induced to repeat the experiment.

We rested about two hours, and made another advance on our way before camping for the night. As we approached the Vaal, the trees and bushes disappeared, and the grass became shorter, forming excellent pasturage for cattle.

On the evening of the next day, just as the sun was beginning to set behind the Free State shore of the Vaal, a little Batlapin boy, who was tending a lot of goats on the plain, told us that the river was close behind some hills to which he pointed. Look-

ing in that direction we soon caught sight of the huts used by the cowherds who were in charge of Gassibone's cattle.

Beyond a question, the Vaal is one of the most treacherous rivers in South Africa; its banks almost to the very middle of the channel are so soft and slippery, that draught-animals going to drink are liable to sink so deep into the mud that it is impossible to extricate them; in such cases they have been known to die of starvation. Accidents of this kind are especially likely to occur with the aged beasts which, having got knocked-up on the way, are left behind to await their owner's return; this, if he has gone on a business journey, is occasionally delayed for months. I have myself experienced some mischances arising from this condition of the margin of the river.

My people lost no time in going to find out where the Batlapin cattle went to drink, and while they were making their investigation, I took my gun and strolled down towards the water's edge. It was getting dusk, and I was desirous, if I could, to shoot some wild fowl for supper. In order to make as little noise as possible, I walked on tiptoe over the firmer parts of the shore, and whenever the trailing branches obstructed my path, I stooped down gently to remove them. Before long there was a sudden cackling on my left, followed by a sonorous flapping of wings, and two of the wild geese (*Chenalopeæ*) of which I was in search were making their escape down the river. I dropped upon my knee, prepared to fire,

but all at once the feeling came upon me that to break the charming sweetness of the scene by the noise of a shot was almost like a desecration. The placid waters of the stream stretched out towards the west, forming a gleaming zone of beauty; the light of a distant hut came sparkling through the gloom; it could not be otherwise than that, in such association, my memory should recall the picture of another stream, in another land, far away, where I had dreamily passed many and many an evening fishing, and when the light of the window within view had sparkled with the welcome of home. I could not help asking myself whether it was not possible even then that loving parents were thinking of the wanderer who was thinking of them. I was by no means saddened at my reverie; I did not for a moment doubt of a happy return; but I became absorbed in my thoughts, and sat pondering on the past for an hour or more, until the trees on the opposite shore had become obscured in the gathering shades of night.

Darkness had so come on that I had no little difficulty in retracing my way to the waggon. I gave my head a succession of thumps against the projecting boughs of the willows, and kept stumbling over their protruding roots; but I held on my road. Ever and again there was some strange and startling noise; first a herd of monkeys, which had been resting on the tree-tops, disturbed by the owls, would break out into a frantic clamour that would gradually die away into weak



and single notes ; and then a great water-iguana (*Polydædalus*) that had been lurking on the bank in search of mice, after creeping noiselessly to the brim of the water, would plunge in with a sudden splash.

These iguanas are huge lizards, over five feet long, that generally select their habitat by water which, if not always running, at least flows periodically ; they are found quite as often near human habitations as they are in the desert. Their bite is not dangerous to anything that is too large for them to devour, but they have such singular power in their long tails and in their claws, that they are able to catch many aquatic as well as land animals. Motionless as logs, with their eyes continually opening and shutting, their dark brown scaly bodies, striped with green and yellow, being of a colour to escape detection, they will for hours await the appearance of their prey with scarcely a sign of animation. Their food consists of frogs, mice, insects, or any animals up to the size of a rat, or any birds not larger than a hen.

It has been said that they are fond of the crabs that are commonly to be found in South Africa, but I am inclined to think that it is only failure of other food that induces them to drag these crustaceans from their holes, although I have seen such an accumulation of the shells as serves to show that a great many crabs may be necessary to make an iguana's meal. No doubt they are immensely partial to eggs ; and so pertinaciously do they visit hen-roost after hen-roost,

that by mutual consent the tenants of the farmsteads combine in declaring war against them. At the mission-station at Limkana, on the Matebe, my attention was called to the way in which, to gratify this predilection, they will climb up trees in search of nests, after the manner of the land-iguana, which never frequent the water at all. From the southern coast to the Marutse district I found the water species everywhere. In streams infested by crocodiles they live in the rapids, which the crocodiles avoid.

In general appearance the land-iguana is similar to the *Polydædalus*, but it is broader, more unwieldy, and has a shorter tail. It is found on plains, both bare and grassy, in rocky districts, in bushes, and in the forests. It lives upon small birds, mice, rats, centipedes, and many insects, but its favourite food is birds' eggs. Ordinarily it chooses its abode at the top of a tree, and at the approach of danger will clamber rapidly to its elevated retreat, and lie concealed along one of the boughs; if it should be on the ground, it will creep into a deserted burrow, or failing this, it will stretch itself out as if lifeless; but only touch it, and every symptom of inanimation vanishes; it will start up, develop its full length hiss like a cat, and crawl along on the tips of its claws, its form, that appeared thick and stumpy as it was shrinking on the ground, becoming in an instant lanky and thin as a skeleton. In the abdomen of this pachysaurian there is found a

collection of lobulated fatty matter, in which some of the native tribes put great faith as a remedy for certain diseases.

It was very close upon midnight when I found my way back to my people in the waggon; they had been far too uneasy at my prolonged absence to lie down to rest.

A bath in the Vaal was the first business next morning, after which we started in a north-eastward course for the Transvaal. In two hours, a much shorter time than I had reckoned on, we came within sight of several erections on the right; one of these was a long building made of tiles, and covered with iron; another, apparently in danger of tumbling down, had been constructed of lath and plaster; the third was of bricks, with a flat roof. These, with a couple of tents, and thirteen Koranna huts, were all that in 1873 existed of the most westerly town in the Republic, which afterwards, during the disturbances in Gassibone's district, and amongst the neighbouring Korannas, became known as Christiana.

Since that time Christiana has changed greatly for the better, and at present is almost as important a town as Bloemhof, which in 1876 included at least thirty houses. Independently of its favourable position on the direct road between Griqualand West and the Transvaal, it has made a rapid development through the exertions of its chief magistrate, whose acquaintance I had subsequently the pleasure of making. It speaks well for the able way in which

this officer maintained his difficult position with the contiguous unruly tribes, that on the annexation of the Transvaal by the English he was allowed to retain his post.

The river-bank where we made our camp was somewhat elevated, and afforded us a good view of the islands and rapids, which were both numerous. The adjacent scenery is unquestionably very interesting, and a visit to the islands would, to an ornithologist, be well worth making. This was the most southern point where I observed the handsome long-tailed roller.

Leaving Christiana on the following day (March 13th), we proceeded up the river towards Bloemhof. The district between the two towns is one of the most dreary and barren in the Transvaal, and has quite the characteristics of a karoo-plain; it offers a striking contrast to the opposite shore on the Free State side of the river, where wide tracts of acacias and numerous farms are mirrored in the waters.

In the way of game we saw nothing but a couple of springbocks, a few of the very smallest of the lesser bustards, and in the more rocky places some ground-squirrels, and some rhyzœnas, the latter being in considerable numbers, as many as fifteen or twenty from a single burrow. Both of these animals had ventured some little distance from their homes; the squirrels digging for roots, the rhyzœnas for beetles, larvæ, and scorpions. At the sound of our wheels they made off, but at a pace so



moderate, that even with a good start they might have been overtaken by a dog. The ground-squirrels ran away very timidly, keeping their tails erect, and not venturing to look back at what had disturbed them until they reached safe quarters; the rhyzœnas were much bolder, stopping frequently to examine the intruders who had invaded their privacy, and pausing, with their tails uncurled, would snarl savagely, as if in defiance. I saw several varieties of rhyzœna; but only one of the ground-squirrel. Further north, where the prairie-like plains made way for more wooded country, the place of the earth-squirrel is supplied by a small yellow-brown kind that lives in the trees; the flesh of both is eaten by all the natives except the Hottentots.

On reaching Bloemhof, on the afternoon of the 15th, we found that it consisted only of a single street, its environs having a poverty-stricken aspect that was far from inviting; it is a place, however, that has latterly been considerably improved.

Ever since we had left Klipdrift the weather had been remarkably fine, with only a few occasional exceptions; but as we quitted Bloemhof we observed that the horizon was ominously heavy; and, as evening drew on, the rain began to fall, and it became so dark that it was quite impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. I regretted that I had not come to the determination of passing the night in the town.

For a while one or two of us tried to walk in

front of the team, to give confidence to the Koranna who was leading the foremost pair of bullocks by the bridle, declaring every minute that he could not distinguish the path from the ground by the side; but the rain was so drenching, and the wind so pitiless, that we were obliged to give up, and to get what shelter we could in the waggon. After slipping and sliding about for a hundred yards or so more, the bullocks all came to a standstill, and I could not help fearing that we had got on to a declivity, which would lead down to the river; and, knowing that further progress under such circumstances might be dangerous, I came to the conclusion that we must stay where we were until daylight.

Notwithstanding the pouring rain, I went out twice to reconnoitre our situation. The second time I went farther than before, and made a discovery which rather startled me. Not many yards in front of us I observed a large dark spot, which it struck me must be a deep hollow in the ground. I called to the driver to watch with me, and wait for the next flash of lightning, that we might ascertain what it really was. The lightning was not long in coming, and revealed close at our feet the bed of a rain-torrent, that of course went right to the river. Only a few more steps and the consequences must have been most disastrous; for when daylight came, we found that the walls of the ravine were not only very precipitous, but not less than sixteen feet in depth.

Nothing could be more uncomfortable than the night we spent. The rain ceased about midnight, but not till it had penetrated the canvas covering of the waggon, the keen wind all along benumbing our limbs, and making us realize that here, on the tableland of the Southern Transvaal, we were 4000 feet above the level of the sea. Except for the Koranna men, David and Gert, there was no rest to be had; but they were both utterly regardless of the rain-pools in which they were reclining, and slept on soundly till the morning.

The Free State shore of the Vaal is elevated; the parts where it is not entirely wooded being scantily dotted with mimosas. Many of the well-to-do farmers, resident on the south of the river, have purchased as much as 3000 acres of land hereabouts, for the purpose of grazing their cattle during the dry season. They complained bitterly of the number of their foals, calves, and mules that had been killed by the hyænas (*H. crocuta*), and said that they had been obliged to resort to strychnine in order to dispose of some of the rapacious beasts. The son of one of the farmers, named Wessel, told me that he had lost eighteen head of cattle of various kinds during the preceding winter.

One case that occurred was somewhat remarkable. A farm-servant, before turning out two mules, had, for his own convenience, fastened them together by a strap; not long afterwards they were found still attached to each other, but one of them was a mangled, half-gnawed carcass, whilst the countless

footprints in the ground showed what desperate efforts the surviving mule had made to get free from its ill-fated companion. Since then the owner had sent no cattle to the pastures, except cows and full-grown horses, unless they were guarded.

Some miles east of Bloemhof we came to a great shallow salt-pan, which we had seen glistening before us for a considerable distance. It was skirted by a farm, and, as usual, one portion of its edge was overhung by a hill, the adjacent grassy parts being of a marshy nature, that might no doubt be cultivated to advantage.

We now entered upon the south-western hunting district of the Transvaal, that extends in one unbroken grass plain from the banks of the Bamboespruit to the Schoenspruit, and is bounded on the south by the Vaal River, and on the north by the Maquassie heights; it is intersected by a river, and by several spruits that flow periodically, generally running from north to south, or south-east.

Before reaching the Bamboespruit, on the 18th of March, we saw several pairs of blessbock antelopes, and then a whole herd of them; they are so called on account of a white spot (*blässe*) on their forehead, which sets off their red-brown skins admirably; their horns diverge backwards, and are by no means so graceful as those of the springbucks. Altogether, the creatures are more strongly built than springbucks; they do not make the same kind of spasmodic leaps, but on the whole they involve their pursuers in a more protracted chase.



In the long grass a number of cranes were pecking out locusts. As we approached them they made a short retreat without rising high above the ground, and uttering their sonorous note, which might almost be called stately, they alighted again only a few hundred yards away.



CAMP ON THE BAMBOESPRUIT.

Some heavy rain came on, and we were compelled to come to a halt quite early in the afternoon by the side of a pool, a very few miles east of the Bamboespruit. Partly from want of rest, and partly probably from the salt we had taken at the salt-pan which

we had just passed, a general lassitude seemed to have fallen upon our whole party; it was an unhealthy languor, that seemed absolutely to prohibit sleep; and the morning dawned before the rain ceased, and we were able to get a little repose underneath the waggon. To rest inside was impossible, as the evaporation from the damp made the atmosphere all but intolerable. Though jackals in plenty were to be heard quite close to us, we were disinclined to take our guns out of the cases, where they were safely protected from the wet, to get a shot at them; and besides it was very dark. After all, the sleep we obtained was very little, and we were all ready to start again while it was still quite early.

My people busied themselves in making a fire, and meanwhile I strolled to a little distance to get a general view of the plain, bounded by distant heights on the north. The sky was overcast, and the day threatened to be as dreary as the night. My attention was attracted by some very musical notes, uttered, as it seemed to me, by two cranes or storks that were fluttering some 500 yards in front of me. I made my companions listen to them, and they agreed in pronouncing the sound exquisite as the notes of an Æolian harp. It was a matter of considerable difficulty to get Gert, the Koranna lad, to leave his breakfast to attend to what was exciting our curiosity; and when he did come he declared at first that there was nothing to see, but after a moment or two he suddenly stooped down,

and seizing my hand, made me bend down to his own level.

“Yes, look!” he said, “look at those two birds settling there; those are the birds that made the noise. They would be great locust-birds, only they have red wings, and black heads and crowns—beautiful yellow crowns.”

This was an unusually long speech for Gert, and he had to pause and refresh himself with a quid of tobacco. He saw our surprise, and repeated the word “crowns,” adding that they were not made of feathers, but of long, stiff, yellow hair.

“In Africa,” he continued, “everybody knows them. The farmers, both in the Transvaal and the Free State, keep them tame.”

“What do you call them?” I inquired.

“Mâ-hems, bas,” he answered; but I could only conjecture that they were a long-legged species of the grey crane, until a few days afterwards, when finding three of them domesticated in one of the farms we passed, I ascertained that they were the crowned or royal crane (*Balearia regulorum*). When I returned to my own country I brought two of them with me, and had the honour of presenting them to His Highness the Crown Prince Rudolph, who placed them in the Imperial Zoological Gardens at Schönbrunn.

Scarcely had we been travelling two hours next morning when we came within sound of a rushing torrent, issuing from a depression that could be distinguished at a considerable distance by its belt

of foliage. The depression varied from twenty to thirty-five feet in depth, and was the channel of the Maquassie River, now swollen by the heavy rain that had accumulated from the neighbouring heights, which bear the same name as the stream. The banks are steep, and the river-course stony, and every now and then there are scraps of picturesque scenery ; but during some of the winter months the flood is reduced to a few mere ponds ; these, however, being deep and rocky, are often tolerably full of fish. The more rugged parts of the shore are the haunts of otters, wild cats, weasels, genets, and other small beasts of prey, water lizards also being occasionally to be met with.

At the ford, which, on account of the steep declivity of the banks, is always awkward to cross—we found the water about three feet deep. Standing on the right bank were some transport waggons laden with goods weighing the best part of three tons. The drivers, fearful of crossing in the present swollen condition of the stream, had left them and made their way to a neighbouring canteen to await the subsiding of the flood ; but I came to the conclusion that we might venture to cross at once, and our waggon reached the other side safely, with no other damage than a slight injury to our cooking apparatus.

It was not midday when we reached the southern slope of the Maquassie heights, that extend hence towards the north. It was a spot where the mineralogist no less than the botanist might find a fine



field for research, excellent specimens of porphyritic quartz being frequently to be secured. Hares and bustards abounded on the plains; and in a pond belonging to a farmer who had settled at the foot of the hills were quantities of black moorhens, divers, wild duck, ibises, and herons.

We received a visit in the course of the afternoon from the farmer's son, who quite astonished me by the dexterity with which he handled my revolver, making shot after shot at a mark with unerring precision.

Towards evening we left the neighbourhood of the farm and crossed a plain on which the grass was some two feet high, affording a safe shelter for game. We had only advanced about six miles since noon; but a steady downpour of rain having set in, we not only thought it best to halt for the night, but were so struck by the abundance of game, that we agreed to stay for a whole day.

The sound of firing roused me betimes in the morning. It seemed to come from the south; and the origin of it was explained by the arrival, while we were at breakfast, of two Dutchmen, mounted on small wiry ponies, and making inquiries about the Bas, the master of the house close at hand. Finding us unable to answer their questions, they drove on to the thatched house, and asked neighbour "Ohm" (the ordinary designation of a Dutch farmer) to lend them a waggon, to carry to their own farm, some miles away, a dozen springbocks and blessbocks that they had killed that morning.

It is the common custom of such farmers as live near towns to leave the heads and the entrails of what they have killed for the jackals and vultures, and to send the carcasses whole to market. Those, however, who reside in more out-of-the-way districts, generally flay and cut up the game into joints, laying the skins out on the ground to dry.

After being dried, the skins are most frequently merely cut into squares, and sewn, ten or twelve together, to make carpets; but in the manipulation of them the farmers are far surpassed by the natives. One use to which they are also put is to make the mountings of the giraffe-hide whips. There is a primitive kind of tanning often practised, the tan being the bark of several trees that grow on the hills, such as the waggonhout-tree, or, failing that, the bark of the common mimosas from the river banks. Those who make a trade of tanning purchase the undressed skins from the hunters; a blessbock skin, which costs three or four shillings, as a rule selling after the operation is complete for about half a sovereign.

Some of the farmers' relatives residing with them manufacture what they call field-shoes, which are extremely comfortable for South African travelling. The soles are made of half-tanned gnu-skins, and the upper leathers of the skins of blessbocks, koodoos, or hartebeests. They may be bought of the makers for about seven shillings, but from the tradespeople in the towns they cannot be procured at less than double that price.

The flesh of these animals is cut into long strips, and either slightly salted, or dried by exposure to the sun; it is brought to table quite hard; when pounded and soaked in butter it has a very delicate flavour; its price varies from sixpence to a shilling a pound, and it is often brought to market in considerable quantities.

Quitting this halting-place, we proceeded to the east. The district that we traversed on our way to the Estherspruit was, if possible, more abundant in game than that which we had left. I counted in various directions no less than twenty herds of springbucks and blessbucks. A short distance from our path a swarm of vultures had settled on a blessbock that had been shot, the very numbers of the birds being a proof that they must have continual opportunities for a similar repast.

The spruit lay in a kind of trench extending towards the south. As we approached it we could see a white-washed farmhouse peeping out from some mimosas on its margin; we subsequently made the acquaintance of its owner, a kindly middle-aged Dutchman, named Rensburg.

As far as the Estherspruit we had found the road singularly good; but suddenly we were now launched upon a marshy plain, from the mire of which our oxen seemed perfectly unable to drag the waggon. With much reluctance we had to consent to stay in this unhealthy situation till the next morning. Towards midnight the atmosphere became

so clear that we could distinctly see the jackals prowling almost close to us. I was much tempted to have a shot, and to endeavour to get one of their handsome skins. Rensberg, however, had warned me that any firing would be only too likely to frighten away the game, so that I deemed it more prudent to abstain.

On starting next day, we had only proceeded about two hundred yards, when we came upon the Klipspruit, now reduced to a few insignificant pools, although after heavy rain it becomes a stream of scarcely less than a hundred yards in breadth. We crossed without difficulty, and at once made up our minds to encamp for at least a day or two upon the further bank.

It was a scene to rejoice a sportsman's heart; the early morning hours never failed to exhibit many a herd of gnus and antelopes, some hardly a quarter of a mile away, others so far in the distance that they were comparatively specks on the horizon which opened out to the south, east, and west.

The springbocks always grazed in groups; the blessbocks in rows, either side by side, or one behind the other. The prolonged notes of the bustards could be heard on every side, and every nook seemed teeming with animal life. As I looked around me with admiration I almost fancied that I should like to be the owner of some vast enclosure, where the game could find a happy retreat from their relentless pursuers; ample room would be requisite, as it is not so much the climate as the limited space in







RETURN FROM THE GNU HUNT.

zoological gardens that causes so many animals to languish and die in their confinement; but the mortality in gardens is small in comparison with what it is in the travelling menageries, where the imprisonment is necessarily so close that it is to be hoped, for the honour of humanity, that they will soon cease to be supported.

We remained on the Klipspruit from the 23rd to the 27th. Our attempts at sport were by no means successful, and on the last day I determined to make another effort, in hopes of better luck. In going down the spruit I had noticed a spot in the broad part of the bed that had every appearance of being a resort of the game, and the footprints both ways across the channel showed that gnus and other animals were accustomed to pass along that way. Here I resolved to take up my position, and await a favourable chance for a shot.

Shortly after sunrise I left the waggon, and made my way very cautiously along the valley for about two miles; it was necessary to go stealthily, a matter which was sometimes by no means easy, as the river-bed was in places very shallow, and my movements were likely to be observed by the game on the heights; it was consequently past ten o'clock before I reached the selected spot; the place, as I have said, being broader and flatter than elsewhere, and the track overgrown with rushes. After waiting about an hour in the broiling sun, I heard the sound of some shots in the far distance, and being still partially concealed, I peeped out in the



direction whence the reports proceeded; nothing, however, was to be seen but a few herds scattered about, all grazing quietly. Still, it became clear to me that one of the herds of gnus, still feeding, was gradually coming nearer to me; and in the expectation that they might approach within gunshot, I crossed to the other bank, and cocked my gun in readiness; but they were slow in their movements, and scarcely advanced at all. Happening to turn my eyes in another direction, I was taken by surprise. Galloping hard towards me from the quarter where I had heard the shots was a great herd of blessbocks; they were coming so much closer to me than the gnus which I had been watching, that I considered they were giving me the better chance. I had no time to make my way back to the other bank, and had to content myself with gaining the middle of the bed and lying down flat upon the ground. After a few seconds I raised my head, confident that the herd would be now within reach; but I was destined to be disappointed; they had evidently caught sight of me, and were making off in rapid flight. In the rear was a doe with her little fawn that could not keep pace with the rest, and I could not help longing intensely to take them alive; with this design I sent a shot into the right leg of the dam, but although she reared and limped at first, she soon recovered her speed, and made off to rejoin the rest.

Hoping still to succeed with the gnus, I went





STARTLED BY A HERD OF BLACK GNUS.



back to my former place, and again stooped down to wait. I reloaded my gun, but had only just put in the bullet, when I was startled by a great snorting and puffing close above me; the whole herd, with lowered heads and tails erect, was rushing towards me like a whirlwind; another moment and I should have been trampled under their feet, but having no desire to come within reach either of their horns or their hoofs, I jumped up, shouted aloud, and brandished my gun. The effect was to bring them at once to a standstill; they waited a moment with their shaggy heads all turned towards me. I lost not an instant in firing. The foremost antelope bent down its head, brayed aloud, swung round twice in a circle, and then galloped off followed by the entire herd. It did not, however, make straight away, but after retreating some ten or twelve yards it made another circle, still followed by the others, and this manœuvre it repeated several times, until finally, the herd, erecting their white tails, and still bellowing wildly, scampered off to a distance.

While they were making their second circle I took aim at an animal that seemed to be about half grown. My shot was well directed and took effect on the shoulder. I heard the ball strike, but the creature kept on its way just as if it were untouched; so sure, however, was I that I had hit my mark, that I kept on in pursuit, in spite of the intense heat of the sun, for the best part of four miles; my exertions all proved to be fruitless, for although

my victim was probably lagging on behind the herd the distance between us continually increased, and at length, weary and disappointed, I was fain to give up and make my way back to our quarters.

But I was not contented. After resting a little while and taking some refreshment, I started off with Gert, determined, if possible, to track out the wounded gnu. We followed on beyond the spot where I had turned back, and made our way for about another two miles, when we came upon the half-eaten carcase of a young gnu bull. Within five hours after receiving my shot it had become the prey of the numberless vultures that hovered about, and had been so mutilated that it could not be removed.

Disgusted at my failure, I broke up our encampment immediately, and set out once again towards the interior of the Transvaal, where I contemplated making the caverns of Wonderfontein the limit of my present journey, after which I should commence my return to the diamond-diggings.

During our stay by the Klipspruit, I had made a good many additions to my collection, notably a pretty young water-lizard, several kinds of insects and fish, some scolopendra, and various grasses, besides some interesting specimens of greenstone.

It was quite late at night when we next halted for our rest, though we were scarcely more than four miles north-east of the ford. The night was fine and tolerably clear; and as we sat talking over the chances and mischances of the day, we could



hear the bellowing of the male gnus, varied ever and again by the heavy thud that was caused by the clashing of their horns as they met in angry conflict. From midnight to dawn the howl of the jackal and the yell of the hyæna showed that while game was in abundance there was no lack of beasts of prey.

The country through which our next day's journey carried us showed no falling off in the quantity of game. The depressions of the spruits became deeper than we had heretofore seen, and were in some places covered with bushes that were the haunt of the guinea-fowl which are common everywhere, from the southern coast to the further side of the Zambesi.

This breed of wild poultry is undeniably one of the most interesting features of the African bird-world. Hunted perpetually, it is nevertheless ever on the increase. Most frequently it is found in flocks varying from ten to forty in number, in bushy or wooded places near rivers or standing water. It is distinguished from our guinea-fowl by a horny membrane on the forehead.

On the Vaal and its tributaries the best time for hunting guinea-fowl is about two hours before sundown, when they leave the bushes in the plains to drink, previously to roosting for the night in the trees by the banks. This hour may on an average be taken to be about four o'clock in the afternoon, and as the birds nearly always use the same approach to the river, a sportsman, who has con-

cealed himself hard by, will see a cloud of dust gradually coming nearer to him from the land; this is caused by their repeatedly stopping on the way to scratch up seeds and insects from the sandy soil. When in thick grass they continually raise their heads to look around them, and where the grass is over three feet in height I have seen them at intervals run out of it for ten or fifteen yards and fly, or rather spring into the air, that they may be able to look above it. Should they happen to catch sight of man or beast, or anything that has to them a suspicious appearance, they give a loud cackle, and dart off with incredible swiftness. I know few birds that can run so quickly, and when they have once taken to flight, a sportsman unacquainted with their habits has little chance of catching sight of them again that day. An experienced hand, however, will either chase them with dogs, or conceal himself so as to confront them as they rise suddenly from the ground, when their flight is so awkward that they afford a mark which the most unpractised shot can hardly fail to hit. Like other feathered game, guinea-fowl have not much to fear from the natives; the only people that I saw making any attempt to get them were the Korannas, who first make them rise by the aid of their dogs, and then pelt them down with the hard stones of a small edible fruit known as the "blue-bush."

In the afternoon we reached the Matheuspruit, which in spite of the rain was nearly dry. Near

the road a small dam was placed right across its bed, and formed one side of a pond.

From the Matheuspruit the road was in a wretched condition, and where it was not stony the soil was so soft that we were in momentary dread of sticking fast. On the evening of the 29th we reached the Jagdspruit.

The following morning was warm and bright, and the rising sun lighted up the eastern slopes of the Klerksdorp heights, some of which had a conical shape, and stood isolated and bare on the bank of the Schoenspruit, others being covered with bushes, and joined together in ridges. Between us and the hills lay a shallow depression, about two miles wide, that appeared to open into the narrow valley of the Schoenspruit a few miles lower down. We were told that Klerksdorp, the oldest settlement in the Transvaal, was close on the other side of a chain of hills that stretched right across our path.

Tempted by the genial weather I went out for a stroll on the plain, which afforded me ample scope for botanizing. Amongst other plants worth gathering I found a cinna growing rankly as a weed, bearing one or more brick-red or rose-coloured blossoms on stems that varied from four to ten inches in height. From a clump of bushes on the left I took a number of beetles, some small bright ones (*Buprestidæ*), some leaf-beetles (*Chrysomelidæ*), and some Longicorns (*Cerambycidæ*); also several black and yellow-spotted spiders, that, like our cross-spiders, had spun their webs from bush to

bush, and from tree to tree. Two duykerbocks sprung up at my approach, and vanished quickly into the thicket.

Having crossed another depression we soon entered the actual valley of the Schoenspruit, which might fairly claim to be a river, as it is only in exceptionally dry seasons that it ceases to flow regularly, and assumes the characteristics of a "spruit." Altogether it may be considered one of the most interesting valleys in all the South African table-land, being one of the most fertile, as well as the most highly cultivated. Its banks are one continuous series of farms; and both here and in the Mooi-valley the excellent pasturage on the slopes greatly enhances the value of the land. With a little energy and rational manipulation of the soil it might be made even ten times more prolific than it is.

At this period, in 1873, Klerksdorp, or Klerksdorf, consisted of a single street, in which, I believe, I counted five-and-twenty houses. It has since greatly increased, and bids fair, like Potchefstroom, to be one of the most important towns in the south-western Transvaal. Each house had its garden, with peaches and orange-trees, and the hedges were made of quinces and pomegranates. The site of the town is well chosen, being at a spot where the valley is narrowed by hills on either hand, and where the supply of water is abundant; it is likewise partially protected on the side looking up the river by an isolated chain of hills.

Potchefstroom, for which we made a start the



next day, is really the most populous town of the Transvaal. On our way thither we crossed three dry spruits within a distance of thirty-four miles. These were named the Kockemoer, the Matchavis, and the Bakenspruit, and all ran parallel to each other, from north to south, towards the Vaal. The country we passed was more undulating than it had been between Bloemhof and Klerksdorp; all the valleys, whether deep or shallow, appearing very fertile. Before arriving at the Kockemoer we had to cross a tract of land so marshy that our progress was once again a matter of considerable difficulty. The sight of two waggons, already sunk hopelessly in the mire, was a warning to us that we must use every precaution; and in several places, which appeared especially bad, we shovelled out the mud, and filled up the cavity with stones; thus extemporizing a hard road, over which, by dint of much shouting and whipping, we made our bullocks drag their load. Very often, however, it was requisite to make long détours, and even then we found the broad tires of our wheels cutting into the soil as though they were the sharpest of knives.

As we passed next day at the foot of a chain of lofty hills I could not do otherwise than admire the scenery, which seemed the most pleasant of any that we saw throughout the journey. In the shallow glen of the Bakenspruit a large flock of grey cranes was busily hunting for locusts, and we noticed a few springbocks grazing quietly among them.

Thousands of swallows had settled on the swampy spot where we crossed the spruit. The South African swallows are even more confiding and fearless of men than our own swifts; not only will they build in the passages of houses that have continual access to the air, but I have known them take up their abode in dwelling-rooms when these have happened to be left open for any length of time. Their nests are more elaborate than those of the European *Hirundo*, and are entered by a passage sometimes straight, but occasionally slightly curved, a foot or more in length, woven into the nest itself, the whole being affixed to a horizontal roof. Their number, too, as well as the number of the goat-sucker tribe (*Caprimulgus*), is greater than that of the European species, but their notes are neither so strong nor so agreeable.

We were now approaching the valley of the Mooi River, a perennial stream, bounded for some miles on either hand by chains of hills or by isolated eminences. As we turned from a grassy hollow, we saw Potchefstroom lying before us, looking, at first sight, smaller than it really is, the effect of its being built on a level in the form of a long parallelogram, in such a way that it is overshadowed by the trees that line its streets. It is one of the most important places in South Africa, and will probably retain its high rank, as it remains the chief trade-centre of the country, and is hardly likely to be ousted from its prominence, unless it should happen to be affected by the construction of the Delagoa and Middleburgh

Railway from Pretoria. When I was there I estimated the population at about 4000, a total that would be much increased if it were made to include the inhabitants of old Mooi-Riverdorp, a name given to the series of farms that, commencing at the north end of the town, extends for some miles up both sides of the river valley.

The Mooi River encloses the town on the east with a tolerably strong stream and some rushy shallows; the water is clear, and contains many of the same fish as the Vaal, besides numerous crabs; otters, wild cats, and water-lizards are found on its banks. An aqueduct from the river, as well, I believe, as from the hills on the west, is carried round the western side of the town, and from this a good supply of water is conveyed to the houses and their gardens.

In the summer-time grass grows freely in the less frequented streets, and even in the dry season the place with its flat-roofed or gabled houses, all neatly white-washed, rising among the foliage of the foreign evergreens, the cypress, the eucalyptus, and the ivy that have been acclimatized, has all the appearance of one large well-cultivated garden, and offers a striking contrast to the dead yellow of the dried-up grass in the surrounding valley; but when, as on the occasions of my two visits in 1873 and 1874, the adjacent hills and plains are rich in verdure, and the river-banks are brilliant with white and red and yellow blossoms, then is indeed the time when Potchefstroom, arrayed in all its glory,

fairly vindicates its title of the " Flower-town " of the Transvaal.

The streets are straight, dividing the town into rectangular blocks, and at the places where they intersect, open squares are left, the most spacious of which is appropriated for a market-place. The little English church, all overgrown with ivy, is very picturesque, but with this exception none of the public edifices rise above the level of the ordinary style of building. The town is the residence of a magistrate, and of the Portuguese Consul, and it contains several elementary schools. It carries on an active trade with the diamond-fields and Natal, some mills and tan-yards being situated on the outskirts. The produce sent to the diamond-fields consists chiefly of corn, meal, meat, and tobacco; that sent to Natal being tobacco, cattle, skins, and a small supply of ostrich feathers and ivory. It should be added that a large proportion of the goods despatched to the interior from Natal and the diamond-fields has to pass through Potchefstroom on its way.

Although the town has no pretensions to architectural beauty, yet the places of business are thoroughly commodious, and the private residences are often quite elegant villas. The great charm, however, of them all, even of the most modest, lies in the well-kept orchards and gardens with which they are surrounded, the hedges being gay with myriads of roses, with fig-bushes, and with the bright leaves and fiery blossoms of the pome-



granate, which turn to their large and luscious fruit. The whole atmosphere seems pervaded with colour and fragrance, and for many consecutive months of the year a tempting supply of fruit hangs in the hedgerows, so that the owner may gather in their produce without depriving his plot of ground of its ordinary aspect of a gay and enjoyable flower-garden.

Overhanging the brooks that ripple in gutters along the streets, are fine weeping willows, that afford a refreshing shade from the glowing sunbeams; their light green leaves and slim drooping boughs stand out in elegant contrast alike to the compact growth of the fruit-trees, to the dark foliage of the eucalyptus, to the pointed shoots of the arbor vitæ, and to the funereal hue of the cypress.

It was evening when we next started, taking an east-north-east direction, to proceed towards the Mooi. We had scarcely left the town behind us when we began to experience the greatest difficulty, on account of the mud, in making our way over the few hundred yards that led to the primitive bridge across the river.

Our route next morning lay through a wide valley, open in most directions, in which was a farmstead consisting of several buildings, and carefully enclosed by its own fields and well-kept garden. Having here obtained some gourds, we proceeded nearly east, and soon reached a table-land, bounded on the south by a chain of hills partially covered with

trees. In other quarters we had an uninterrupted view of the river-valley with its numerous farms, to be recognized everywhere by the dark patches of cultivated land; in the extreme distance were ridges



NIGHT CAMP.

of hills and isolated heights, and the slope of the Blue-bank plateau; while on the northern horizon we could just discern the outline of the Magalies mountains. It was the finest view I had hitherto seen.

On the table-land that we were crossing, I noticed

some funnel-shaped chasms in the soil, varying from twenty-five to forty feet in depth, distinguishable from a distance by the thickness of the growth of the trees. I afterwards learnt that similar chasms are by no means uncommon in some parts of the Transvaal, between the Harts River and the Molapo, as well as between the Lower Molapo and the Vaal in the Barolong and Batlapin territory; they are found likewise in Griqualand West. These crater-like openings are characteristic of the vast bed of superficial limestone that lies, sometimes indeed only in thin layers, but ordinarily some hundreds of feet thick, covered in some places with sand or chalk, and in others with blocks of granite or slate; they are caused by the union of several deep fissures in the rock far below the surface of the soil. This limestone-bed has a clearly defined stratification; it bears external marks of the action of water, and throughout its extent of hundreds of miles is full of cracks, but so hard is its substance, and so huge is its mass, that in nine cases out of ten the convulsions of nature have not made any appreciable displacement; it is only in these chasms that the effect is at all apparent.

The underground fissures, sometimes several miles long, serve as subterranean channels for the streams, which after a while force themselves out through little rifts into the valleys. This is the case with the Upper Molapo, and in the same way does a portion of the Mooi flow below the surface of the ground, disappearing entirely in places, to reissue



further down the valley. Where, however, several fissures are concentrated at one point, they result in the formation of the craters to which I refer. At the top, these funnels are sometimes as much as 200 or 300 yards in circumference: at first sight they have the appearance of being circular, but



FUNNEL-SHAPED CAVITY IN ROCKS.

on investigation they nearly always prove triangular, or, less frequently, quadrilateral. The interstices of broken rock with which their inner surface is lined are filled up by the surrounding



earth, which thus forms a luxuriant bed for the roots of trees and shrubs, which tower up above, and become conspicuous upon the generally barren plain.

Where the fissures that radiate from the bottom of the funnels are sufficiently wide at the top, it is quite possible to descend perpendicularly for a short distance and to trace their course sometimes for several hundred yards. Many of them are full of water clear as crystal, and one that I saw subsequently, on my way back from my third journey on the Upper Molapo, was full to the depth of 140 feet, so that I might almost feel justified in describing it as a miniature lake.

Although I have not seen Herr Hübner's "Klippdachs-Schlucht," I imagine it must be included in the category of these formations. I found, too, that many small streams in the district of the Vaal, the Harts River, the Molapo, and the Marico, as well as in that of the Upper Limpopo, had their origin in similar hollows in the rock, where the water could not immediately run off, but collected in the funnel until it forced its way through. At most of the farms near such streams we noticed how the supply of water issued from a marshy spot, perhaps a mile or so higher up, and how in the very midst of the springs there was frequently a cavity, perhaps fifty feet or more in depth, that had all the appearance of having been bored in the rock.

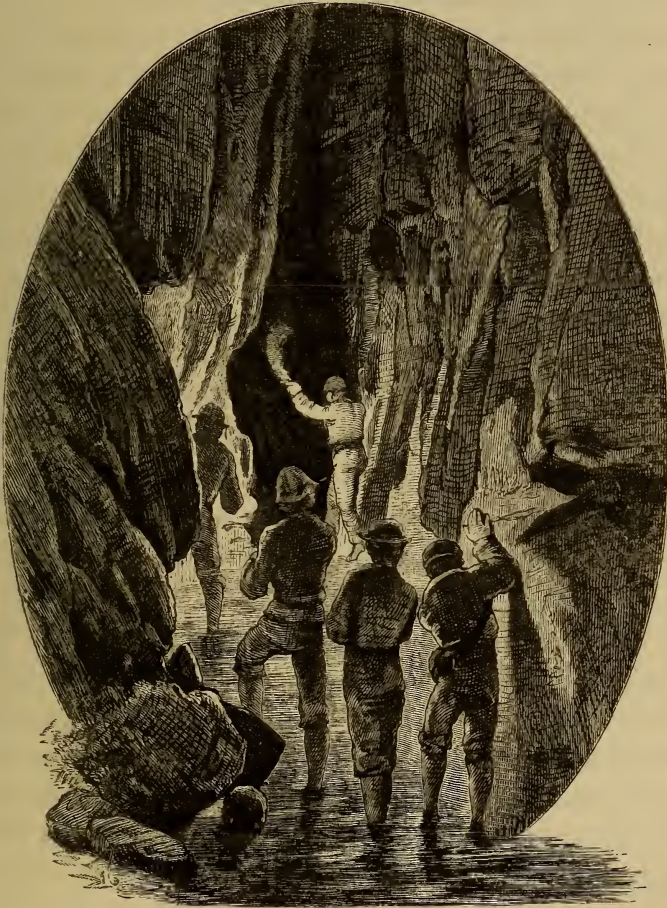
In every place of this character, even where the

water had only a subterranean outlet, I invariably found that there were none but the same species of fish. I know a reedy pool on a plain between the Harts River and the Molapo, abounding with fish and birds, which appears to have no outlet whatever; and having ascertained that its greatest depth is near the middle, I have no doubt but that it is an example of these open funnels in the rock. In the limestone where these singular formations exist, besides veins of quartz and quartzose mineral, there are to be found particles of tin, copper, iron, and silver.

It was on the third day after leaving Potchefstroom that we arrived at Wonderfontein. This is the name by which the Boers distinguish the caves and grottoes of the district, and which does not belong as usual to a single farm, but to a series of farms that with their separate pasture-lands lie along the valley of the Mooi River. The farm-houses are chiefly built of stone, and are buildings of good elevation, each being provided with a waggon-shed, and with one or more rush-huts for drying tobacco, which is universally cultivated in this part of the country. The particular farm to which we were now directing our course was in the immediate vicinity of the "wonderful" caves, and might be termed Wonderfontein proper.

Fed by numerous streams that flowed from both directions, the Mooi River was here of comparative importance; its banks in places were swampy, and overgrown with masses of reeds, yielding an unfaill-

ing source of interest to the ornithologist; and so confusing was the chorus of whistling, twittering, cackling, and singing, that we could hardly fail to be



GROTTO OF WONDERFONTEIN.

puzzled as to where we should give our attention first.

By the permission of the farmer we made our camp

under some weeping willows that overhung his peach-garden. We made many inquiries about the grottoes, and were told that as it was quite easy to find the entrance it was equally easy to miss the way inside, and to fail to find an exit; it was therefore advisable to be provided with guides. This office, we were soon informed, could be undertaken by the two sons of the farmer for the remuneration from our party of 1*l.* a head. Exorbitant as I felt the demand was, yet having come to Wonderfontein for the express purpose of visiting the caves, I submitted to the exaction without a murmur. Some relations of the farmer, who were staying with him on a visit, proposed to join us, and we started without much delay, the two guides each carrying a bundle of tallow candles.

Having crossed the little river by a ford, wide but quite shallow, we had to clamber up the right bank, which was very rocky, and covered with bushwood. A quarter of an hour brought us to a chasm in the rocks, opening almost perpendicularly downwards, and which was manifestly another of the funnels which I have been describing. The entrance to the cavern was a clear illustration of the rending of the rocks, but I must own that I was considerably disappointed with the interior. I had expected to find fossil remains of the late geological period, and thereby perhaps to supply a gap in the geological records of South Africa; but I found nothing to gratify my anticipations.

By the help of the rocks projecting from the sides



of the funnel, we managed to descend to the bottom, which had gradually contracted until it was only a narrow passage slanting down towards, or it might be below, the river-bed. Here we entered upon a perfect labyrinth of fissures, at first so small that we could only creep in one after another on all fours, but increasing till they were frequently ten feet high; they terminated above in mere clefts, from which the water kept dripping, and formed stalactites that were not exceptional in character, either of form or size; they had nearly all been damaged by previous visitors, and the ground was covered with their fragments.

The very multiplicity of the underground passages through which we were conducted, was in itself a proof that the rock had been rifted in all directions, and in many places where the two clefts came into connexion, a sort of vault was formed overhead, somewhat higher than the passages, but presenting no other remarkable feature. The sides were dark grey, generally bare and smooth. The little brook, of which we could hear the sound as soon as we entered, rippled through the caves from east to west, and covered the breadth of the passage, making it necessary for us to perform the best part of our excursion barefooted. As we went onwards, either to the west or north, the water became considerably deeper; we caught sight of some stalactites, glistening and undamaged, just before us, but were prevented from securing them by our guides, who refused to advance a step further.

It would not be a matter of much difficulty to widen the narrow places between the entrance to the cavern and the broader clefts in the interior, so that a miniature boat might be introduced; it would at least make it possible to penetrate to the end of the passages, and might probably be the means of discovering loftier and more spacious grottoes. To me it appeared that away from the river the passages were mere rifts, but that closer to the river they were invariably wider, thus confirming the impression that the water in making its way along them had gradually washed out for itself a larger outlet.

We were not in the caves very long, but found them thickly tenanted by bats, that kept on following us up to the very entrance. Our guides held the fluttering creatures in such abhorrence that nothing would induce them to touch them; they were accordingly much surprised when I captured two of them as an addition to my collection of mammalia, and as a memorial of my visit to the wonderful grottoes.

Wonderfontein is one of those places in South Africa where an explorer may advantageously spend a considerable time, ever finding an ample reward for his labours; the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral world are all well worthy of his best investigation. My own visit on this occasion was necessarily limited to three days, so that I could obtain nothing beyond a cursory glance at the neighbourhood.

Larger quadrupeds have all been exterminated for the last fifteen years, but on the plains towards the north I found numbers of *Catoblepas Gorgon*, *Antilope albifrons* and *Euchore*, whilst the handsome yellow-brown rietbocks, their short horns bending forwards in a hook, were occasionally to be met with, either singly or in pairs, in the long grass or among the rushes on the river.

Our farmer friend was very courteous, and invited us to join his sons on their hunting excursions. Holes recently scratched on the ground bore witness to the existence of jackals, proteles, and striped hyænas; very often porcupines, jumping-hares, and short-tailed pangolins might be seen; and amongst the rocks I found several genets, and a kind of weasel with black stripes.

Once when I was out strolling with one of my people along the far side of the river, we had put down our guns against a rock, and were watching a flock of finches; suddenly my attention was drawn off by a great splashing in the water, and looking through an opening in the rushes, I saw four otters swimming rapidly one behind the other up the stream. Before we had time to get our guns, they all disappeared in the sedge. The brown otters of the South African rivers are shorter and more thick-set than the European species, and their skins are of inferior value; they are to be found in all reedy and flowing streams, as well as in the pools of spruits.

In rapids, and especially in the deep pools

left in the dried-up river-beds, which never fail to abound in fish, they thrive wonderfully, being rarely hunted, except when they are enticed by the sound of poultry to venture near human habitations ; this is of rare occurrence, but when it does happen, they are sure to be attacked and killed by the dogs. They are scarce, however, in all places where the natives have settled close to the river, and find their safest retreat in the south-central, the western, and the northern districts of the Transvaal, where the valleys are marshy and rushes plentiful. I have noticed that they seldom remain stationary, but seek their prey over extensive tracts of country, hunting fish and crustaceans in the shallow pools, rats and mice in the grassy banks, and birds in the morasses and reedy parts of the rivers.

Amongst the clumps of reeds we observed the hanging nests of sedge-warblers, of the bright red, black-spotted fire-finch, and of the handsome long-tailed king-finch (*Vidua Capensis*), one of the largest of the finch tribe. In winter the king-finch assumes a brownish hue, but in the summer its plumage is a rich velvet-black, to which an orange spot on each shoulder stands out in brilliant contrast. The change of plumage is not the only transformation with which Nature during its period of luxuriance endues this charming bird ; its tail, that during the winter is of no unusual length, increases in summer to a bush of feathers eighteen inches long, which so seriously impedes its flight, that in gusty



weather it can only fly in the same direction as the wind.

Like all the other reed-finches, it is a lively little creature, and may perpetually be seen swinging and peeping about on the tops of the reed-stalks, or fluttering over the morasses; and when it seems to consider itself unobserved, it settles down and twitters cheerily among the rushes. If, however, it is alarmed or excited, as it may be by the appearance of another finch invading its nest, by any attempt to capture it, or by the approach of a snake, it becomes perfectly furious; its throat becomes inflated, it spits like a cat, its beautiful neck-feathers bristle up into a perfect ruff, and it prepares to use its sharp beak to good purpose. There are few more interesting birds than this in the whole country.

Long-eared owls, the true owls of the swamps, sometimes flew up as we came near them; but, after a short flight, they would soon alight again on the edge of the marshes. There were a good many kinds of water-birds to be seen, both swimmers and waders; and we noticed several varieties of sandpipers, bitterns, small silver herons, common grey herons, and purple herons; as well as a sort of ruff, some moor-hens, wild ducks and divers. Whilst one of a party in a boat searches for nests and eggs, another may very readily shoot at the birds that are disturbed.

The rich blossoms that abound in the moister parts of the valleys naturally contribute to the

generation of innumerable insects; and as a consequence insectivorous birds, as well as graminivorous, sun-birds, bee-eaters, and swallows swarm about the shrubs both of the gardens and the woods. The multiplicity of insects, however, did not prevent their capture from being a matter of pain and grief; the mosquitoes not only tormented us in the evening, but even stung our faces and hands badly in the daytime.

Snakes, no doubt, were abundant, and I caught one of a variety that I had never seen before; it was dark grey above, and sulphur-coloured underneath, about two feet long, and quite as thick as my finger.

The worthy farmer who owned the place seemed immensely proud of his "wonderlijke chate;" he treated us hospitably, and had always coffee and biscuits ready whenever we called upon him. In the course of conversation he told me that the caves had been visited by a colleague of mine named Mauch, who had stayed a considerable time. He seemed to regret that we spent so much time in collecting vermin, which he called "det slechte chut," when he would have liked to be chatting about the diamond-fields, "Duitsland" and "Osteriek;" but he did what he could to gratify my eagerness to collect any birds peculiar to the locality. He recommended me to conceal myself behind his waggon-shed, and take a shot at a "besonderlik Vogel," that would be sure to settle on a half-dead tree close by; and, taking his advice,

I had the satisfaction of getting a specimen of a small bird of the darter tribe.

Many of the farmers distil a kind of spirit from peaches, which is known in the Transvaal as peach-brandy; it is similar in character, but considerably weaker and cheaper than that prepared from grapes in the western part of Cape Colony, and known by the name of cango.

## CHAPTER VI.

## RETURN JOURNEY TO DUTOITSPAN.

Departure from Wonderfontein—Potchefstroom again—A mistake—Expenses of transport—Rennicke's Farm—A course of birds—Gildenhuis—A lion-hunt—Hallwater Farm and Saltpan—A Batlapin delicacy—Rough travelling—Hebron—Return to Dutoitspan—The Basutos.

AFTER much enjoyment of the natural objects associated with the place, and with very pleasant recollections of its kindly-disposed owner, I prepared to quit Wonderfontein, which I had determined should be the limit of my first excursion, and to make my way back to Dutoitspan. As far as Bloemhof, I determined to take the same route by which I had come.

Being anxious that it should be by daylight that we recrossed the marsh which we had experienced to be so perilous by the bridge over the Mooi, at Potchefstroom, I resolved to push on all night, with the exception of a brief interval of rest.

During the period of the short halt, I was sitting almost lost in reverie, when I was roused by hearing what struck me as some peculiarly rich notes. One of my people drew my attention to a couple of large



birds, not a hundred yards off. It was too dark to distinguish what they were; and before we could creep near them they had taken alarm and had risen high in the air; but I am tolerably certain that I recognized the deep long-drawn notes, as they re-echoed in the stillness of the night, as the warning cry of the South African grey crane. Notes of this full, resonant character, that seem to reverberate as if from a sounding-board, so as to be audible at an unusual distance, are peculiar to a few kinds of birds, including the swans, which have a hollow breast-bone, through which the wind-pipe curves before ascending to the throat.

On the evening of the fourth day after quitting Wonderfontein, we re-entered Potchefstroom, and made our encampment at the same spot as before.

Several of the residents, with whom we had already made acquaintance, came and paid us a visit in our waggon. They told me that Mauch had stayed several times in Potchefstroom, and had found a liberal friend in Herr Fossmann. In the course of conversation they mentioned that dendrolites and other petrifications were to be found on the mountains that we could see towards the east; and, in answer to my inquiries about the interior of the country, they said that several times a year waggons laden with ivory, ostrich feathers, and large quantities of skins came from Shoshong, the town of the Bamangwatos, on their way to Natal. These waggons came down by the Limpopo, crossing it just above its junction with the Marico. They were the pro-

perty of two brothers named Drake, with whom, on my second journey, I made acquaintance at Shoshong, being called to attend one of them professionally. Among other bits of information that my visitors gave me, I learnt that two men were now staying at Potchefstroom, who had just returned from elephant-hunting in the Matabele country.

I had finished all the sketching that I wanted to do on my way up the valley, and consequently had ample leisure on the return journey for hunting, and for seeking to add to my scientific collection. As we crossed the plain, I took my good pointer Niger with me, and walked on one side of the waggon, at a distance of some three hundred yards. Niger was always of great service to me, and never off his guard in our foraging expeditions. I had brought him from the diamond-fields, on my baboon-hunting excursion. Whilst I kept my distance on one side, one of the rest of us marched along at about the same interval on the other, in the same way as a couple of scouts. The larger bustards (*Eupodotis caffra* and *kori*) were too shy to allow us to come near them, but we had some good sport amongst the grey and black lesser bustards, partridges, sand-grouse, plovers with red legs and speckled wings, and hoplopteri, which seemed to abound chiefly in the more marshy places.

A little incident that amused us as much as anything that transpired on the journey had the effect of detaining us a short time on our way between the Baken and Matschavi spruits. Gert was seated

upon the box of the waggon, and spied out a dark object, about two miles in advance to the left, which, as we approached nearer to it, was acknowledged on all hands to be an animal of some kind or other. Gert and the other native insisted that it was only a cow; but as there was no cowherd in charge, and no other cattle near by, the rest of us came to the conclusion that it could only be one of those old gnus, which, on account of their combative propensities, are from time to time banished from a herd, and thrust out to an isolated existence. We were all of one mind that the animal was of no service where it was, and that it had better find its way to some European museum. Accordingly, I started off, quite intent upon securing the prize. I was beginning to approach with the profoundest caution; but I very soon found that any delicacy on my part was quite superfluous; for before I got within three hundred yards of it, the brute had caught sight of me, and was tearing towards me at full speed. It was a great bull that came rushing onwards, with its huge horns lowered to the ground. I did not lose my presence of mind, but fired a couple of blank shots, which made the animal first pause and then retreat. I had to return to the waggon, somewhat chagrined, it is true, but compelled to join in the general laugh, and to own that the European eyesight was far outdone in keenness by that of the Korannas.

Without any mishap, we crossed the ford over the Schoenspruit, and made our camp on the open sward

between the stream and the aqueduct leading to Klerksdorp. Close beside us were two other waggons belonging to a Transvaal "transport-driver," who came to have a talk with us; and as we were taking a cup of coffee, he joined us at our repast. He told us that to the best of his belief the goods he was conveying included casks of French wine and brandy, jars of hollands, boxes of English biscuits, besides a variety of pickaxes, shovels, and other implements. Altogether his load weighed nearer six tons than five. The waggons had been loaded in the diamond-fields, and the driver's business was to take them to the gold-diggings. He informed us that, after paying all his expenses, he hoped to clear 140*l.* by this journey; so that we inferred that, including the dues paid for unlading at Port Elizabeth, the total cost of the transport of these goods thence to Pilgrim's Rest, in the Lydenburg district, could not be less than 300*l.* It is true that the distance between the two places, *viâ* Hope Town, Kimberley, Christiana, Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, and Middleberg, can scarcely be less than 1100 miles; but even for this the charge seems very exorbitant. Generally speaking, the transport-drivers no doubt make a good thing of their business; and it would seem to be only in exceptionally bad seasons, or when winter snow-storms on the paroo plains prove fatal to their oxen, that they ever suffer any serious loss.

Next morning we quitted Klerksdorp, proceeding towards the Estherspruit. It had not rained for



some days, and we were sanguine of finer weather ; but the nights were very sensibly colder than when we first started on our expedition.

Our mid-day halt was made, on the following day, beneath the shade of some of those many-stemmed dwarf trees, the branches of which, in complicated twinings, bend downwards to the ground. Immediately below them the soil was almost bare of verdure, and was penetrated by many mouse-holes ; but beyond there were slight depressions in the earth, where the grass grew luxuriantly.

Arriving early next day at the flowery valley of the Estherspruit, I devoted some hours to a search for insects, knowing that many of the smaller coleoptera would abound on the umbelliferous and liliaceous plants. We afterwards all went off in a body, armed with our guns, pincers, and the waggon-whip, to the rocks on the left of the valley. One of the results of this excursion was the capture of two snakes ; and, to judge from the width of the traces that I noticed, I should conclude that there were a good many puff-adders in the neighbourhood. It was precisely the place where they would be likely to thrive, as being haunted by reed-rats—the smaller of a brown colour, the larger of a grey hue with black stripes—as well as by swarms of the striped mice which build in the bushes. Reed-rats are venturesome creatures that from their shape might almost be called jumping-shrews. The largest of them are about the size of a common rat. They live in holes underneath rocks, their food consisting of

insects and larvæ. They are always on the alert, and move very nimbly; but when pursued, they have a habit of stopping to look round them, and this generally results in their being caught.

Although it was late in the afternoon when we reached the Matjespruit, we went on for another three hours before stopping for the night. The first halt next morning was at Klipspruit, where, about a mile and a half above us, we observed a waggon standing, with some horses grazing by its side. Behind the waggon was a tent, and I hoped that we should find we had come across a party of Dutch hunters, from whom we might obtain some fresh meat, in case our own sport should prove unsuccessful. My expectation was not disappointed, and we soon ascertained that the waggon was the property of the landowner, whose farm residence was higher up the valley, but who had brought his family out in this fashion for a holiday, to enjoy a little hunting. Not far from the waggon a number of boughs were stuck into the ground, attached to each other by festoons of bullock-thongs, on which were hanging long strips of meat undergoing the process of being converted into "beltong." On the ground was the carcass of a bull gnu, which a young Koranna was in the act of skinning.

Game seemed to be abundant in every direction. We saw a fight between two gnus. They charged each other with prodigious vehemence; but when they caught sight of us they obviously recognized us as common enemies, and making a truce between

themselves, scampered off with the rest of the herd.

After we had passed the Lionspruit and the Wolf-spruit, the following evening brought us to Ren-nicke's farm, the owner of which had not been over-courteous to us on our outward journey. Now, however, he not only raised no objection to our hunting in his woods, but sent his young son to act as our guide. Conducting us to the edge of the forest, the lad bade us stoop down and follow him quietly. About sixty yards further on we came to a low bank; it was not much above five feet high, and dotted over with a number of dwarf shrubs. The youth crept on very cautiously, and having looked down, motioned to us to follow him noiselessly, and to peep through the bushes. Pointing with his finger over the embankment, he whispered in my ear,—

“Kick, ohm!”<sup>1</sup>

I shall never forget the sight. I only wish I could have thrown a net over the whole, and preserved it in its entirety.

The bank on which we were crouching was the boundary of a depression, always overgrown with grass and reeds, but now full of rain-water. In the pool were birds congregated in numbers almost beyond what could be conceived; birds swimming, birds diving, birds wading. Perhaps the most conspicuous among them were the sacred ibises, of which there could not be less than fifty; some of

<sup>1</sup> “Look, uncle!”

them standing asleep, with their heads under their snow-white wings ; some of them striding about solemnly, pausing every now and then to make a snap at a smaller victim ; and some of them hurrying to and fro, dipping their bills below the water in search of fish. On the far side, as if utterly obli-



A BIRD COLONY.

vious of the outer world, a pair of grey herons stood motionless and pensive ; from amongst the weeds rose the unabated cackle of the wild ducks, grey and speckled ; mingling with this were the deep notes of the countless moor-hens ; while an aspect of perpetual activity was given to the scene by the



nimble movements of swarms of little divers. At a spot where the embankment descended sharply to the pool, several ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*) were wandering backwards and forwards, uttering their peculiar shrill whistle; and large flocks of sandpipers were to be noticed, either skimming from margin to margin of the water, or resting passively just where they had alighted.

The explanation of this enormous concourse of the feathered tribe was very simple. A storm of unwonted violence had washed down from the plain above into the hollow beneath myriads of worms and insects, lizards, and even mice, and so bountiful a banquet had attracted the promiscuous and immense gathering which had excited my wonder.

I suppose that one of us must have incautiously allowed himself to be seen or heard, for all at once a whole cloud of the birds rose above us in the air. Taken aback at the sudden flight, I fired almost at random, and was fortunate enough to bring down one ibis and one moor-hen. As we returned along the edge of the swamp, another of our party shot a wild duck.

On getting back to the waggon, I learnt from one of my people who had not joined us in the excursion to the bank, that the farmer had sent me an invitation to go and visit him. Although he did his best to be kind and hospitable, I found the arrangements of his house, which was built of brick, of the most simple and unpretending order. He complained bitterly of the losses he sustained every year

from the disease that broke out among his horses ; his own saddle-horse had not escaped the infection, and he was anxious to know whether I could give him any advice that might be serviceable to him.

We left Rennie's farm in time to arrive about dusk at "Gildenhuis Place," a farm which I have previously mentioned as lying on the southern slopes of the Maquassie Hills.

*À propos* of these Maquassie Hills, I may mention that on my third journey into the interior, two years subsequently to the present, I met an elephant-hunter, whose home was on their northern ridges ; he was a brave fellow, and told me of an episode in his career which I may be allowed to repeat, in association with my own experiences in the neighbourhood.

His name was Weinhold Schmitt, and he had spent his youth on one of the farms at the mouth of the Maquassie River. The northern passes of the hills were being terribly ravaged by four lions, that none of the Boers would venture to attack. At last, one day, a farmer's son, having gone out to fetch home three of his horses, came riding back in great excitement, with the intelligence that he had found their carcasses all lying half-eaten in the grass. The footmarks all around left no doubt that the lions had been the perpetrators of the deed.

The announcement stirred the Boers to action, and they determined to make up a party to hunt them down. Accordingly the farmer and six others, of whom Schmitt was one, mounted their horses ;







LION HUNT IN THE MAQUASI HILLS.



the son who had discovered the remains being elected leader. The lion-track was soon found; it led through a valley, across one hill, then another, and finally on to a level plain, where, not only was the grass very short, but the soil was so hard that the vestiges of the beasts could be no longer distinguished. After some hesitation, it was agreed that there was no alternative but to abandon the chase; and it is very probable that most of the party had found their ardour somewhat abated by their exertions, and were quite content to acquiesce in the proposal to return home. They broke up close to Schmitt's house, one of the party remaining behind for a minute to talk. All at once, to their vast surprise, they spied out, close to the farm, a lion and lioness, evidently lurking in ambush. Without losing an instant they rode towards them, their horses behaving bravely in the presence of their natural foes. In order to get a better aim at the beasts when they rose, Schmitt dismounted and led his horse a few steps by the bridle, then raising his gun to be ready to fire, he called to his partner to do the same. On turning his head, however, he found that his friend, instead of following him, had retreated for a good fifty yards, so that here he was alone confronting a couple of lions, with very likely several more in their rear. What could he do but retreat also? As he retired he kept his eye fixed upon the lions, who kept steadily following him, till just as he joined his companion, they suddenly turned tail and made off towards one

of the rock-funnels where the bushes were very thick.

The rest of the party had hardly got out of ear-shot, and were soon summoned back. Off they started, and determined to surround the hollow, taking especial care to watch the side nearest the hills for which the lions were almost sure to make. After a continuous holloaing and throwing of stones, the lioness was ultimately roused from her retreat. She did not rush straight towards the hills, as had been expected, but took a devious course, which, however, happened to bring her within range of no less than three of the pursuers. Simultaneously three shots rang in the air. Despite her efforts to escape, the lioness very soon sunk to the earth. Every shot had taken effect.

To my inquiry what became of the other lions, Schmitt replied that they withdrew to the district of the Barolongs, and were not heard of again for a long time; but he concluded by saying that even now, in very dry seasons, they will occasionally return from the far west.

It was at no great distance from the Maquassie River that we camped out next day, under the shade of some lovely acacias. The current, which we had found considerably swollen when we crossed it a few weeks before, was now reduced to a mere thread. On the same evening we arrived at the bank of the Bamboespruit, where we spent the night, as we did not care to cross the ford in the dark.

Our progress on the following day led us over the grass plains that I have already described, and past the two farms known as Rietfontein and Coetze's, both situated on the edge of saltpans. Arriving next day at Bloemhof, we stayed only a



HALLWATER FARM.

short time, starting off again for the Hallwater saltpan, thence to take a short cut to Christiana.

In 1872 the saltpan of Hallwater became notorious throughout South Africa, in consequence of the supposed discovery of the ruins of Monomotapa, a town situated in a district of the same name that existed two centuries ago. Old chronicles relate that it

was a domain that included pretty well the whole of South and South-central Africa; and that the population, through the medium of the natives on the coast, kept up an active trade with the Dutch and Portuguese. It was said that Portuguese missionaries from the east had worked amongst the inhabitants, and traditions from the same source represent that the towns were for the most part built near the gold-diggings, and that in the immediate neighbourhood of Monomotapa alone there had been no less than 3000 mines. Discoveries had now been made near the saltpan of some stone fragments of columns and mouldings, evidently bearing the marks of human labour; and as the distance between this spot and Cape Town corresponded accurately with what the records stated was the distance of Monomotapa from Cape Town, the inference was generally accepted that the true site of the ancient town had been revealed.

As the place was only a few miles to the north of my route, I was unwilling to pass it without a visit. It was near the Vaal, and nominally in the Transvaal Republic; but although I found an old Dutchwoman living there with her daughters, I learnt that it was virtually under the authority of the Korannas at Mamusa, a power which they retained until the beginning of 1879. It was just at the southern corner of a triangular tract of country that had its base towards Mamusa and the Harts River, and was claimed by the Batlapin chiefs, Gassibone and Mankuruane, at that time both independent, by old



David Mashon, the Koranna king of Mamusa, and by the Dutch. Amidst the perpetual disturbances that arose between these various claimants, the Dutch farmers who had settled on the land were invariably made the scape-goats.

Producing the best cooking-salt in the Bloemhof



KORANNA.

district, the saltpan yielded an income over and above that derived from the pasturage; so that the old woman who resided in the red-clay cottage with its roof thatched with grass, besides pasturing her cattle, employed several servants in collecting salt. There were a few huts close at hand, and two

holes about twelve feet deep opened the way for a spring, which was conducted by a trench to an artificial pond that supplied the people with their water. The pond, when I saw it, was filthily dirty; there were some red-legged and spurred plovers on its margin, but it was a spot where only tortoises and frogs could lead a contented existence. The foregoing sketch, which gives a fair view of the cottage and the huts, was taken two years afterwards, when I was on my third journey.

Soon after my visit, the white people took their departure, leaving the collection of the salt to the Korannas. To any traveller on his way to the interior, I should give the advice to lay in a good stock of salt at Hallwater; it is an indispensable article for preserving meat, and for preparing skins; there is none so good to be obtained elsewhere; and its price is something over a penny a pound. The Korannas who reside here support themselves chiefly by breeding bullocks and goats, but they find it worth their while to keep a few tumble-down wag-gons in which they may send salt to Potchefstroom, Bloemhof, and the diamond-fields, where they ordinarily sell it at the rate of 1*l.* for a "mute" of 200 lbs.

If a low dam were constructed close to the saltpan, just above the place where the dry channels open, a reservoir could very easily be provided, which would amply serve to irrigate their fields; it would, however, demand something more than Koranna energy to carry out any such scheme,

and it is very unlikely to be put into execution until the natives are debarred from the chance of indulging in the fire-water that paralyzes their faculties.

I had an opportunity during our short stay here of tasting the favourite national dish. Some Batlapins were passing through the place, and were roasting some locusts over red-hot ashes. As soon as they were sufficiently cooked, a good many of the men took them and devoured them entire; others pulled off the feet and the wings; the more fastidious stayed to take out the insides, and it was in this condition that they were offered to us. After partaking of the luxury, I think I may recommend a few locusts to any *gourmand* who, surfeited with other delicacies, requires a dish of peculiar piquancy; in flavour I should consider them not unlike a dried and strongly-salted Italian anchovy. It is only the true South African locust that is available for the purpose of food. I found that I could make a good use of them as fishing-bait, and that they answered much better than earth-worms. Thousands out of the swarms either fall into the rivers where they are greedily devoured by the fish, or are captured by birds of all sorts and sizes, from the tiny fledgling that can scarce hold them in its claws, to the great cranes and eagles that can consume them wholesale.

Anxious to investigate the district as thoroughly as I could, I proposed to reach Christiana by a short cut, and then, turning towards the west, to

regain the road near Hebron, thinking thus to traverse the chief part of Gassibone's territory from east-north-east to west-south-west. There was, however, no proper road in the direction in which I wanted to go, and the bushes not only obstructed our view, but were interspersed with large clumps of prickly acacias. I had no alternative but to acknowledge that my little scheme was frustrated, and to make my way to the Vaal as rapidly as I could.

On our way we saw a good many pairs of the fawn-coloured lesser bustards, and some duykerbocks and steinbocks; the duykerbocks were grazing quietly, the steinbocks only visible when startled from the bushes. There were traces of hartebeests, and of the larger gnus, probably the striped gnu (*Catoblepas taurina*, *Gorgon*), which led us to hope that the animals themselves might not be far off; but we were hardly in the mood either to be very keen upon the game, or to appreciate the beauty of the forest scenery as we otherwise should, because we were undergoing the inconvenience of a total want of water.

We came upon a Batlapin settlement, and, according to the advice of some of the residents who entered into conversation with us, we were to follow a certain footpath, which would lead us to a plain, whence we could make our way without difficulty. During the twenty minutes we rested, we noticed the women making a new hedge of thorns to protect their goats, and the men sprinkling some damp earth



on a couple of roughly-tanned hartebeest skins, to render them supple enough to make up into a dress.

The route we took on leaving seemed to be the most abundant in small game of all parts of Gassibone's territory. Most prominent were the pretty little steinbocks; but we came in sight of



BATLAPINS RETURNING FROM WORK.

three springbucks, which took flight without allowing us to come anywhere within gunshot of them, and a couple of secretary-birds, that were stalking up and down, devouring snakes and lizards, as if it were a solemn duty. Partridges, generally in pairs, were the most plentiful among the birds.

Although I felt the necessity of now travelling on as rapidly as possible, I could not resist the temptation, while I was still in the neighbourhood of the Vaal, to take one day's fishing. We had scarcely chosen our station, and lighted our fire, when the owner of a farmhouse, about half a mile off, came bustling down, and told us that he could not allow us to spend the night there; by quitting the road we had rendered ourselves liable to a fine of 5*l.* to the Republic. I made no remonstrance, setting off at once on our way; but brief as had been our halt it had enabled one of my companions to catch a sheatfish, weighing nearly three pounds, which at our next meal made an agreeable variety to our ordinary *menu*.

We reached Christiana about midnight, and were all disposed to enjoy a cup of tea after our long day's wanderings; but, to our great disappointment, we found that somehow or other the cooking apparatus had all been lost. To myself the loss was especially vexatious, as my money was so nearly exhausted that I could not afford to replace it. One of my friends, however, was good enough to relieve me of my difficulty.

Having spent the forenoon at Christiana, we spent the rest of the day in making our way to the little native kraal that we had passed as we came from Gassibone, after leaving Klipdrift. Hence to the diamond-fields our route would be over an entirely new district, the most interesting part of

which would be in the middle, amongst the hill-ridges by Hebron.

Right to the foot of the hills the country was flat. We passed several saltpans which, though small, had retained their water to a later period than usual, and were even now frequented by wild geese (*Chenelope*) and cranes. The river took a wide circuit towards the left, and it was a stiff two days' journey by which we traversed the secant of the curve. The magnificent grass plain that we crossed belonged already to the Transvaal; that on the other side, which was covered tolerably well with bushwood rising above the tall grass, was at that time claimed by Gassibone; but now both alike are included in the Transvaal. We saw, I think, more bustards than at any place I ever visited in all my travels; before us, behind us, in every direction, far and near, they seemed to swarm.

Taking Gert with me, I went into a wood adjoining our road in search of insects, and found some goat-chafers, as well as two kinds of bark-beetles (*Bostrichidæ*). Here and there we came across some skulls of gnus, sufficient in number to convince me that until quite recently they had frequented the district, though now they have retreated into the interior, and remain in the more northern plains between the Harts and Molapo Rivers, and in the plains of the Klipspruit, which, being more open, are far less favourable for antelope-stalking.

From Bloemhof we had been travelling nearly

parallel to the Free State shore, which, as far as Hebron, is higher than the opposite bank, and studded over with numerous farms. Rather more than eighteen miles from Christiana we came again upon the river, near a canteen where the goings-on seemed more than sufficiently wild and lawless. Here the road divided, one branch leading down the river to Hebron, the other crossing the stream by a passage known as the Blignaut's Pont, being the shortest and consequently most frequented route between the diamond-fields and the Transvaal. Wanting to explore the Hebron hills, as well as the deserted river-diggings adjacent to them, I chose the longer road, aware beforehand that it was also the rougher. Between Blignaut's Pont and Delportshope, near the confluence of the two rivers, there are, both in the main valley and in the valleys running into it, several insignificant villages and detached farmsteads, occupied by Korannas, who are English subjects; the men were to be seen everywhere, either lounging about in tattered European clothes, or sauntering with their dogs among the bushes, while their half-naked children were looking after the meagre herds.

Passing the canteen, we found the country beyond it rather more interesting, as we ever did when we approached the Vaal, where a practised eye will rarely fail to find plenty of sport, and a naturalist is sure to feel himself in an ample field for his studies. At the foot of the hills we came to a building, half hotel, half store, built partly of brick, and partly of



wood and canvas; it stood immediately on the Vaal, which here parts itself into several channels, and flows round a number of islands. It is really a picturesque spot, and is called Fourteen Streams. The Hebron heights commence here, and extend down the Vaal as far as Delportshope, having branches that stretch out towards the north, north-west, and north-north-east, in the direction of the Harts River, one ramification terminating in the Spitzkopf already mentioned, others reaching towards Mamusa and the hills that surround Taung, Man-kuruane's residence. All the range is thickly wooded, and it is intersected by the boundary-line between Griqualand West and the Transvaal; it commences about eight miles above Hebron, a former mission-station in the midst of the diamond-diggings. The formation of the hills consists of what is known as Vaal-stone, being greenstone containing almond-like lumps of chalcedony, covered with quartz-rubble and ferruginous and argillaceous sand. The bottom of the channel is so rocky that the river forms numerous rapids, so that the view upwards from Hebron is very charming; a wide panorama lay open before us, and we could see the hills on the horizon far away in Griqualand West and the Orange Free State, as well as the Plat Berg, a hill 800 feet high, with all its streamlets, pastures, and farm-lands.

But if the scenery was exquisite, the roads were execrable. The only pavement that nature had provided was huge blocks of stone, between which

the rain had washed away the soil and left deep gullies in the path. The waggon was in imminent danger of being overturned every few minutes, and it may be imagined that a progress under such circumstances was little to the advantage either of the baggage or my collection. As for ourselves the jolting was far too violent to allow any one of us to ride inside the waggon. The last hill into Hebron seemed to bring the peril to its climax; so steep was the descent and so sharp the curves that it made, that it was only by our combined efforts that we saved the waggon from being jerked completely over, or the oxen from rolling down the incline.

It was early on Easter Day that we were arriving at Hebron; the weather was cold and ungenial; the sky was overcast by leaden clouds drifted along by a keen south-west wind; it was just the morning to throw a chill over the most cheerful heart. Nor did the aspect of the remains of the once important diggings and station tend to enliven the spirits; ruins they could not be called, for the materials employed were of too transitory a character to allow the dwellings that were constructed to become worthy of such a description. The prospect would have been dreary at the best, but seen through the mists of a dank autumn morning, it was depressing in the extreme. Of the once populous Hebron, all that now remained was a shop or two, an hotel, a smithy, a slaughter-house, and a prison. Crumbling, weather-beaten walls of clay were standing or falling in every

direction, the chaos, however, being of such extent as to demonstrate how large the settlement at the diggings formerly had been. Hundreds of shallow hollows in the ground contributed their testimony to the number of workers who once had busied themselves in searching for the precious crystals. Thousands of tons of rubble were left that had once been grubbed out by mere manual labour, and still attested what must have been the multitude of hands that had sifted and resifted it in eager expectation of a prize; and yet out of the host of diggers perhaps scarcely two succeeded in making a fortune, and hardly one in a dozen did more than cover his expenses.

Not only did Hebron fall to decay as rapidly as it arose; its decline was even more rapid than the fall of Klipdrift, and many other diamond-mines. Its true geological character had been misunderstood. In the alluvial deposit where the diamonds were found, there was to be discerned a variety of particles washed down from the surrounding hills, or from districts higher up the river; besides fragments of greenstone, both large and small, there were bits of quartz of various kinds (milk-quartz, rose-quartz, quartzite, and quartzite porphyry); and besides these again there were peculiar oblong cakes of clay-slate of a yellow or pale green colour, covered with a black incrustation, probably caused by the decomposition of the outer surface; these clay-slate blocks, when broken, exhibited some beautifully-marked colours ranged in concentric bands, and were

erroneously supposed to be the mother-earth of the diamond.

After making some necessary purchases at one of the shops, I found that I had spent all my money except about sixteen shillings ; this was the whole sum with which I was to get back to Dutoitspan, whither it was consequently indispensable for me to make my way without losing an hour. Because it was a holiday, the ferry-man refused to take me across the Vaal himself, and all his men were tipsy ; accordingly, I resolved to try my luck at crossing the river by a ford.

I sent out one of my companions to explore, and he soon returned with the intelligence that he had discovered a practicable fording-place, about two miles lower down the stream. Forthwith we started off.

The proposed passage, as it was lighted up by the rays of the setting sun, looked favourable enough ; but the appearance was deceptive. Though the water was shallow, the current was strong ; the river-bed, too, was covered with rocks, which even in the open road would sorely have tried the strength of our oxen. Before we had got one third of the way across we found ourselves carried considerably below the ford, and our position rapidly becoming critical.

Our black drivers exerted themselves to the uttermost. They shouted, they flogged, they pulled ; but quite in vain ; the oxen were utterly unable to stir, and distressed by the strength of the current,





EASTER SUNDAY IN THE VAAL RIVER.



they began to be restive and to pull at their yokes and bridles. This caused the foremost pair to sink deeper and deeper, and it seemed only too certain that they must be drowned. Prompt action was necessary. I had hurt my hand, and was incapacitated from rendering much help; but I sprang from the waggon, followed by one of the rest; and although we could do nothing to rescue the vehicle from its situation, we succeeded in unharnessing the oxen, who struggled to the opposite side with the greatest difficulty. By the most arduous exertions, we went backwards and forwards, carrying the most valuable part of my collection ashore; but the waggon itself we were obliged to leave, with a large portion of its contents, in the bed of the river, until further assistance could be procured. Our labour entailed such fatigue that before darkness came on we were all ready to drop.

The uncertainty about our waggon and property made us pass an anxious night, and it was a great relief in the early morning to hear a distant cracking of whips, announcing that aid was at hand. Four Koranna waggons, drawn by six or eight pairs of oxen, soon appeared, and made their way quickly to our side of the river. A bargain was concluded, by which our waggon was to be brought to land for the sum of ten shillings, and the manœuvre was accomplished without difficulty or further accident.

On the third day after this exciting adventure I re-entered Dutoitspan. I had been away for two

months; but, in spite of having exercised the strictest economy, my journey had cost me 400*l.*; in fact, rather more. As matter of course, my absence had involved the loss of half my patients; many families had chosen another medical man, and many more, particularly the Dutch farmers, had left the diamond-fields and gone to the Free State. My attendance, however, was very soon called in to some severe cases of sickness, and I began at once to recover my position; and it was not long before I repaid the loan advanced to me for the cooking apparatus by my friend, who very shortly afterwards left Dutoitspan to settle in the colony.

The great object of my journey I conceived to be happily accomplished. I had wanted to gain experience as to the best mode of travelling, and to get some insight into the character of the country, and into the domestic habits both of the natives and of the settlers. I was anxious to acclimatize myself for future journeyings, and the ungenial damp and stormy season had put my constitution to a very fair test. The heavy rains had involved the loss of a good many objects of interest, but I had nevertheless succeeded in bringing back thirty skeletons, about 1500 dried plants, one chest of skins of mammalia, two chests of birds' skins, more than 200 reptiles, several fish, 3000 insects, some fossils, and 300 specimens of minerals, not to mention a number of geological duplicates, which I procured chiefly from the river-diggings to present to several museums and schools in Europe.



It is almost needless to add that on this trial trip I gained many useful hints. In the first place, I learnt that a saddle-horse was indispensable for any future and more prolonged excursion. Continual occasions were ever arising when its services would be most acceptable, either in driving back the draught-oxen that had strayed away, or in exploring points of interest at a distance without bringing the waggon to a standstill, or in getting readily within reach of game. And another thing my experience taught me—I must have much more efficient weapons for my use.

Before setting out, I had made arrangements to retain my little tent-house in Dutoitspan, opposite the court of justice, and thither I now returned. The waggon was pushed up against the back of the house, and the oxen were sold. They brought in enough to discharge my two months' rent, which amounted to 10*l.*, to pay 3*l.* for my servants' wages, and to leave me a little money in hand for my immediate personal necessities.

For the next six months I settled down hard to my practice; and it was a busy time for me. There are very few places in the world where a doctor does not, more or less, become the intimate friend of his patients, and thus finds continual opportunities for an interesting study of character; but in such a sphere of work as the diamond-fields, in their early days, these opportunities were unusually many. Where invalids were often confined to the most limited space—families of tolerable means frequently all

living in a single tent—a medical man, whether he would or no, was brought face to face with the details of domestic life, not only in its brighter, but in its more trying aspect; and in such cases he would ever and again have to become an adviser, an advocate, and sometimes an arbitrator. At times it seemed almost easier to face a wild beast than to speak the proper word of counsel or caution to some self-willed grey-headed man. Prague, with its hundred towers, and the richest practice it could offer, would have failed to give me in years a fraction of the experience that I gained in this brief interval.

Of the thousands of black men who at that time acted as servants in the diamond-fields, the majority belonged to the Basuto, Zulu, and Transvaal Bechuana tribes. They earned from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* a week, and rarely stayed more than six months at the diggings; for as soon as they had saved enough to buy a gun—which would seldom cost more than 4*l.*—and about 5 lbs. of powder at 3*s.* per lb., a few bullets and caps, a woollen garment or two, and perhaps a hat, they considered themselves quite in a position to return to their own homes and buy themselves a wife. A servant had to be bound to his master by a certificate drawn up by a proper official, and this had to be renewed at every change of situation, a penalty being imposed when the document was not forthcoming. Whenever a servant wished to complete his engagement, and to return home, the employer, if the man's conduct had







METING BETWEEN BASUTOS RETURNING FROM THE DIAMOND FIELDS AND OTHERS GOING THITHER.



been satisfactory, would give him a certificate to the local authorities, that he might be permitted to buy a gun. The certificate was practically equivalent, therefore, to a gun licence; and thus it had been brought about that many hundreds of natives, both in the colony and in their own independent states, were in possession of fire-arms, with liberty to use them.

As the Basutos, whom I have just mentioned, formed in 1872 and 1873 the larger contingent of the coloured labourers, I should like to say a few words about them, thus including them in my general survey of the family of the Bantus.

I divide the natives of South Africa into three races—the Bushmen, the Hottentots, and the Bantus. To the first belong the Bushmen proper; to the second the Hottentots proper, the Griquas, and the Korannas; whilst the third includes the colonial Kaffirs, Zulus, Basutos, Bechuanas, Makalakas, and other tribes, about forty in all; besides which there are transition types between the races, as, for instance, between the Bushmen and the Bantus. It is a subject, however, upon which I have no scope to enlarge here.

Of these tribes, we have already made some acquaintance with the Korannas and two tribes of the Batlapins. The Basutos reside chiefly on the Cornetspruit and the Caledon River, extending thence to the Drakensbergen; they consequently occupy the country bounded by the Free State, Cape Colony, Nomansland, and Natal. Their lan-

guage is called Sesuto. Since their war with the Orange Free State they have lived under English jurisdiction, whilst their neighbours on the west, the southern Barolongs, another branch of the Bantus, have become subjects of the Orange Republic.

In agriculture, the Basutos have advanced more than any other tribe. Next to them in this respect come the Baharutse, in the Marico district in the Transvaal, of whom I shall have to speak subsequently, in the narrative of my second journey. The Basuto farms are very small, but they produce hundreds of thousands of bushels of corn, and abound in horses and cattle. There is no doubt that both the Basutos and the Baharutse are yearly increasing in affluence.

Not long ago, when the most southerly of the Basuto chiefs collected all the unruly spirits he could find—runaway servants, thieves, fugitive Gaikas and Galekas, the residium of the last Kaffir war—and attempted to plunder, and to revolt from British rule, all the rest of the Basutos remained faithful, and voluntarily sent 2000 armed horsemen into the field on the side of the English.

With a few unimportant exceptions, the structure of the Basuto huts, and the general character of their work, correspond with those of the Bechuanas, and in their handicraft they are about up to the average of the Bantu tribes. In one respect they differ from the rest of their kin: they manufacture carved wooden fetishes, painting them red and black.

Thaba Bosigo is their most important kraal; Thaba Unshee being that of the Barolongs in the Free State. They have penetrated as far north as the confluence of the Chobe and the Zambesi.



## CHAPTER VII.

## FROM DUTOITSPAN TO MUSEMANYANA.

Preparation for second journey—Travelling-companions—Departure—A diamond—A lovely evening—Want of water—A conflagration—Hartebeests—An expensive draught—Gassibone's kraal—An adventure with a cobra—A clamorous crowd—A smithy—The mission-station at Taung—Maruma—Thorny places—Cheap diamonds—Pelted by baboons—Reception at Musemanyana.

IN the course of the six months that I now spent in Dutoitspan, I made acquaintance, amongst my patients, with three German families, all nearly related, who were of great assistance to me in my preparations for my second journey into the interior. It was, in fact, owing to the kindness of the head of one of these households that, after I had got together all but 120*l.* of the 900*l.* that the expenses of the expedition would require, I was enabled to procure on credit from one of the mercantile houses of Dutoitspan goods to the amount of 117*l.*, for which I should otherwise have had to pay ready money; thus I was in a position to start four weeks before the time that I had originally contemplated.

My friend Eberwald, after trying his luck as a





A MOONLIGHT EVENING IN THE FOREST.



diamond-digger in the Old de Beer's mine with indifferent success, had returned, and expressed his willingness to accompany me again. He said that he should like to see a bit more of Africa, and would assist me in any way he could. I offered him what he had undertaken before—the supervision of the waggon, an office which he executed conscientiously and well.

It was not by any means my intention that this should be my chief journey. I rather regarded it as a second trial trip, on a more extensive scale than the first. I contemplated making it cover half the distance between the diamond-fields and the Zambesi, but I meant it to be only a further preparation for an expedition right away into Central Africa.

Amongst my patients I had come across a young man, a native of Silesia, who seemed a likely man to assist me, and who professed himself quite ready to accompany my party. He was considerably involved in debt; but in order to secure his services, I became security with his creditors. Finding, however, his obligations all wiped off, he suddenly disappeared altogether. At the time when the diamond-fields were full of doubtful characters, such incidents were by no means uncommon.

There was my other young friend, F., who was quite in the mind to go with us again. My experience of his character rather made me hesitate at renewing any engagement; but yielding to Eberwald's intercession on his behalf, I consented to

give him another chance of showing whether he could be relied on.

As a third associate Eberwald introduced me to a friend of his, Herr Boly, a Hanoverian, of whom he spoke in the highest terms. I was quite ready to attend to the recommendation, and I am happy to add that I never had the least cause to regret admitting him of our number.

A liberal friend had kindly provided me with a team of eight oxen and a Griqua driver, so that on the whole I was far better equipped than on my previous journey. I had also procured a sextant, the use of which was explained to me by an old ship's officer, but unfortunately I was unable to turn either the instrument, or the instruction I had received about it, to much account, as I was baffled in all my inquiries to obtain a copy of the Nautical Almanack.

It was on the 3rd of November, 1873, that our party left Dutoitspan : it consisted of myself, Eberwald, Boly, F., and the Griqua, besides nine dogs, including my faithful Niger, my saddle-horse, and the eight oxen.

I made my way to Klipdrift by the shortest route, designing thence to travel up the Vaal Valley to Hebron, whence I intended to turn off short to Gassibone's town, and continue my journey on to Taung, the residence of the Batlapin king Mankuruane, which I had been unable to reach before. In this way I should explore the right-hand bank of the Vaal in parts that would be new to me,



and I should cross Gassibone's district from south to north, whereas previously I had traversed it from the west, somewhat towards the east.

Our first day brought us to Old de Beer's farm. On the following morning we came to some dilapidated remains a few miles from the site of the mission-house near the station at Pniel, to which I have already alluded. Before beginning to descend to the river, I noticed a depression in the plateau, now transformed into a lake nearly square, and about half a mile across; a number of black storks and cranes were enjoying themselves at the edge of the water. We went on by the road recently hewn by the convicts through the rocks, thus avoiding the loose sand that had given us so much trouble on our previous journey, arriving at night at the spot where, in February, we had endured so much discomfort. To my surprise I found the roads in a much better condition than they were then, and after about six hours' travelling, we reached the bank of the river next morning; but we had somehow or other sustained the loss of two of our dogs.

The water was so low that the ferry-man declined, on account of the weight of the waggon, to take us across the river in his boat, but pointed out to us a ford lower down, by which we could cross. We did not forget our experiences on Easter Day, and accordingly set about our proceedings very circumspectly. The river was now reduced to a channel scarcely twenty feet wide and hardly more than

two feet deep, but although on either side the bed was full of great boulders of greenstone as large as one's head, it was here smooth and sandy, so that we crossed with perfect ease, and made our halt near Klipdrift, on the other side.

While we were resting, Pit, our Griquaman, surprised me by bringing me a diamond weighing about a quarter of a carat. During the time the oxen were grazing he had been lying on the ground rummaging over some sand that had been left as sifted by the diggers, and his trouble had been rewarded by the discovery of the little stone, which I was very pleased to accept as an addition to my collection; but some time afterwards I was grieved to find that I had lost it, when or how I could never tell.

Starting again the same evening, we travelled on till it was quite late, leaving the Vaal, which took a bend to the south-south-east, on our right. The road lay over bushy heights, covered with rocks and crowned with alluvial flats often a mile in length, and separated by tracts of soil of the same character, sloping down towards the river.

About four o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th we arrived at Hebron, but passed on without stopping, as I wanted, while it was still daylight, to reach the spot where we should have to leave the Hebron and Christiana road, and turn off towards Gassibone. Even in the few months since we were here the town had manifestly gone still further to decay. The bad state of the roads compelled us to

stop sooner than I intended, and we did not start next morning until we had met with a young Batlapin, who agreed to act as guide. At noon we took our rest under the shade of a spreading mimosa, after which we made an unusually long march, and encamped for the night in the open plateau.

A landscape of peculiar beauty lay outstretched around us. The Hebron heights and their dark spurs veiled in purple haze bounded the horizon to the south and west, whilst to the north and east the vast plains were shrouded in the distance by a deepening tint, a sure token that the night would be one of those that in South Africa are ever to be remembered for their splendour. A soft air was swaying the flowery grass, of which the seeds had been sown by the wind and imbedded in the soil by the feet of the game. A beauteous tint began to tinge its surface, and soon a gorgeous stream of sunlight broke forth, its golden rays illuminating the far-off east. Was not that the direction of my cherished home? Was it not irradiating the very scenes of my childhood and beaming on the dwellings of my kindred? I sunk into tender contemplation, and our camp, the plain, the watchfire, Gassibone, nay, Africa itself, were all forgotten! It was a peaceful evening, followed by a peaceful night, as if to fortify us for the anxiety which we little expected on the morrow.

The figure of our black driver passed between me and the glowing light, and recalled me to myself.

It was time to retire; the oxen that had been grazing at a distance had returned, and of their own accord had reclined on the ground close to the waggon; spreading out our coverings, all of us lay down upon the grass, and sheltered by its stems and breathing its fragrance, we were soon enjoying our well-earned slumber.

In good time next morning we were again on our way. Judging from what the guide told me, I reckoned that the distance to Gassibone's quarters must be about thirty-five miles, but I was somewhat disconcerted on hearing that on our way we should find water extremely scarce. It was some satisfaction to know that we had a sufficient supply for our midday meal, but any intermediate draught to quench our thirst between times, was not to be thought of.

Proceeding east by north we soon came to a region where we could well believe our guide when he told us that not a drop of rain had fallen for months, and the further we advanced the more parched and yellow did the grass become; though the spring was coming on, we saw but few sprouting blades, and as we went on we found fewer still; the young leaves of the amaryllis, too, that had sprung up here and there, were quite withered by the drought.

A gradual ascent led us up a small plateau, vegetation still becoming more and more scanty. A light breeze swayed the tall dry grass-stems like a field of corn and was hailed by us with delight as



it moderated the heat, and gave a sort of freshness to our fevered lips. The oxen had not tasted water for thirty hours; their languor was excessive, and up hill they could only climb at a snail's pace. For two hours we patiently followed the footpath, our guide informing us that when we reached the highest point of the ascent, we should have to bend a little to the right, and should then come upon some wheel-tracks made by the waggons loaded with wood, which the morena (king) would generally allow to pass through his territory to the diamond-fields. By following these tracks, always keeping to the left, and travelling without stopping, we might perhaps reach some native huts in the course of the night. It could not be said that the communication was very encouraging.

We were obliged to take a short rest, and while we were looking about us, we noticed a thick cloud overhanging the plains. Every one, natives included, settled that it was a huge swarm of locusts. I was occupied with my own matters, and soon forgot all about it. A sudden cry from one of the people in the wagon very shortly afterwards recalled my attention to what we had seen, and on looking again I beheld a sight that could not fail to fill me with amazement and alarm. The plain right in front of us, over which we were on the point of passing, was one sheet of flame. The cloud that we had observed turned out to be a volume of smoke rising above the bushwood, that was all on fire. The conflagration was perhaps five miles from us,

but it was exactly across our path, and we might well feel dismayed.

The first among us to regain composure was our temporary guide, who pointed out that the waggon-tracks of which he had spoken were hardly twenty yards ahead; at least, we could reach them. We looked to the right; we looked to the left: on the right the ground was level, but it only led to a chain of hills, the base of which was already licked by the flames; on the left was a hollow which was just beginning to catch fire, and beyond it a little hillock some forty feet high. Our perplexities seemed only to increase; the oxen were too weary to allow us for one moment to think of retreating; they could not hold out for a mile; and yet something must be done; the fire was manifestly advancing in our very face. We discussed the possibility of setting fire to the bushwood close in front of us, and thus, as it were, forestalling the flames; but the scheme was not to be thought of; the waggon, which contained some thousands of cartridges, 300lbs. of gunpowder, besides a quantity of spirits, was already so heated by the sun that we could scarcely lay our hands upon it; a single spark of fire would in an instant involve it in complete destruction, and the risk was too great.

My eye still rested upon the little hill. I saw that the wind was blowing the flames in a direction away from it, and aware that delay would be fatal, and that some action must be taken, I gave my







THE PLAINS ON FIRE.



decision that at all hazards we must make for it. Every one agreed that I was right, and, rushing to their posts, did what they could to urge on the bullocks without a moment's loss of time. Mounting my horse, I hurried on in front, but on reaching the hollow that had to be crossed before the place of safety upon the hill could be gained, I almost gave a cry of despair on seeing its character; it was not only overgrown with bushwood and very steep, but was strewn in all directions with huge blocks of stone: if only the waggon-wheel should strike against one of these, who could doubt the consequences?

With all his might, Boly cracked his whip and shouted vigorously, and succeeded in making the oxen drag the waggon with unexpected speed; they were all flecked with foam as they pulled their oscillating load behind them; every moment it seemed as if it must overbalance. At the bottom of the hollow it was absolutely necessary to take a rest; the beasts must have time to recover from their exertions; they were all more or less torn by the bushes, and my friends, too, were much scratched about the hands and face. The heat was becoming intense. My horse was not naturally a nervous animal; but it trembled till it could hardly stand, and the hardest part of our struggle had yet to come.

A flake of fire fell within fifteen yards of us, and warned us that it was time to be on the move. "Hulloh an! Hulloh an!" roared the driver, and

the bullocks once again strained themselves to their work. Scarcely, however, had they gone ten paces, when the smoke puffed against their eyes, and all bewildered, they swerved into a track where the waggon must inevitably have been overturned; it was a critical moment, but happily one of my party, who was walking at my side, saw the danger, and, rushing at the heads of the leaders, turned them by a desperate effort into the right direction. The instinct of self-preservation now redoubled every one's efforts; onwards we pushed, through clouds of smoke, amidst falling ashes, amongst fragments of red-hot bark, till we were within fifty yards of the place of safety. So heated was the atmosphere, that I momentarily expected to see the canvas of the waggon break out into a blaze.

The bullocks once more gasped and tottered beneath their yoke; with painful toil they made their way for another thirty yards; it was doubtful whether they could accomplish the remaining twenty.

One more moment of rest, followed by one more frantic paroxysm of exertion, and all was safe! Just in time we reached the hill that overlooked a hollow, beyond which was the expanse of black burnt grass. I ungirthed my horse, my people all flung themselves exhausted on the ground; their faces were crimson with heat; their limbs were bruised by their frequent falls; their eyes seemed starting from their sockets. Poor Pit, who had scrambled along

with the front oxen, had his shirt torn from his back, and his chest was smeared with blood from many a wound, but fortunately none that was very deep.

The fatigue and excitement that we had undergone demanded some repose, but the miseries of the thirst we were enduring did not permit us to wait long. As soon as possible we started off again; we had no difficulty in finding the proper tracks; and fortunately for our worn-out team, which had to pause about every hundred yards, the ground was quite level. Evening began to draw on; to alleviate our sufferings we were obliged to moisten our burning lips with vinegar; we were too depressed to speak, and kept a moody silence. Once Pit broke the stillness by calling out to us to look to the right; we raised our eyes just to notice that three hartebeests were almost in the road before us; but so excessive was our languor that no one seemed to care that they were there.

While I was in Africa three kinds of hartebeest antelopes came under my observation. The common hartebeest, found throughout South Africa, as far as the Zambesi, but most frequently in the bushy parts of the southern and central districts; the sesepi, or Zulu hartebeest, which is found in the same districts, but north of the Zambesi as well; and a third species, which appears closely allied to the common hartebeest.

I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to the

sesephi, which in various respects resembles the buntbock; but I may here say a few words about the hartebeest proper.

From the effect of its elongated head and angular horns, the common hartebeest may perhaps be pronounced the ugliest of all the antelopes. I myself found it most frequently between the Vaal and the Soa Salt Lake, though I was told that it is quite



HARTEBEEST.

common in the east and north-east of the Transvaal, and in the northern parts of Cape Colony. Being less timid than other kinds, it is more exposed to destruction; it lives in small herds, often inhabiting the same districts as the striped gnu. The probable reason of its comparative rarity in the more northern regions of Central South Africa is that the Baman-



gwatos are especially partial to its skin for their dresses, and it has consequently been much sought for, till its numbers have diminished.

In places where trees are not too numerous, it is generally hunted on horseback. When pursued, its motion is very awkward, probably on account of the



HEAD OF THE HARTEBEEST (*Antilope Caama*).

unusual height of the shoulders. Although this species of hartebeest (*Antilope Caama*) is the commonest of the three kinds I have mentioned, I am under the impression that it is a rarity in European menageries; indeed, I am not aware that the trans-

Zambesi kind has ever been represented there at all. In the country of the central Bechuanas, and in the forests, they are approached under cover of the foliage, and are usually found on the borders of glades, and anywhere where there is a tolerably open range for their view. By white hunters they are often chased promiscuously with elephants, ostriches, and other wild game.

So obscured were all the waggon-tracks by the ashes left by the fire, that it was a matter of no little difficulty for our guide to distinguish the proper way towards the native settlements. The trials of the day seemed never coming to an end. Our thirst became more and more painful, our throats being parched, and our tongues cleaving to our mouths. Our sufferings enforced a melancholy silence. Any hope we had entertained that the heat would moderate as daylight waned, proved quite fallacious, as the evening was exceptionally hot, and the breeze that had been blowing was completely lulled. At last, however, the distant baying of some dogs caught our ear, and never was any sound more welcome; and when, soon afterwards, the monotonous chant of the native girls, accompanying themselves on their wooden castanets, could be distinguished, it was as music unsurpassed in sweetness. Here at length was the promise of relief from our tortures.

Lights from the hut-fires were soon visible. Leaving the waggon standing unguarded where it was, every one of us, guide included, rushed im-







WOODS AT THE FOOT OF THE MALAU HEIGHTS.



patiently to the huts. A lot of yelping curs ran out to meet us; the singing of the women ceased, and one solitary man advanced in our direction, evidently astonished that a waggon should be passing at such an hour. Seizing him by the arm, I shouted in his ear, "Meci, meci;" startled by my vehemence he uttered a loud cry, probably of alarm, for our black guide burst into a fit of laughter. However, I had made him understand me, and he went into his hut, whence he soon returned, bringing a huge horn full of stinking stuff, which he declared was his entire supply of water, and for which he demanded half-a-crown. Neither in quality nor in quantity did this suffice us, and after some further parleying, we made him comprehend what we wanted, when he and two of his wives brought us out some bowls of milk, which we speedily emptied. After our thirst was thus quenched we began very shortly to have a sense of hunger, and lost no time in kindling a good fire and getting a leg of mutton, which we watched while it was roasting. We sat and talked over the steppe-burning, and our happy deliverance from our alarming predicament. To the south we could still see the glow in the sky, which made it certain that the fire was not yet subdued in that quarter.

These fires occasionally arise from accidents, and from carelessness, but in districts where there are few shrubs and trees to be injured, the farmers in dry winters not unfrequently purposely set fire to the

steppes, with the object, they say, of promoting the growth of the grass. It is known, too, that ostrich-hunters were formerly in the habit of causing these conflagrations so as to get a crop of tender-sprouting grass, which is always attractive to the birds, who delight in the young herbage. Fires of this kind are likewise to be seen from time to time amongst the low scap- (sheep-) bushes, rarely exceeding eighteen inches high, on the plains both in the Colony and the Free State, and on dark nights the glowing streaks that mark the heavens are thus accounted for.

We had hardly travelled half an hour next morning before we discovered that the waggon-tracks that we had been following had brought us into the same road that we had used on our previous journey from Gassibone to the Vaal. Our good-natured guide here took leave of us, and we descended one of the passes leading to Gassibone's kraal. The defile was wide, but became much narrower at the farther end; the sides, although they were covered with luxuriant vegetation, yet permitted the terrace-like stratification of the hills to be distinctly traced. The flat parts were overgrown with wild mimosas, and had an aspect not unlike the cherry-gardens planted on our own hill-sides in Europe.

It was about noon when we reached the kraal. Passing through it, we encamped under some trees in a hollow close to the bed of a torrent. The ground was covered with a rich sward

that on account of its sheltered situation and its proximity to the water had retained a pleasant freshness.

Proceeding along one of the passes beyond the settlement, we ascended some high land, whence we could see that dark clouds were beginning to gather. Pit told us that the rain for which we had longed so much was certainly now coming, and after a short consultation, we decided to halt at once, and unyoked our oxen about three miles after starting. Pit was right enough; the clouds rolled on in rapidly increasing masses, and before another hour had passed the rain came down in such a deluge as I have rarely seen before or since. We would have given much for such a downpour on the previous day.

The storm lasted for about two hours; it took some time for the water to clear off; but when it ceased to foam along in torrents, and began to trickle down more gently from the hillsides, we thought we might venture to proceed another stage, though it was getting on towards sundown. The defile along which we passed was quite narrow, except in one or two places where it opened out into a plain. Niger, my dog, was on in front; he was foraging in the long grass, when suddenly he started off in pursuit of something that we could not see. There was a strangeness in his movements that perplexed me; he kept springing forwards, and as suddenly retreating, and I was curious to find out what was disturbing him. I stopped the waggon,

and when I approached the dog I found him in front of a great tubular ant-hill, barking furiously. The other dogs began to bark in concert. I soon saw the cause of the animal's excitement; a great yellow cobra-capella, nearly seven feet long, was



NIGER AND THE COBRA.

winding itself round the ant-hill; its neck was all inflated, and it was hissing vehemently. A moment was enough for me; I put a charge of small shot clean into the reptile, and had the satisfaction of dragging it out from the bushwood, a notable addition to my naturalist's collection.

In the course of the evening we came to the



broad valley which had been described to us as the shortest route to Taung, and, leaving the main pass, we turned into it towards the north, and settled ourselves for the night.

The day following the storm was dull and chilly. Our road lay first across a hollow, with some Batlapin huts on one of its bare slopes; then through an opening in the hills to a dense wood, and thence into another hollow, split up into about a hundred little allotments about fifty yards square.

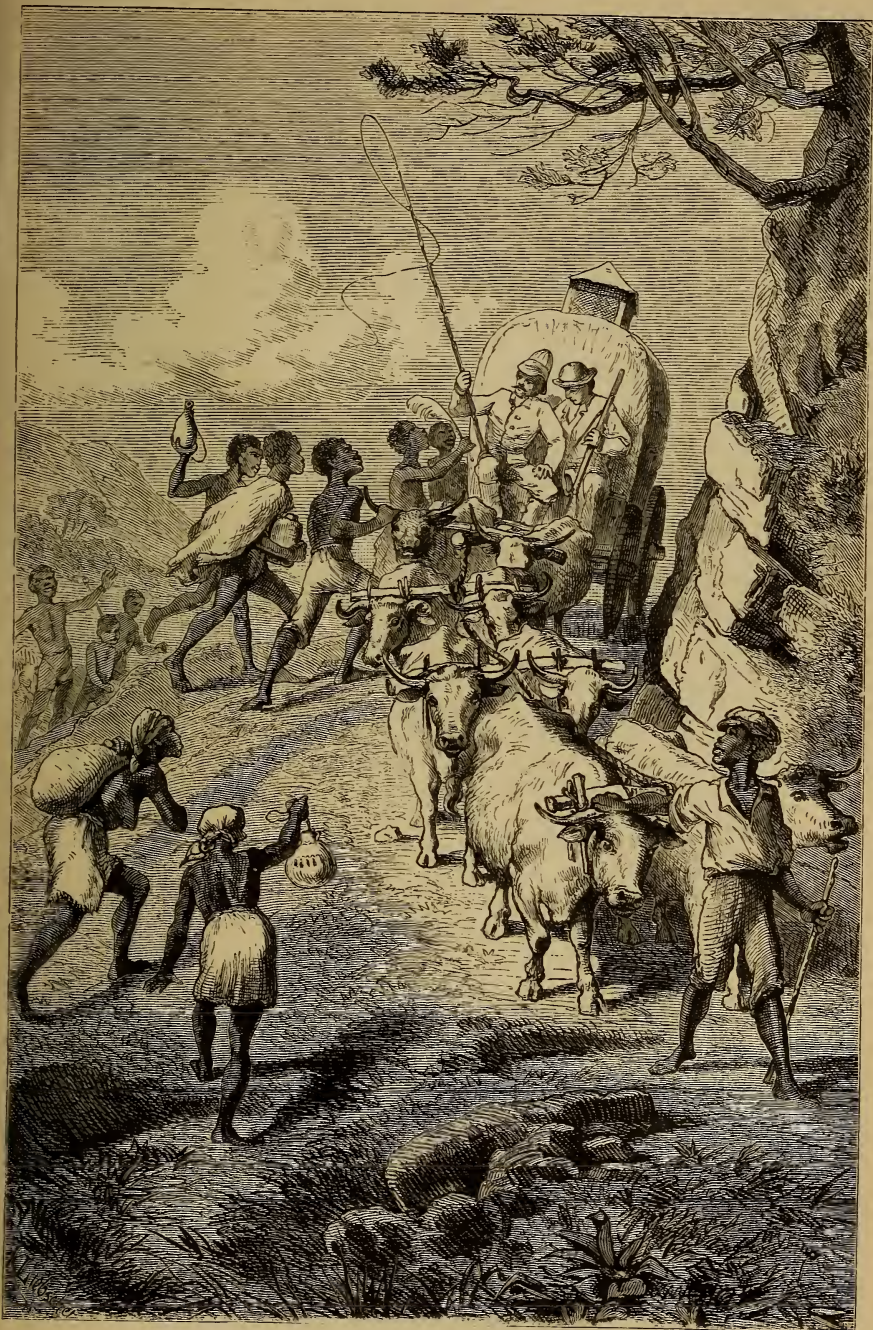
It took us the best part of an hour and a half to get over this ground; but when we mounted the high ground beyond, we found ourselves in sight of the Harts River valley, which was right before us. The bill-ridges round Taung seem to form a sort of network. None of them rise more than 800 feet above the level of the river, but the scenery which they form is rather attractive. To reach the ford we had to skirt the first ridge, and then bend northwards.

After a former ruler, Taung is also called Mahura's Town. It lies under the shelter of a rocky height, a short distance from the right bank of the river, where a rush of yellow water was streaming down the bed, which in many places was overgrown with reeds.

As we wended our way down the slope, we came within view of another native village. The mere sight of our waggon served to put its population into a state of extreme excitement. A whole crowd

of men, in tattered European clothes, except now and then one in a mangy skin, followed by as many women, all naked except for little leather aprons, and by a swarm of children as naked as when they were born, came shouting eagerly towards us. They were nearly all provided with bottles, or pots, or cans, and cried out for brandy. "Suppy, suppy, bas, verkup Brandwen!" they repeated impatiently. They had brought all manner of things to barter for spirits. One man held up a jackal's hide, another a goat-skin; another offered us bullock-thongs; yet another had brought out a bullock-yoke; and some of them had their home-made wooden spoons and platters to dispose of to us. It was a disgusting scene. We tried to treat the whole matter with contempt, and to take no notice of their demand; but when we attempted to drive on, their importunities waxed louder than ever. They caught hold of the bridles, and pushed the oxen back, becoming ever more and more clamorous. One of the men made what he evidently imagined would be an irresistible appeal, by offering me a couple of greasy shillings. They next tried to bribe us with some skins of milk, which the women were made to bring out from the huts, and they were driven to despair when they found that the offer of a goat that they dragged forward was not accepted. Their screechings and shoutings were of no avail; not a drop of fire-water was to be extorted from me. We had almost to beat them off before they would allow us to proceed. A few persevered in following









us to the ford, and made a final effort to secure one bottle by a private negotiation, out of sight of their neighbours. They confidentially offered five shillings for the bottle; but I was inexorable.

The entire width of the river was here about sixty yards, but it had a rocky island in the middle, so that practically there were two streams to cross. The current, after the rain, was still so strong that every one seemed to think it would be prudent to delay the passage for a little longer. I did not share the apprehension, but was quite willing to acquiesce in the universal opinion. Under a large acacia, a short distance from where we were waiting, stood a waggon and a couple of huts, which we could see at once were occupied by a white family; some broken wheels, some old iron, and some blacksmith's tools lying about, betokened the occupation of the owner. He was one of two smiths who resided in the place. He had taken up his quarters here close by the ford, the other having settled near the entrance of the glen, by the mission-station. He complained that the diminution of the population, and the general impoverishment of the place, had seriously interfered with his business; but he had nevertheless succeeded in getting together a goodly herd of sheep and cows. The other smith might have done equally well, but he had spent all his earnings in brandy. Naturally, there was not much good feeling between the rivals.

In answer to our inquiries about the ford, we were told that all the traders, giraffe and ostrich-hunters,

missionaries, or any one who wanted to take the shortest cut through Kuruman, crossed by it; but, somehow or other, nearly every third waggon managed more or less to come to grief. The chief was disinclined to do anything to improve the ford; nor, if he had been disposed, would it have been of much good, as the stream, every time it was swollen, brought down such accumulations of sand, soil, and stones, that the character of the channel was perpetually altering.

Acting under the advice of the blacksmith, who pronounced the ford perfectly safe, we crossed in the afternoon, reaching the opposite side without the least difficulty, and after a short rest went on to Taung. Without pausing in the native quarter, we proceeded to the mission-house, a stone building, with a gabled roof thatched with grass, standing in a nice little garden. On entering we found ourselves face to face with a gentleman about thirty years of age, with a long light beard. He looked at us at first with some surprise, especially at my friend F., who was carrying arms. He was the resident missionary, Mr. Brown. I soon introduced myself, and explained the object of my journey, and he at once gave us a very kindly welcome, apologizing for the simplicity and limited extent of his accommodation. He mentioned that he was engaged upon the compilation of a Sechuana dictionary, a work that has since been published. After ascertaining that we intended making a short halt at Taung, he invited me to bring the waggon into his enclosure,

saying that I should thus escape being pestered by the natives for brandy. Even Mankuruane himself was often very troublesome to strangers, and the protection of the mission-house would be a shelter from annoyance. Just at present, however, the chief was not at home, having gone to Kuruman on a visit to another chief, named Mora. Mrs. Brown and her children were also at the same place; they had gone to spend a few weeks with the wife of the missionary there. The place altogether was very picturesque, being, both for its pleasantness and for its population, the foremost of all the Batlapin towns. It formerly contained nearly 6000 inhabitants, but by the year 1879 it was not so large by one-third.

We resumed our journey on the afternoon of the 12th. We took a north-north-east course, and at no great distance from the Harts River came to the Barolong kraal, called by the name of its chieftain, Maruma. The excessive rainfall must have been confined to a very limited area; for, although we had had it so heavily, the little river here was quite dry, and there was hardly any water at all to be had except in some holes that had been made for the purpose.

Next midday we left the valley, and after a short drive along some stony hills, arrived at a rich tract of pasture-land. Whilst on our halt, I killed a fine bird of prey (*Melieræ canorus*), and a large lizard of the kind which I have before described.

Approaching now the north-eastern frontier of the

Batlapin country, I expected soon to enter upon the small territory belonging to the Mamusa Korannas. Turning our course due north on the 14th, we found ourselves on another extensive plain, overgrown with bushes. Several heavy showers fell, and at last induced us to make a halt; but the sight of a number of antelopes darting about among the marethwa-bushes was too tempting to be resisted, and I started out for a chase. This proved a more troublesome matter than I had anticipated. To avoid the bushes, I had to twist my horse about continually; and this I found so discouraging that I thought I might venture to change my tactics, and make a bold dash straight ahead. My horse had hardly begun to bound forward when he came to a sudden pause; failing to leap over a mimosa, he had plunged into the middle of it. I endeavoured to pull him back, but the sharp double thorns ran into him so much the more. The poor creature began to kick violently, and snorting aloud, only got more deeply imbedded in the prickles. My clothes began to suffer considerably in the struggle, and glad enough I was when the horse contrived to extricate its hind-quarters from the bush. I threw my gun upon the ground and managed to alight, and finally to drag the excited animal clear away; but my face, my arms, my neck, even my legs, were all smarting violently; and when I made my way back to the waggon, I was only to be compared to the triumphant hero of a cat-fight. I am not likely to forget my experience of that mimosa-



tree. Nature, like a cruel step-mother, seems to have banished some of the offspring of Flora, unendowed with fragrancy or honey, to the desert wilds of Africa, where they take their revenge on any unoffending mortals that come within their reach.

Soon afterwards we entered a shallow valley, nearly circular in form, and on the heights surround-



CAUGHT BY THORNS.

ing it we observed a few native farms. The valley itself opened on to a steppe, covered with tall, dry grass, where a herd of sprightly springbocks were enjoying their antics. We halted for two hours for dinner. Just as we were preparing to move on, we saw a Kaffir waggon approaching from the north. The owner, a Batlapin, wearing a long great-coat,

was recognized by Pit as a man he had previously known at Klipdrift. Once, Pit said, he had been poor, but now he was very rich, possessing two waggons and large herds of cattle. He increased his gains by travelling about amongst the Barolongs between the Harts River and Molapo, selling the commodities that he purchased in the diamond-fields. Having ascertained from Pit that I was the "bas" of



CHEAP DIAMONDS.

the waggon, he walked round it twice or thrice, and then, leering at me with his twinkling eyes, he put his hand to his hat and said, in most insinuating tone, "Sir!" Then producing from his pocket a little box, about two inches in diameter, such as were commonly disposed of to the natives for snuff-boxes, he gave a cunning grin, and began to rattle

it. I at once got an inkling as to the way in which he had gained some of his wealth. He jerked his finger towards his servants, and said that they had been working for him in the diggings, and here was the result of their toil. Opening the box, he showed me some twenty diamonds or more, the largest being of about three carats, and told me that I might have the lot for 30s. Feeling only too certain that they had all been stolen, I positively refused to be a purchaser.

In the course of the march during the afternoon I found a good many weevils under the leaves of a liliaceous plant, as well as several kinds of locusts that were new to me. It poured with rain in the evening, and we had to put up a canvas awning for a shelter.

We began our next march by passing over some plains of short grass that were swarming with myriads of large-winged ants. The rain had been so abundant during the last few days, that I did not doubt for a moment that we should find plenty of water everywhere. We did not take the trouble to procure a supply for ourselves, nor did we give the oxen a proper draught before starting; our disappointment was consequently very great when we ascertained that there was none to be had, and that once again we were to be exposed to the torture of thirst. A turn in the valley showed us the bed of a spruit not far off, and I felt certain that after such rain as we had witnessed there would of necessity be at least some water trickling along it. Accord-



ingly, I clambered down the sides, which were nearly perpendicular, and determined to investigate the bottom. A number of other defiles opened into the



SURPRISED BY BABOONS.

chasm, and the spot was most picturesque; but to my chagrin I found that there were no signs of water. Defeated in the object for which I had taken the pains to descend the ravine, I was turning



to leave it, when some stones came pattering down the rocks in my direction. I soon became aware that the stones were being designedly aimed at me; and, looking up, I saw a herd of baboons perched among the trees. I had my gun with me; and, not being in the mood to be pelted in this fashion, I fired into a tree upon which two of the baboons were sitting. It was only attached to a cleft in the rock by a single root, and my shot tore it right asunder. One of the baboons sprang wildly into the air, the other clung in alarm to the falling stem. An old male now appeared just in front, and began to pick up some stones; a second shot, however, had the effect of putting him and the entire group to a speedy flight.

The hill that we next ascended bore all the appearance of having been occupied, though probably more than a century ago, by Makalahari or some other native tribes; the summit was covered by a number of enclosures made of rough-hewn stones, and about two or three feet high, varying from fifteen to twenty-five square yards in area. Many of the Bechuana tribes declare that their own grandfathers occupied the site, but it seems unlikely that the abandonment of the position has been quite so recent.

From the top of the hill we could see the country round for some fifteen miles; it sank gradually towards the north. Five miles ahead we made out a native village, and hastened on towards it, in the eager hope of getting water; but on reach-

ing it we only received directions to make for a depression further on to the north-west, now partially hidden by the slope on which we were standing. We arrived at the place only to meet with fresh disappointment; and distressed as we were by our prolonged thirst, we were compelled to pass another night without any relief.

We lost no time in making a start the following morning, and, turning into a wide valley that ran northwards, we came in sight of a native village, consisting of about forty huts, the shape of which evidenced that they were the property of Koranna and Bechuana Barolongs. The village ran principally along the right bank of a little river-bed containing a number of small pools. Our bullocks soon sniffed the water, and quickening their pace, were making their way almost beyond control to the bank, when suddenly all further progress was blockaded by a dozen or more Koranna men, all dressed as usual in ragged European costume. Making violent gesticulations, and shouting aloud, they made me understand that no animals could be allowed to drink there for less than five shillings a head. Of course I repudiated a demand so exorbitant, and offered what seemed to me a more reasonable compensation. They refused to listen to my terms, nor could Pit, with all his powers of persuasion, induce them to swerve from their determination.

They had soon found out the desperate condition of thirst to which we were reduced, and had made

up their minds to make a good bargain out of our necessities ; but I was not to be baffled ; and, knowing them to be thorough cowards, informed them that, whether they liked it or not, I was resolved to have the water I required. Taking it for granted that my threat implied a recourse to fire-arms, they set up a piteous howl, and kept on bawling out some native word, which I was told was a cry for help. In answer to the appeal a number of the inhabitants came hurrying out, Korannas armed with muskets, Barolongs and Makalahari brandishing assegais. The Korannas who carried guns were for the most part women. Partly in their own tongue, partly in Dutch, the whole crowd, now nearly fifty altogether, broke out into the most savage invectives ; the women shrieked out the most dreadful of imprecations, while the children, from behind the enclosures, yelled to the top of their voices ; our own dogs, of course, were the reverse of mute, and the native curs yelped and snarled in chorus. Never was there a more complete pandemonium. I had come with the most peaceable intentions ; yet, here I was, either by my own want of tact, or by their greed of alcohol, all but involved in a fatal contention with the natives.

Seeing the threatening aspect of affairs, my people levelled their guns ; this led to a counter-demonstration, and the weapons of our antagonists were pointed against us. My knowledge of the Koranna character came to my aid, and prevented me from

getting into a dilemma; I was quite aware that however much they might be urged on by a few care-for-naught leaders, as a rule they were the most abject of cowards. Upon this conviction I acted, and avoided any precipitate measures.

Leaving two of our party in charge of the wagon, I rode out quite alone towards the mob. They did not attack me; I did not suppose they would; but louder than ever they assailed me with the bitterest revilings. Steadily I advanced towards them, when all at once the foremost began to retreat; the rear quickly began to follow. In a moment the exultant voice of Pit behind me, shouted, "Det kerle lup! Det kerle lup!"<sup>1</sup>

I heard the triumphant tone, and dashed off into a gallop. Had I been a field-marshal ordering my forces to retire, I could not more effectually have cleared the field. When I pulled up I could only burst into a fit of laughter; the comical way in which man, woman, and child had struggled to keep out of reach of my horse's heels was irresistible, none of them apparently feeling safe until helter-skelter they had reached the security of their own hedges; once within these, they turned to deliver their maledictions more vigorously than before; perhaps I was not the worse off for being unable to comprehend what was doubtless a tirade against the overbearing acts of the white man. There was no further opposition, and our famished animals were at once sent forward to enjoy a refreshing drink,

<sup>1</sup> "The fellows are making off!"







RECEPTION IN MOSEMANIANA.

while we took care to replenish our own vessels with an ample supply of water.

As we quitted the village we were greeted by another storm of vituperation, which, as we did not condescend to take any notice of it, became more furious than ever; but so uproarious did the shouting become that the riot unfortunately startled our oxen, and caused them to swerve aside so suddenly that our front axle snapped in two. No more untimely accident could have befallen us, and we involuntarily raised a cry of dismay. I congratulated myself most thoroughly on not having come into overt collision with the people, for, in spite of their being cowards and the worst of marksmen, they might, by a stray shot from their old muskets, have done us a very serious mischief; moreover, to have come to grief amongst the Barolongs or Makalahari would have been a very different thing from finding ourselves helpless in the midst of an infuriated crowd of odious Korannas.

As it was, I relied very much upon the effect of my firmness with regard to the water, and was right in my conjecture that the natives would not try to take advantage of our misadventure. They no sooner saw what had happened than they hurried back from the enclosures to which they had retreated, and began laughing, hooting, and screaming around us; the children danced merrily at the fun. At a hint from me my people, who had been sitting on the front of the waggon with their guns on their knees ready for action, laid them aside, and joined



in the general laugh ; this had a wonderful effect in bringing the crowd into good humour ; I took the opportunity of telling the old barefooted overseer that I should have to water my cattle at his pools oftener than I expected ; however, I was quite willing, I said, to pay him properly, and he was soon in as amicable a mood as the rest, and recommended me to send for a certain man in the village of Marokana, who would be able to replace the damaged axle.

Within the last ten years, and especially since the introduction of spirituous liquors into the country, wherever the Hottentot element has mingled with the Bantu, or whenever the Batlapins, Barolongs, or other kindred tribes have not had capable and responsible men for their chiefs, they have been corrupted by the Korannas, Griquas, and others who have adopted all the vices, and none of the virtues of the white men. The consequence has been that drunkenness, idleness, robbery, and even murder, have become rife among them. It is sincerely to be hoped that the measures lately taken by the government in Griqualand West with regard to the Korannas will have beneficial results.

The arrangement that I made with the overseer was that our cattle should have as much water as they wanted at the rate of a shilling a day each ; he was even considerate enough to direct me to some clean pools that had never been used by the villagers. Before I set out again, I engaged the services of two native lads for eight shillings a week each. Pit's wages were ten shillings a week.



Musemanyana is the most northerly possession of the Koranna king of Mamusa; on the north and east it is bounded by plains abounding in game. To these plains I have given the name of "Quagga Flats;" they belong to Montsua, and are the common hunting-grounds of Batlapins, Barolongs,



MUSEMANYANA.

Korannas, and Dutch farmers, who come either from the Western Transvaal, or have been permitted by various chiefs to settle on their territory. On the west lies the small dominion of the Marokana chief who nominally owns allegiance to Montsua, the king of the Barolongs, but without any payment of tribute.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## FROM MUSEMANYANA TO MOSHANENG.

Departure from Musemanyana— The Quagga Flats—Hyæna-hunt by moonlight—Makalabari horsemanship—Konana—A lion on the Sitlagole—Animal life on the table-land—Gnu-hunt at night—A missing comrade—Piles of bones—Hunting a wild goose—South African spring-time—Molema's Town—Mr. Webb and the Mission-house—The chief Molema—Huss Hill—Neighbourhood of Moshaneng—Illustrious visitors.

No sooner was the axle mended than we left Musemanyana, travelling on till it was quite late at night. The wind was blowing almost a gale when we halted, and in lighting our fire we had some difficulty in preventing another steppe-burning; the next morning, however, the 21st, was warm and bright. Shortly after starting we came across some Makalahari and Barolong women collecting young locusts just emerged from their pupa state. It was not until we had gone on for three hours and a half that we arrived at a depression, and found some pools of clear water; from this point our road lay to the north-east, over wide plains with bushes few and far between. The dry grass had all the pleasant fragrance of hay, and

young blades were already sprouting amidst the withering stems. In all directions the ground was burrowed by jumping-hares, porcupines, and earth-pigs. Hyænas had taken possession of the holes that the earth-pigs had deserted, and occasionally we observed the lairs of jackals. In localities ex-



BAROLONG MAIDEN COLLECTING LOCUSTS.

clusively populated by natives, jackals, caama-foxes, and proteles are freely hunted for the sake of their skins, which are made into coats ; but in the parts where white men predominate, and game is abundant, hyænas are chiefly made the object of attack, being partially exterminated by strychnine.

Fourteen miles further on we came to another valley, broader than the last, and containing numerous pools; the grass here, although it had been burnt down in September, had already grown again a foot high. In the valley was the last of the outlying settlements, belonging to Hendrick, the chief of Musemanyana, and we counted more than a hundred of his cattle. The plains extended right away to the horizon on every side.

We next entered upon the Quagga Flats, and found ourselves upon Montsua's territory. The weather continued genial, and the wind had dropped, but the marshy condition of the soil made our progress still difficult. Meeting some Barolong people on their way from Marokana to hunt, I tried to bargain with them for the exchange of some of my draught-oxen, but our negotiation fell through, as the Barolongs demanded 8*l.* a head on every bullock that should be bartered.

On the 23rd F. and I, accompanied by "Boy," one of our new black servants, left the waggon and went off on a little hunting-excursion. It was on this occasion that I first became aware of the fact that springbock gazelles leave their fawns all day, only returning to them in the evening to stay with them at night. Any one wandering about the plains where the grass is not many inches high may come within twenty yards of the pretty little creatures without perceiving them, and although they do not try to escape observation, like the orbeki gazelles, by lying flat upon the ground,



they are often very effectually concealed by the herbage.

In the course of the afternoon we turned into a road leading northwards that subsequently proved to be the direct route between Mamusa and Konana ; the track had probably not been open to vehicles until within the last three months, though apparently it had been previously used as a footpath by the natives. We were now on the edge of a plain that extended east and west as far as the eye could reach, but was bounded on the north by some hill-tops, and broken in the same direction by clumps of wood ; these, however, were some miles away. A lovely evening passed into just as lovely a night, and the full moon, encircled by the very slightest of halos, and stars twinkling with a subdued lustre, shed a kindly glimmer over the dark grey plain. In spite of fatigue, I lay awake long enjoying the beauty of the scene, my companions all sound asleep, and the dogs the sole sharers of my watch.

A sudden movement on the part of Niger disturbed me from my reverie ; followed by Onkel, another of our dogs, he sprang forward and began to growl. The long-drawn howl of a spotted hyæna had broken the stillness of the night, and though it was, as I supposed, at some distance, it quite accounted for the agitation of the dogs. I was so well accustomed to the sound that I did not pay much regard to it, and prepared to lay down my head to sleep ; but so obstreperous did the dogs

become, that I was soon convinced that the intruders could not be far away, and resolved to make a raid upon the disturbers of our rest. I crept up to Pit and Boy, and after shaking them till they were awake enough to understand me, I gave them orders to hold in the dogs. Going to F., I tried to arouse him, but did not wait to



A HYENA HUNT.

ascertain whether he took in what I said to him. Without losing more time than I could help, I procured some ammunition, and started off in the direction from which the howling seemed to come. The servant-boys had the greatest difficulty in preventing the dogs from following me; the whole canine race of Africa instinctively regards the

hyæna as an enemy that should be attacked whenever opportunity affords.

I advanced about a hundred yards, sometimes stooping, sometimes crawling on my hands and knees, but without seeing any signs of hyænas ; all at once, however, a low growl reached my ear, and I placed myself behind an ant-hill ready to take advantage of the first chance of a shot. In vain I waited. I made the best scrutiny I could of the surroundings, but I could see nothing but ant-hills, and the growls were not repeated. I was beginning to suppose that my own movements had scared the beasts away ; still I waited on till the ants began to make my position uncomfortable, not to say untenable. Just as I was thinking I must retire, I was startled by a hideous yell, scarcely a dozen yards away. I strained my eyes to peer everywhere around me, but the moonlight revealed nothing but ant-hills in every direction. Whilst I was still in suspense, I became aware of a savage growl close at my heels ; turning myself round, I was about to fire, when Niger's well-known bark made me hold my hand. Frantic with excitement, the dog had been too much for Pit to hold, and Boy, fearful that the hyæna would be more than a match for him, had let Onkel, a far stronger animal, loose as well ; and now the two dogs together were scouring the place, full of eagerness to scent out their enemy. They scampered backwards and forwards, far and near ; but the hyænas had obviously adopted the prudent plan of timely retreat, and at last I was

compelled to abandon all further hope of success, and returned to the waggon to bear my disappointment as best I could.

Of all the South African beasts of prey, the spotted hyæna is the most enduring and the most tenacious of life, and I have known instances where they have withstood the effects of fearful wounds for double the time that I believe other mammalia could have held out. I shall have to refer to these animals more than once again.

Next morning we reached one of the patches of wood that we had seen towards the distant north; it contained some wretched huts, made of branches driven in the ground and covered with leaves, occupied by Yochoms, a branch of the Makalahari. These Yochoms were dependents of a Barolong, named Mokalana, who resided in another of these woods a few miles away; both settlements bore the names of their respective owners. The custom that the Bechuanas have of calling their towns and villages after their builders or owners, frequently causes a great deal of confusion, as in this way a place sometimes gets known by two or three names, those of past as well as present chiefs; and when a chief changes his place of residence, the new settlement will bear the same name as the old one, although it may be not more than a few miles distant.

The Yochoms had to look after a herd of cows and sheep for their liege lord, and it was also their business to hunt for him; for this purpose they



were supplied with horses, and seemed much more at home in the saddle than any other of the Bechuanas.

By a present of a pocket-knife, I induced one of the natives to ride off to the "Bas" and inquire whether he was disposed to let me have some young



A YOCHOM OF THE KALAHARI CHASING A BLESSBOCK.

oxen in exchange for my old ones, if I gave him proper compensation in money and ammunition.

While we were taking our mid-day meal, another Makalahari came back from hunting, mounted on a powerful brown mare. Quite imposing in his appearance was this swarthy son of the South African

table-land, as he rode along in his shining leather tunic, the shafts of his assegais supported in a leathern socket attached to the stirrup, and the carcass of a blessbock slung across the front of his primitive saddle.

All the horses are bred upon the plains, and so well accustomed are they to the clumps of grass and to the holes in the soil, that the riders give themselves no concern about their bridles, but chase the fugitive herds of antelopes at full gallop, and generally succeed in overtaking them (except the springbucks, which are too fleet to be caught in this way) in about half an hour; the assegai is then brought into requisition, and is aimed with such precision that it rarely fails to hit its mark. One head of game thus secured, the huntsman, as a rule, never attempts to get a second, but having despatched his booty with his other assegai, he forthwith turns his horse's head homewards. The fewer the wounds which the animal receives, the greater the value of its skin to the Bas.

As my messenger was long in returning, I began to prepare to start; but just as the bullocks were being harnessed the man was espied in the distance. The message he brought was to the effect that the Bas had only one team for his own use, and that he could not consent to part with it. At the same time, however, he sent word that he had a sheep which he would exchange for a mug (about 1 lb.) of gunpowder. Accepting his offer, I received a fine "fat-tail;" and, in addition to the gunpowder, I

gave several trifling articles, such as needles, tinder-boxes, and little chains, which the Makalahari reciprocated by presenting me with some proteles' skins, and a few blessbock and hartebeest horns.

The unwelcome announcement was made to me the first thing next morning that one of my bullocks had died in the night, so that the burden of the waggon had to fall upon three pair instead of four.

Opening into the valley along which we were making our way were several side valleys, all containing cultivated fields. After a few miles we came upon one of these running north and south, which, we were informed by some passing Korannas, was that of the Konana River, that flows through highlands to the Maretsana. These highlands are occupied by Korannas and Barolongs and their vassals, and are under the protection of their chief, Shebor, who in his turn is subject to Montsua.

After rather a tedious drive, we came to Konana, which lay extended along the slope of a hill studded with trees, and contained 1000 inhabitants. I indulged a hope that I should be able here to procure some fresh bullocks; and in order to attract the attention of the people, I encamped on an open piece of sward just to the east of the town, on a declivity leading downwards to the river, and made a display in front of the waggon of various commodities that I had brought with me to enable me to make purchases for my scientific collection. It was not long before a crowd of visitors arrived, and with much curiosity inspected my stock, which con-



sisted of a velveteen suit, two bright woollen shirts, a hat, half a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, and half a roll of tobacco. But, although the chief came in person, I found no one disposed to negotiate with me for what I wanted.

Several of the residents, who entered into con-



A BAROLONG STORY-TELLER,

versation with us, informed us that the surrounding hills, as well as the heights along the Sitlagole and Maretsana Rivers, were infested with lions, which were so accustomed to the sight of men and to the sound of fire-arms that they were incredibly bold. Although the plains were abundantly supplied with



game, the monarchs of the forest exhibited a decided predilection for domestic animals; and the chief, Shebor, told us that he had to lament, not only the loss of many of his cattle, but of several of his people; and he advised us to keep a sharp look-out all along the opposite hills, which were amongst their favourite resorts.

He related a distressing incident that had occurred on one of the neighbouring rivers. A party of natives were on their way from Maraba, in the Makalaka country, to the diamond-fields, a distance of 800 miles. It was by no means unusual for such parties to quit their homes with simply a hide and an assegai, quite prepared, during their long and arduous journey, to live on nothing but roots, wild fruit, and occasionally a small head of game. The spectacle they would present to any traveller who might meet them was very piteous. Sometimes they would be almost destitute of food of any sort for days together, and be reduced well-nigh to skeletons. Their progress would become more and more painful; and they would endeavour to mitigate the pangs of hunger by drawing in the waist-bands which with a strip of hide formed clothing. The ordinary custom was for them to travel in single file, the strongest first, then the less robust, followed by the weakest; so that an invalid would often be quite by himself, a long way in the rear. In the party of which the chief was speaking there were two brothers, one of whom, on account of his feeble condition of health, had for more than a week been

obliged to take his place last in the procession. Arriving at the bank of the Sitlagole, the party halted to search for some roots, not unlike turnips, which were known to grow there, and which they hoped to cook and enjoy for supper. They found the roots in such abundance that it was resolved to spend the night on the spot, and they kindled a fire to prepare their meal. On closing in, it was soon ascertained that the sick comrade was missing. They looked at each other with much perplexity; but the brother of the absent man, without losing a moment, snatched up his own and his brother's share of the roots that had been gathered, fastened them to a strap upon his shoulder, seized his assegai, and started off. The rest drew closer in, enjoyed their supper, lighted up several additional fires as a protection from attack, and laid themselves down under the bushes to sleep.

The missing Bechuana was a Batloka, and the evidence went to show that the poor fellow had been compelled to rest so often and so long from his weakness, hunger, and sore feet, that he had fallen far into the rear, and, missing his way, had strayed into a rocky valley full of bushes that were notoriously the haunt of lions. Here no doubt he had been pounced upon and killed, for the brother had not gone far before he could trace the spot where the proper path had been left, and proceeding onwards he soon observed a lion's footprints in the sand. Instead of turning back, he had apparently caught sight of his brother's stick, straw hat, and







THE BECHUANA FINDS THE REMAINS OF HIS BROTHER.



gourd bottle, lying on the ground, and, trusting to his assegai, had resolved to venture on alone.

“But what was an assegai,” exclaimed Shebor, “in the face of a lion who had just tasted human blood?”

It was clear that before he reached his brother's corpse the lion had sprung from its concealment, and secured him as a second victim.

Finding next morning that both the men were absent the whole party was in consternation, too truly fearing the worst. They applied for help at a Barolong farm close at hand, and, following the tracks, were not long in discovering the two mangled bodies close to each other. The marks on the ground were quite distinct, and left no doubt that a lion had just quitted the spot. Probably it had only been scared away by their own approach, and they determined to continue their chase. After they had made their way for about 500 yards along the bank, they caught sight of a tawny object in a thicket just ahead. They hardly dared to hope that it was the creature of which they were in pursuit; but simultaneously a number of them fired, and great was their triumph when they discovered amongst the bushes the carcass of a huge lion pierced by six bullets.

Such was the substance of Shebor's narrative, which he told with much energy and many gesticulations. It had its due effect in inducing us to take every precaution on our way to our next encampment on the slope, about three miles from Konana.

The next morning was again very fine and bright, and the golden sunbeams that penetrated the foliage above our heads awakened the feathered tribe betimes to commence their usual concert. Small song-birds were especially numerous, as well as various kinds of shrikes, and the *Tockus flavirostris*.

For two reasons our progress all day was very slow. Not only were our bullocks so weary that they required continual intervals of rest, but the bushwood was so dense that we felt the necessity of being very cautious. We did not, however, catch sight of a single lion; and, in due time, found ourselves once more upon comparatively open country.

It turned out a gorgeous day, and I am sure that none of us will forget the view upon which we gazed across the table-land. To a sportsman, and still more to a student of animal life, such days must ever remain engraven on the memory; they atone for the discomforts which have been endured in the past; they explain the longing which arises to revisit former haunts.

On reaching the top of the plateau, we looked across a vast plain, extending for at least twenty miles to the north and south, bounded on the east by mimosa groves. Except around the pools where the grass grew high, the plain was covered with a rich carpet of new green sward, thickly studded with brown ant-hills, and forming the habitat of numerous sorts of game. Dark-brown, light-brown, tawny, yellow, motley, and







WILD ANIMALS ON THE PLAINS.



black, were the robes in which a fanciful nature had bedecked her children. There were striped gnus and black gnus, blessbocks and hartebeests, springbocks and zebras; some were grazing, others gambolling, whilst here and there a herd would stalk solemnly along in single file, as though wrapped in meditation. Several herds of blessbocks stood in long rows cropping the pasturage, and quite near to us was a group of nearly 150 zebras, wending their way in a wide curve slowly to the south. In smaller bands were hartebeests innumerable; black gnus, in herds varying from ten head to eighty, had taken up their position near the bushes; and between them and the zebras were springbock gazelles, far too many to be counted. Nor were birds wanting to add to the animation of the scene. There were great bustards (*Eupodotis Kaffra* and *Kori*); there were two of the lesser bustards that I have already mentioned. There were chenalopex, ducks, plovers, ibises, cranes, and many others; their rich plumage and graceful forms as they rose in the air, or hovered just above the ground, contributing largely to the general charm.

I had seen much of the animal life of South Africa during my first journey, but I had never witnessed anything to compare with this; it exceeded all that imagination could depict, and appeared to me enough to transform the most indifferent into a keen lover of nature. For a full hour we feasted our eyes upon the prospect before us, quite forgetting the necessities of our weary cattle. So fascinated

were we with the scene that we resolved to make our encampment where we were for several days.

Connected with another, this plain extends to the upper Harts River on the east, to the Maritana on the north, and nearly as far as Mamusa on the south. It covers an enormous area, the greater part of it belonging to King Montsua. It has no perceptible slope, and it is only close to the river-banks that the rain gets carried off at all; consequently, its surface holds numerous salt-pans varying in size, besides many shallow depressions, always full of water in the rainy season. The salt-pans, it would seem, have a great deal to do with the wonderful way in which the game thrives.

In one of these depressions we chose the site of our encampment, about three miles from the spot where we had stood gazing at the view. The zebras and the blessbocks were the first to take flight as our waggon proceeded, and some of the herds made their way through the thickets in the glades, and scampered off to the adjoining flat.

We could distinctly hear the lowing of the gnu-bulls as they led their herds to drink, and we determined that on the following evening we would take our stand and watch for them by one of the rain-pools. In the morning we made a preliminary attempt at a *battue* on the southern end of the plain, but without any success. Pit and F. took a wrong direction, and consequently left a gap between us of about 360 yards, through which the game made an escape.



BAROLONGS CHASING ZEBRAS.







Returning to the waggon, we found some Baro-longs, who had come from Konana, and were on their way to one of the mimosa groves, where some of their companions were already waiting for them, for a *battue* of their own. They offered us their assistance, but as it was my object to observe the different kinds of game, rather than to kill a number of them, I declined to avail myself of their help.

As night drew on Boly and I set out to the separate spots upon which we had previously fixed, intending to make ourselves during our observations as comfortable as we could in some small holes in the ground. I contrived to creep into my hiding-place without rousing any birds from the water, a circumstance that, however trifling it might seem to be, was really of great moment, as the clatter made by a number of birds startled suddenly, and rising on the wing, is quite enough to make the larger game aware of danger and avoid the spot.

The night was rather dark, but in the north a storm was travelling eastwards, and repeated flashes of lightning gleamed across the sky. Except for an occasional cackle or twitter from some birds on the water, the silence was almost unbroken; several times I thought I could hear the low growl of gnus, but probably it was the suggestion of my imagination; once too I felt sure that I caught a sound as of a dog lapping in the stream, but though I strained my eyes I could discern nothing,

and could only conjecture that a stray jackal might have approached the water to leeward of me.

Patiently I waited on, until at last there was no doubt that I could really distinguish the sound for which I had been listening. Raising my head and



GNU-HUNTING BY NIGHT.

laying my ear upon a bare place on the ground, I heard the heavy thud of a herd of gnus tramping along a game-track. Full of expectation I crouched down again. When next I looked up, I was aware of the lightning in the north being much more vivid than before. Soon I was able to hear the grunting

of the approaching herd, and had not long to wait before I made out one of the gnus on the opposite side of the pool; it came along the water's edge some way towards me, then turning round, it retreated a little distance, returning almost directly, accompanied by several others. They all stood for a considerable time without moving, but the leader, followed by another of the herd, at length began cautiously to descend to the sandy shore. As the creature stood directly in front of me, it was so foreshortened that I could see nothing of it but its head. As well as the darkness would permit I took my aim straight at the skull, and fired; the crack of the rifle was followed by a distinct crash of the bullet, and I was sure I had hit my mark; without paying any attention to the rest of the herd, I rushed out to secure my victim; but my search was all in vain; I groped about with my gun-barrel, but to no purpose; I was so certain that I had struck the creature that I was quite bewildered at its escape, and should have persevered long in looking for it if the increasing vividness of the lightning had not warned me of the impending storm, and induced me to return.

On arriving at the waggon, I was disconcerted at finding that Boly, who had set out with me, had not come back, and supposing that he had missed his way, I sent F. some distance up the slope with a lighted fire-brand, hoping that it might serve to guide him in the right direction; but although the beacon was brandished until the great rain-drops fell and

extinguished it, there was nothing to be ascertained about Boly. The wind had now risen to a hurricane, and brought upon us a most furious storm. Although our position in the hollow had the advantage of sheltering us in some degree from the violence of the tempest, it had the disadvantage of receiving all the torrents that rushed down from the flats above, and we were rendered wretchedly uncomfortable by the in-pouring flood. However, it was not so much the discomfort we endured as the anxiety about our missing companion that engrossed our minds; we felt so perplexed and baffled that we could talk and think of nothing else, and yet we were powerless to aid him. The storm was increasing, flash following on flash, and thunder-clap rolling after thunder-clap, and the rain beat so heavily upon the waggon-tilt that it was only by shouting at the top of our voices that we could make each other hear. The temperature, which all day had been very high, became suddenly checked, and a cold chill made us shiver again in our damp clothes.

The storm lasted for hours, and by the time that the wind abated, and the rain ceased, we were all very fatigued. It was indispensable that we should have a little repose, but we hardly allowed ourselves a couple of hours' rest before we were ready, by daybreak, to make what search we could for our missing friend. I sent one of the servants in the likeliest direction, and he had not gone many hundred yards, when he fell in with Boly making



his way towards the waggon. He was covered with dirt from head to foot, and was as pitiable-looking an object as could be imagined; but although he was trembling with cold, and begrimed with mud, he was carrying a gun as bright as when he had started. He had not much to tell; in order to avoid the fury of the storm he had crept into a hole by the side of an ant-hill, where he had made the best of things all night through, but in order to keep his gun clean and ready for all emergencies, he had wrapped it in his jacket, which he had taken off for the purpose.

On the morning of the 29th I took a stroll, and brought back a hyæna-skull; this was placed along with some skulls of gnus, blessbocks, and springbocks that we had collected already since we had made our sojourn here.

At mid-day we started again, going to the eastward with the object of getting into the road leading from Taung to Molema's Town, whence I should proceed again to the north. After going about six miles we rested in a mimosa grove, where we fell in with some Barolongs. We passed a great number of deserted huts, round which the bones of animals were heaped in piles; to account for such an accumulation the slaughter must have been prodigious. Curious in the matter of pathological deformities, I turned the heaps over, but found the bones nearly all broken; the horns were perfect with the exception of two which had been pierced by bullets, the wounds having healed and a fresh horny substance

having formed in the apertures. I likewise found a pointed piece of horn, pierced with holes and attached to a thong, used by the natives for dressing leather.

When it grew dark we pitched our camp under some acacias on a hill near a salt lake, which was



DESERTED HUNTING-PLACE OF THE BAROLONGS.

itself quite dry, but had some fresh water-springs on the bank supplying what we required for drinking. Wandering about, I found some more empty huts, and some more collections of bones. Observing that there were plenty of hares, guinea-fowl, partridges, and duykerbocks about, I made up my

mind to remain in the place for a whole day, and had every reason to be satisfied with my decision, for the weather was lovely, and the sport so successful that by the next evening my scientific collection was richer by a variety of bird-skins, snakes, insects, and crustaceans, as well as by a considerable



EGYPTIAN GOOSE ON MIMOSA-TREE.

number of plants. The rest of the party brought me back from their excursion some interesting birds, chiefly bee-eaters, black and small grey shrikes, and plovers.

The capture of a wild goose (*Chenalopez*), which I considered a great prize, gave me a good deal of trouble. The hill where we were stopping was at



the western corner of the salt-pan, the northern and southern banks of which were bounded by other hills of the same character; between us and the hill to the north was a valley by which the rain descends from the upper plains; but so partial had been the storm that had inundated us two days before, that here, at a distance of hardly a dozen miles, no sign of water was to be traced. Every now and then I heard the cackle which I recognized as that of the Egyptian goose; but, although I had the advantage of a high position, I could not succeed in getting sight of the bird at all. Persevering, however, for a long time, at length I espied it perched on a bough of a withered mimosa. My gun was loaded with only small shot, so that it was useless for me to fire unless I could get very much closer; this required no little caution, but by taking off my boots, and making my way barefoot over the stony water-course, I succeeded in placing myself in a good position behind some bushes. The goose continued sitting quite upright upon the same branch, which I afterwards found nearly overhung its nest at the bottom of the trunk. Finding myself within sixty yards, I took my aim, and the handsome skin of my victim was soon on its way to my rapidly-increasing collection.

To the saltpan I gave the name of "Chuai Jungmann," or Jungmann's salt lake; its geological formation is similar to the Vaalstone at Bloemhof, consisting of blocks of greenstone of about three cubic feet.



After sundown we proceeded a little on our way, and spent the night on an immense plain, which bore evident tokens of a long drought; the ground was cracked, the herbage crumbled at a touch, and the fleeting herds of springbucks raised great clouds of dust. The deficiency of water made us put our best foot forward, and during the next day we got over eighteen miles; there was no game to induce us to loiter on the way, and we were only too glad to find a hollow full of water, where we could halt for the night.

On the morning of the 1st of December we were surprised by a visit from a Boer, who had settled in the neighbourhood. From him we ascertained that we had now reached the western boundary of the Transvaal. He said that he was anxiously waiting the arrival of President Burgers, who he hoped would give him some relief from the annoyances to which he was perpetually exposed on the part of the Barolongs.

Some of the white-thorned mimosas on the plain were in full bloom, and covered with hundreds of small globular blossoms of a bright yellow colour and pleasant fragrance. These shrubs sometimes grow eighteen feet high; their flowers are tender and sensitive, often containing many varieties of rose-beetles (*Cetoniidæ*), and some Longicorns marked with red bands. Amongst so many sorts of shrubs, I was surprised to find that there were only two that seemed to be much resorted to by insects; these had their branches often thickly coated with the

larvæ, more than an inch long, of the great cicada, of which the sonorous chirping could be heard on all sides. At our approach the insects would rise with a loud buzz, and settle again upon some adjacent mimosa with a shock that could be truly said to be audible. Brilliant leaf-beetles were also to be seen, and great steel-blue wasps were hovering round the bushes, catching flies; whilst numbers of humble-bees buzzed about in their busy fashion, collecting food for themselves and their broods, that were quartered in the forsaken ant-hills.

The South African spring-time had now settled with all its glory on these districts of the Upper Molapo, and all the inferior animals seemed roused to new life and vigour beneath its influence; to them its beneficent breath imparted fresh animation and enjoyment; to the unreasoning offspring of nature it seemed to be the herald of peace and pleasure; only amongst men, the lords of creation, did its return revive thoughts of discord, fire, and deeds of blood.

A short drive on the morning of the 2nd brought us to the village of the Makuba, on the southern or left shore of the Molapo,<sup>2</sup> belonging to Molema's Town. For the first fifteen miles of the river-course the valley is very narrow and enclosed by steep cliffs, but further on, where the plateau slopes to the west, it becomes much flatter. Here it was that we had to cross it, and we made our halt on the right-hand bank, near some wartebichi

<sup>2</sup> Molapo = river.

mimosas. Towards sunset we saw Molema's Town lying in front of us on a moderate slope, with woods in the background; on its eastern side the town is bounded by two interesting rocky heights, and between one of these and the stream stands the commodious Mission-house, built in the native style, belonging to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

The little river is not more than six or seven yards wide, but the rocks and the numerous acacias and willows that adorn the hillside in the spaces between the farms, combine to make the position of Molema's Town one of the most pleasing of all the native settlements of Central South Africa. The farmsteads are all detached, and all provided with enclosures, within which the pointed roofs, overgrown with calabash-gourds, are quite picturesque.

The many waggons about the place were the index of a thriving population, a circumstance to be attributed very much to the fact that King Montsua has prohibited the sale of brandy in the country, an order which Molema, the governor, or sub-chief of the town, has strenuously enforced. Another source of prosperity has been the introduction of European cereals by former missionaries.

Molema, it may be mentioned by the way, is a Christian and a preacher. It pleased me very much to find that he has forbidden the felling of any trees in the precincts of the town; and we had scarcely made our encampment when a native, as the representative of the police-court, came to apprise us of

the rule, at the same time offering to assign us adequate pasturage for our cattle.

I was contemplating calling on Mr. Webb, the missionary; but before I had positively made up my mind, a fair stout man leading a little girl by the hand came out of the Mission-house towards me, and, as I anticipated, introduced himself to me. We engaged in a long conversation, and he gave me much information about the locality. He told me that Montsua was now residing at Moshaneng, a town in the province of his royal ally Khatsisive, the ruler of the Banquaketse. He was resolved, however, to settle in Poolfontein, where the Transvaal Government (probably for the purpose of forestalling the independent Barolong chiefs) had placed its Barolong subjects. This was a great annoyance to Montsua, and the real motive of his desire to leave Moshaneng, and to build himself a new residence elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

The Mission-house was furnished with the barest necessities, as, in the extremely unsettled state of affairs, Mr. Webb considered his residence likely to be only temporary; moreover, Molema, being himself a preacher, was by no means well disposed to white missionaries at all. Both Mr. Webb and his wife, who appeared to be an energetic helper in his labours, advised me to make my way as quickly as possible to Moshaneng.

Mr. Webb now went to inform Molema of my

<sup>3</sup> Montsua has subsequently done this, and has offered the English Government the jurisdiction of his territory.



arrival, and brought him back with him to the Mission-house. Molema was an old man, suffering from asthma. He expressed himself very delighted to see me, and said that he had not seen a Nyaka (doctor) since Nyaka Livingstone. He was very anxious that I should give him a molemo (a dose) that would



DISPENSING DRUGS IN THE OPEN.

relieve him of his troublesome cough, and enable him to breathe more freely ; inviting me to go and see him on the following morning, he promised that if I would stay for a few days he would make me a present of a fat sheep.

In an excursion that I made up the country, I

observed that wherever there was a stratum of mould, it never failed to be sown with kaffir corn. I noticed a good many specimens of tropical vegetation, the first I had seen since leaving Grahamstown; but, on the other hand, I saw a large number of plants distinctively belonging to the temperate zones, such as *Campanula*, *Saponaria*, *Veronica*, and some umbelliferous *Euphorbiaceæ*; out on the plains the grass stood four feet high. I shot a heron and several finches, including two fire-finches; also two spurred plovers, which probably I should not have noticed but for their peculiar cry of "tick-tick." The women who were working in the fields were much cleaner than the Batlapins; and after I left Molema's Town I was satisfied that these northern Barolongs, as they are called, are altogether of a higher grade not only than the Batlapins, but than the Mokalana, Marokana, or south-western Barolongs; in agriculture, however, and especially in cattle-breeding, they are far surpassed by the south-eastern Barolongs, who reside in and about Thaba Unshu, which contains over 10,000 inhabitants, the people living to a large extent upon their horse-breeding, which cannot be successfully carried on either in the Molapo district or in the Transvaal, on account of the horse-plague.

I did not omit next day to pay my visit to Molema. The chief received me in his little courtyard, and after introducing me to his wife and sons, whose apartments were close at hand, sent for some wooden stools for myself and Mr. Webb, who

accompanied me. When we were seated, he begged me to give him the latest news from Cape Colony and the diamond-fields; he made inquiries about the proceedings of the English Government in the south, complained bitterly of the encroachments of the Boers in the east, and wound up by asking me whether I was an Englishman or a Boer. When Mr. Webb tried to explain to him that I was a Bohemian, he looked completely mystified; and having asked me my name, he made some old Barolongs who were sitting in the courtyard repeat both my name and my country over and over again, until the two words were sufficiently impressed upon his memory. Before I left I made him a promise that I would never return to his country without paying him a visit, and he assured me that I should always find a welcome.

Before I left Mr. Webb gave me two letters of introduction, one to Mr. Martin, a merchant residing in Moshaneng, the other to Montsua, which Mr. Martin would read and interpret to him.

On the 5th we started off northwards towards the foot of a wooded hill. Without deviating far from our proper route I had many opportunities of adding to my entomological collection; amongst other coleoptera I secured a large and handsome tortoise-beetle that I had never seen before, having its wing-sheaths dotted with greenish-gold and brown spots; its habitat apparently was on one of the commonest South African nightshades. The nest of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*) did



not fail also to attract my attention, abounding as they did in the camel-acacias along the way.

The day's march was brought to a close in a



NEST OF WEAVER-BIRDS.

depression near a brook flowing north-eastwards towards the Taung or Notuany River; and next morning, after making our way through a regular underwood of acacias, we came to a Makalahari



village, the population of which was composed almost exclusively of Montsua's shepherds and hunters. They gave us a most discouraging description of the road to Moshaneng, and declared it all but impossible for us to accomplish the journey to the royal residence with oxen so weak as ours. The road was indeed in a deplorable condition; the sand was very deep, and sorely tried the strength of our poor animals; the woods were full of holes a foot or more in depth, that had been rain-pools in the rainy season, and, besides this, the dust rose in clouds from the sand-drifts, parching our mouths and throats, and making our faces smart considerably.

In one of the smaller hollows now overgrown with grass, I found hundreds of a glistening blue Litta, marked with a rusty red spot, a species which I never met with but once again when I was on my subsequent journey in some woods not unlike these, about fifteen miles to the north of Shesheke. I also shot a buzzard of the kind known as the honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) that was hovering over me.

The state of the road next day showed no improvement; and when we came to two salt-pans, nearly dry, where the sand was some fourteen inches deep, we almost despaired of getting across, but by the aid of various expedients, and by the exercise of much perseverance, we managed to reach the opposite side, where we halted to enjoy the rest that we felt both man and beast had so hardly earned. In the woods we found two kinds of

edible berries, one of which was the brownish-red fruit of the bluebush, used for shot, the other being a yellow berry something like our currant, called wild pomegranate by the Boers, and "geip" by the Korannas, by whom it is greatly relished.

On our way we saw in the distance a ridge of hills running transverse to our path, which some Barolongs that we met told us were Malau's heights; to the highest summit, which did not appear hitherto to have had any special distinction, I gave the name of Huss Hill. Reaching the saddle of the ridge we camped amongst some groups of shrubs overgrown with bryony, cucurbitæ, and other creepers. In some spreading acacias we observed shrikes, both long-tailed and black-and-white; large turtle-doves, too, seemed by no means rare, and for the first time I heard a note which I fancied must proceed from a *Psittacus*. Following the sound I was gratified by seeing a pair of the small grey parrots (*Psittacus Ruppelii*) with green breasts, and yellow spots on the head and wings. They are found beyond the Zambesi, and live in pairs in hollow trees.

As we went on we had alternately to descend steepish valleys, and to climb stony hills. Again we had to experience a lack of water; for ourselves, indeed, we were fortunate in being able to get some milk from a few Barolong people we chanced to see, but the deficiency was sadly felt by our poor panting bullocks.

Arriving at a wide valley running north by east,

under the last spur of Malau's heights, we were relieved by the springing up of a cool breeze, which seemed to prognosticate rain. Our anticipations in this matter were not disappointed, and, before we had toiled on much farther, a refreshing shower came down, allowing us to fill all our vessels, and the bullocks to quench their thirst.



COLLECTING RAIN-WATER.

It had been my intention to push on so as to reach Moshaneng that day; but, coming to a valley where the pools were full of rainwater, and which looked very pleasantly sheltered, we were induced to stay there for the night, although it was about four miles short of the town.



In the woods were some fine trees, known amongst the Boers as beech, as well as a shrub erroneously called wild syringa. There were also wild olives



A REFRESHING DRAUGHT.

and karee trees, mohatla and marethwa bushes; some shrubs with winged seed-vessels, like the maple, several kinds of mimosas (*Acacia detinens*,



*Acacia giraffa*, *Acacia horrida*), and, on the hills, some aloes, that differed from those which I had seen further south. I shot a great grey lory, that from its cry is called the “go-away” by the English, whilst by the Boers it is known as the “grote



ROYAL VISITORS.

Mausevogel.” It builds right at the top of trees, whence it peers about at anything that excites its curiosity; whenever it utters its frightful cry its crest stands perfectly erect. I likewise brought down a brown fork-tailed kite, and two yellow-beaked hornbills. On the 11th I made some short, but not

unsuccessful, excursions, and secured, amongst other booty, some parrots, six lories, some widow-birds, hornbills, two sorts of cuckoos, a small red-and-green woodpecker with a red crest, and some shrikes.

We had now come about seventy miles from Molema's Town, having, about half way, entered upon the territory of the Banquaketse, in latitude  $25^{\circ} 10'$  south. In the course of the afternoon we were honoured by a visit from some of the magnates from Moshaneng. A covered two-wheeled waggon, drawn by four horses, was seen skirting the wood, and making straight towards us. Our black man, Stephan, went to the horses' heads, whilst the occupants, four natives, alighted. The first to step out was a young man of about seven-and-twenty, who introduced himself as Mobili, the son of a Bechuana chief. He had known my friend F. in Kimberley, where his English education and knowledge of the language had for a time procured him an appointment as interpreter in the Courts of Justice. He was now, however, living as a South African gentleman, and was on a round of visits to several Bechuana chiefs. He had come from the king of the Bakuenas only a few days previously. Having shaken hands with F., he proceeded to introduce the three others. "These," he said, "are two of the most distinguished Bechuana kings. Montsua, king of the Barolongs, a wealthy and powerful tribe, and Khatsisive, king of the Banquaketse; and this," he added, pointing to the third, "is

Khatsisive's Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Banquaketse kingdom."

Montsua, a plump, jovial-looking man, of about fifty, inspired me with confidence immediately. Khatsisive, who was tall and scraggy, looked, as did also his Chancellor, as if he knew how to suit his furrowed countenance to circumstances. They were all in European costume, Khatsisive wearing a long overcoat and chimney-pot hat, while his Minister sported a "Menschikoff."

Mobili and Pit acted as interpreters, and during the conversation that ensued we were closely scrutinized by our visitors. Montsua assured me that I was very welcome to the neighbourhood of his residence at Moshaneng, explaining that he was not now living on his own territory, but on that of Khatsisive, his friend and ally, having quitted the Molapo some time since on account of the oppression of the Boers. He was so weary of the annoyances he suffered, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to leave Moshaneng, and to establish himself either at Poolfontein or on the Lothlakane, where he should be pleased if at any time I would pay him a visit.

I was very closely interrogated as to the object of my journey. In reply I exhibited some birdskins, which were regarded with some astonishment. Mobili interpreted my explanation of the process by which the skins were preserved; but the way in which the king kept shaking his head implied that it all surpassed his comprehension; and when

I advised him to be careful in handling them, as there was some poison used in preparing the plumage, he uttered a low cry of alarm, and instantly dropped the specimen he had in his hand. Mobili had translated my word "poison" by the words "molemo maschive" (i. e. bad medicine), which startled the king, as there is nothing of which the Bechuanas live in greater dread than subtle poison, even applying the name to medicines that fail to effect a remedy. Montsua and his companions were certainly a good deal disconcerted by my communication, for they turned up their coat-sleeves and began vigourously rubbing their fingers against the sand on the ground. They were very glad to avail themselves of the soap and water and towel, for which I immediately sent; but nothing seemed to make them quite comfortable, notwithstanding my assurance that the poison could have no injurious effect upon the human skin.

After shaking hands with us all round, and bestowing a friendly nod upon the servants, the two rulers over many hundreds of square miles remounted their waggon and prepared to start. Mobili had just taken the reins when King Montsua laid his left hand upon his shoulder, and with his right beckoned to me. As soon as I approached he made Mobili ask me what I had done with the "rumela," the letter of introduction that I had brought for him from Mr. Webb. I fetched the letter at once, as well as the other addressed to Mr.



Martin, which I asked might be delivered for me; at the same time I expressed my surprise that the existence of the letters should already be known at Moshaneng.

Montsua laughed, and said,—

“I knew all about the letters three days ago. While you were asleep two Barolongs came over from Molema’s Town; from them I heard of your arrival, and of the good effect your molemo had had upon Molema.”

On the afternoon of the 14th, I completed my journey to Moshaneng, the way lying through cultivated country, bounded on the east by an open plain, on the west by rocks, and on the south by wooded heights, which were the northern chain of Malau’s ridge, overlooking the town.

Malau’s ridge may be considered as the south-central portion of the Banquaketse heights, which are connected by the Lekhutsa and Makarupa hills with the western mountain groups in central South Africa.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> I consider that there are three distinct mountain-groups in Central South Africa; the Magaliesbergen in the east; the Marico heights in the west; and the hills in Matabele-land in the north.

## CHAPTER IX.

## FROM MOSHANENG TO MOLOPOLOLE.

King Montsua and Christianity—Royal gifts—The Banquaketse highlands—Signs of tropical vegetation—Hyæna-dogs—Ruins of Mosilili's Town—Rock-rabbits—A thari—Molopolole.

THE southern part of Moshaneng belonged to Molema and his Barolongs, and (excepting the ruined church and Mr. Martin's house) contained no buildings in the European style of architecture. The native huts were all of pure Bechuana construction, and owing to the limited space, were packed very closely together, although in the Baharutse quarter, separated by a valley and a stream, the farmsteads were much less crowded. I should estimate the population of the entire town to be about 7000; but out of this number nearly 1000 would be fluctuating, many of the inhabitants working occasionally for lengthened periods at the diamond-fields, or cultivating land at a distance.

The king's residence stood in the western part near the river-bank, and was surrounded by a courtyard containing two huts apiece for his five wives.

Here, as with not a few of the Bechuana tribes where Christian missionaries have begun to labour, a good proportion of the young people have professed to embrace the new doctrines, while the elders have clung to their heathen institutions. It soon became evident to Montsua that, although circumcision was not uniformly discarded, the young men and young women were reluctant to take part in the accustomed marriage orgies, and that many of the established festivities were very thinly attended. Amongst these ancient ceremonials was a dance known as the reed-dance, performed through the towns by a number of men in procession, blowing with such vehemence upon reed-pipes, that nearly always one or more of them would either drop down dead during the progress, or would subsequently die from the acute emphysema of the lungs brought on by the exertion. With reference to this time-honoured performance, Montsua gave notice that he should only undertake not to interfere with the "bathu ba lehuku,"<sup>1</sup> on condition that they all joined in it as heretofore. The dance was ordered by authority, but the converts, instigated by Molema, Montsua's own brother, refused to obey the king's injunction. Molema was himself urged on by Yan, the present black Barolong Christian preacher.

Baffled on this occasion, by the advice of his rain-doctor Montsua next required that the followers

<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. Mackenzie, the bathu ba lehuku are "the people of the word;" the people who receive God's word.

of the new faith should take parts in two ceremonies connected with rain-magic ; first, in the letshulo-hunt appointed by the rain-doctors for the capture of certain wild animals, parts of which were employed in the incantations ; and, secondly, in turning up a plot of ground for the service of the doctors, which was afterwards considered consecrated, and called "tsimo ea pulta," the garden of the rain. To both these demands the converts again resolutely refused to submit, giving the king to understand that while they were ready to submit to any other proof of their loyalty, since they had become "bathu ba lehuku" their consciences would not allow them to participate in the idolatrous usages of their forefathers.

Again thwarted, the king was driven to devise some other measures for bringing the recusants to obedience ; the constitutional form of his government, and the large numbers of the adherents of the new creed both making it difficult to bring the offenders to justice. He soon tried another scheme. On the following Saturday, when both Molema and Yan had gone away into the country, he issued an order, and caused it to be circulated through the town, that no person would be allowed to attend the church on the next day. The women took up the matter ; aware that Christianity raised them to an equality with their husbands, they came to the unanimous decision that no notice was to be taken of the king's order. Accordingly, Sunday came, and at the hour of service not a member of the congregation was absent from his usual place. The



king, perhaps, might have heard the singing from his own house; or perhaps there were plenty to inform him what was going on; at any rate, he got into a towering passion, and, seizing a long knife, rushed off to the church, which he entered just as one of the men, in Molema's absence, was delivering a



BAROLONG WOMEN AT MOSHANENG.

prayer of thanksgiving. His appearance naturally caused no little commotion amongst the worshippers, and in the midst of the excitement, he bellowed out a peremptory order that they should all disperse. One of the women calmly confronted him, and said that the "bathu ba lehuku" must finish their ser-

vice first. Enraged at the open defiance of his authority, and incensed by the temerity of the woman, he made such vehement and indiscriminate thrusts with his formidable weapon, that he quite succeeded in clearing the building.

Amongst the converts were one of his own daughters and her husband; at first he simply forbade her to leave her own house, but when he ascertained that she was visited there by one of the new community, who joined in hymns and prayers with her, he took her away from her husband, brought her back to his own residence, and obliged her to revert to the heathen custom of wearing nothing but a leather apron.

In course of time, however, as Montsua found that his opposition was of no avail, and discovered, moreover, that the converts not only remained just as faithful subjects as before, but were the most industrious and the most thriving of all his population, he grew weary of his persecution, and subsequently, when he and Molema separated, although he did not himself embrace the new faith, he so far favoured the cause of Christianity as to direct Yan, the Barolong, to continue preaching amongst the surrounding people, and to permit Molema to do the same in his town on the Molapo.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It was by the Wesleyan Missionary Society that Christianity was introduced among the Barolongs. At the time of my visit, in 1873, Moshaneng was the most northerly station; but now that Montsua has settled in Lo thlakane, there is no station further north than Molema's Town. Molema himself is still a

In acknowledgment of some trifling medical services that I had rendered to himself and his household, Montsua presented me with 1*l.*, and with some beautiful ostrich feathers, four black and four white, which he said were for my wife; he looked very incredulous when I told him that I did not possess a wife, and observed that I could keep the feathers until I had one. Besides this, his gratitude was so great that in return for my Snider-rifle he let me have five strong bullocks. By the assistance of Mr. Martin, and another resident merchant, I procured five more, so that with what I retained of my own, I had the satisfactory prospect of continuing my journey with a good team of fourteen.

My stay in Moshaneng was advantageous both to my ethnographical and entomological collections. I obtained a number of curiosities in the way of costumes, kiris, and other weapons, sticks branded with ornamental devices, water-vessels made from ostrich-eggs, wooden spoons and platters, and snuff-boxes made of gourd-shells or horn. One way or another, too, including duplicates, I collected as many as 350 insects, amongst which were a new cerambyx, another of the same family with black and yellow bands, and one copper-coloured and two preacher. Mr. Webb has left. Mr. Harris is the present missionary in Lothlakane. The work of the Society has borne good fruit, inasmuch as it has refined many of the habits of the Barolongs, induced the rulers to adopt more considerate measures, and by the introduction of agriculture has done much to raise the social condition of the natives.

green scarabæidæ. The dry mimosa-hedges seemed to be the favourite resort of two handsome kinds of Longicorn beetles.

When, on the morning of the 18th, I prepared to start, all the great people of Moshaneng turned out to bid me farewell; Montsua and Mr. Martin each bringing me another beautiful white feather. The king insisted on shaking hands with me over and over again, and as the last proof of his regard offered to lend me a guide as far as Molopolole, the residence of the king of the Bakuenas; although the man did not look very strong, I thought it more graceful to accept the offer.

After leaving the town, we turned first north-west, then north, crossing two rivers, the second of which was named the Koluany; we then came to a hilly country, the scenery of which, in beauty, resembled the imposing Makalaka highlands in miniature. The table-land consisted partly of bushwood, and partly of grass-land, interspersed here and there with thinly-wooded districts, and with rocky eminences sometimes eighty feet in height, composed of huge blocks of granite, generally pyramidal in form. The soil near these rugged crags was usually moist, and they were bordered with mimosas, and covered with rich vegetation, amongst which small aloes with their pink and crimson blossoms, stapelias with their dark velvet-like flowers, and cactus-like euphorbiacæ, with their wondrous shapes, shone pre-eminent, and charmed the eye not only by their intrinsic beauty, but by the pro-



fusion in which they grew in every cleft of weather-beaten rock, here peeping out from some dark hollow, and there tightly wedged between two blocks of stone. But no object on these rocky heights was so striking as the sycamores that spread their light-grey roots, now broad and flat, now thick and forked, like a network down the steep sides of the cliff, their succulent stems rising from the crevices frequently to eight or ten feet, and terminating in a crown of handsome foliage. Woodsorrels, ferns, mosses, and lichens of many kinds were abundant, and I observed several new lepidoptera and beetles; amongst the mammalia there were some small beasts of prey and a great many rock-rabbits. Towards the west, the land sloped towards a brook that, after rain, assumes the dimensions of a river; from Moshaneng it flows north by west, then north-west, and finally due north, when it joins the Molapo. The declivity is steep, and the upper part wooded, and is known to be the resort of *Hycena brunnea* and *punctata*, as well as of the caracal and leopard.

But the extensive highlands are notoriously infested by large numbers of that most dangerous of all the South African beasts of prey, the *Canis pictus*, also called *Lycaon pictus* or *venaticus*, and ordinarily known as "the wild dog." It is one of the most rapacious and destructive animals on the face of the earth, and is a deadly enemy to all kinds of cattle. Both Montsua and Mr. Martin had warned me to be on my guard against their attacks. "Never let

your bullocks graze out at night," were Montsua's words to me, "and never let them be unguarded even by day, if you expect to bring many of them to



HYENAS AMONG THE CATTLE.

Molopolole." In size this dreaded animal is about as large as a young wolf, only more slender, and in shape it is a cross between the proteles and

hyæna. Always hunting in herds, they are especially dangerous; they attack the larger quadrupeds, oxen, elands, and hartebeests, whilst their ravages amongst sheep, goats, and wild pigs are still more destructive; they are not content with one victim, but seize a second and a third, so that the devastation they make is really frightful. They do not confine their visits to the native territory, but make their way to cultivated lands on the border of the Transvaal. They have their holes underground, and sometimes leave their quarters in winter to range over wider districts, returning in the spring. When they start on their raids, they hold their noses high in the air, and if unsuccessful in discovering a scent, they divide into little groups, and disperse in various directions with their noses down to the surface of the ground. Having found the track of any wild or domestic animal, except the horse, which is too swift for them, the entire pack, yelping and baying, darts off upon the chase with such eager impetuosity, that many of them fall into the bushes, or run foul of rocks and ant-hills. Through being so small, they not unfrequently succeed in getting close to cows or antelopes before they are observed; and whilst the cow may be defending herself by her horns from the assailants in front, two or three of the voracious brutes will be biting at her heels, and as many more at her belly; finding defence hopeless, the unfortunate creature will take to flight; this occasionally succeeds, and cows are from time to time seen



reaching their homes in the farmsteads with dreadful wounds all over their bodies; but if they stumble or get seized by the neck or nostrils, or bitten through their knees or in the stomach, so that the bowels protrude, it is all over with them, and they die in the most horrible agonies.

The 18th was spent in crossing the Banquaketse table-land. Everything seemed blooming in the advancing summer, and I did not see a single withered mimosa. Towards sundown we entered the valley of a sand-river, now reduced to a mere rivulet, called the Mosupa, Masupa, or Moshupa; it was said to join the Taung, an affluent of the Notuany. The river-bed and its banks were partially strewn with gigantic blocks of granite that lay in immense flats on the left-hand shore, their upper surfaces being slightly hollowed, forming natural reservoirs. A few hundred yards to the right the stream made a sudden turn to the north-east, and just in the bend rose a fantastic crag connected with two others of inferior height, and formed of huge masses of rock.

As we descended from the high ground towards the valley, some luxuriant woodlands and shrubberies cut off any very distant view, but made some graceful scenery. The setting sun, all aglow, was just resting on the edge of the adjacent table-land, on the east of which the Masupa held its course. As the gorgeous disk became concealed, and a more equal light fell upon the scene, our eyes fell upon an object which drew from us all an involuntary expression of surprise. Had we been anywhere



but in the heart of South Africa, we should have concluded at once that we were looking upon some ancient churchyard; what we really saw were the ruins of a town, enclosed by a low stone wall. The guide whom Montsua had sent with us, in giving an account of the place, said that until the last few years it had been occupied by a branch of the Banquaketse, but that the son of the chief Mosilili, named Pilani, who was a friend of Sechele, the king of the Bakuenas, had with a number of his dependents left his father's town and Khatsisive's territory, and had settled in Sechele's new district in Molopolole; whereupon Mosilili, an old ally of Khatsisive's, finding his town half deserted, left the remainder of the residents in the lurch, and took up his abode near Kanya.

During a stroll that I took along the river, I came across some very pretty bits of scenery. The banks were high and thickly clothed with vegetation; and in the stream the slippery boulders, piled one above another, formed little cataracts and natural weirs that future settlers might well utilize, either for turning mills or irrigating meadows. In the thickets on the banks were flocks of horned guineafowl (*Numida coronata*), and in muddy places I saw distinct traces of otters and water-lizards.

At dinner-time we noticed on the over-hanging rocks a number of rock-rabbits, called "dossies" by the Boers. We started off for a chase. These creatures are the smallest of all extant pachydermata, and, on account of being so continually hunted by

the natives, are very shy. As long as we kept near the waggon, which was stationed at the ruins, they remained passive enough, either squatting as they watched us from the ledges of rock, or contentedly seeking roots in the bushes, and figs on the sycamores ; but no sooner did we approach the foot of the crags, than they bounded away instantly into the nearest crevices.

Whilst Eberwald, F., and Stephan were shooting on the east hill, I made my way to the west, and before long spied out a rock-rabbit that seemed quite unsuspecting of my movements, and was crouching in a melancholy attitude, as if oblivious of all the affairs of itself and the rabbit-world in general. With much caution, and not without many ludicrous tumbles, which caused a good deal of amusement to Pit, who was with me, I scrambled on till I was just within range. Pit wanted me to get nearer ; but, assured that my opportunity was now or never, I fired a charge of small shot straight upwards. My aim was perfectly good ; the rock-rabbit rolled on to the stem of a sycamore that overhung the precipice, and fell perpendicularly several feet. We made our way, out of breath, to the foot of the tree, but were doomed to disappointment. Although the ground was all stained with the fresh blood, the creature had disappeared ; we searched every nook and crevice, we investigated every corner, but were completely baffled in finding the wounded rabbit.

This *Hyrax capensis*, if it be not actually the same



HUNTING THE ROCK-RABBIT.







species as the *Hyrae abyssinicus*, is certainly very closely allied to it. It extends all over South Africa, from the south beyond the Zambesi; it generally selects rocky heights for its habitat; and, having once settled, it is extremely tenacious of its abode, not deserting it even though a farm or a village be established below. It is peculiar in its disposition, having all the appearance of being meditative, as though carefully weighing its movements before action, but withal of a savage and snarling nature. In size it is rather larger than a common rabbit; it has short ears and bright little eyes. Its fur, which is much sought after by the natives, is of a dark yellowish-brown tint. The flesh is eaten both by white men and natives; and many of the tribes, such as the Makalakas, make use of sticks armed with nails, with which they drag the animals out of their holes. Besides being hunted by men, it is preyed upon by the caracal, by the southern lynx (*Lynx pardinus*), and by the brown eagle. In spite, however, of all the persecution it suffers, it thrives wonderfully; and nothing seems to put a check upon its propagation. The young ones are often attacked by genets.

The cliffs that are steepest, and the crags that are the most rugged, are the favourite resorts of the rock-rabbit. It is not unfrequently found with a little hare, but this resides, ordinarily, more on the surface of the ground than in clefts of any depth. It loves warmth; its chief business of life, after providing itself with food, appears to be basking in

the sun; and damp winters, rare though they are on the table-land, and extreme cold, try it severely. In confinement, if it be not allowed plenty of space for moving about, or if it be shut up in any premises that are the least damp, it soon pines away; it is, however, very frequently to be seen in dwelling-houses, tied up by a piece of cord, which it does not attempt to gnaw. The price at which one can be bought varies from two to five shillings.

There is another species of rock-rabbit, one of which, although I saw a specimen, I was never able to procure. It has a foxy-red fur. I saw it in one of the limestone-funnels in the western Transvaal. Besides this, there is a smaller grey sort, found in the wooded districts of the southern part of Cape Colony, in Kaffraria, in Natal, and still further north. Of this I have seen two examples. It is said to have a shrill piping note, and to be very wild, but better able to endure damp than its brother of the woods.

As soon as we had all gathered together again after our little ramble, we made another start. Our road took us across several sandy river-beds, as well as over a great number of rain-trenches, the edges of which were overgrown with fine verdant mimosas. Near one of the trenches, our guide drew our attention to numerous hyæna and leopard-tracks, a hint to be upon our guard, which we did not neglect.

And not without reason. Our bullocks had with much difficulty just effected the passage of the Shutani stream, when the dogs gave tongue







THE AFRICAN LYNX.



furiously, and Stephan screamed out, "Bas, bas! pass up, een chut lup nack ye tu!"<sup>3</sup>

In a moment our attention was fixed upon the direction whence came the sound of an angry barking; another instant and a creature, yellowish in colour, with dark spots, bounded in front of the waggon; a moment more, and it had dashed down the slope. It was a southern lynx, known to the natives as a "thari." It looked so small, and the dogs, with Onkel at their head, were so close upon its track, that we did not wait to fetch our guns, but joined helter-skelter in the chase, rushing headlong over bushes, rocks, and every obstacle. We had not, however, a very long run; the dogs suddenly came to a halt at a mass of stone deeply embedded in the ground, where a rift about sixteen inches wide formed the entrance to a hole; the dogs stood before the gap and barked vehemently; the thari could be heard spitting savagely out of reach.

We could not spare the time to hunt out the lynx from its retreat, and with great reluctance were obliged to return to the waggon. At night, when we made our camp, I enjoined my people to keep the best look-out they could, and as an additional protection against leopards, I ordered several large fires to be lighted.

It was through thick and leafy underwood that we proceeded on our next day's journey. We met two women, whose necks and breasts were covered

<sup>3</sup> "Master! master! take care, something is running at you!"

with many strings of beads, their arms and thighs being encircled with rings about as thick as one's finger, formed also of tiny beads; they were walking, followed by a boy, who was driving a bullock laden with their baggage. By crossing the Koluany we had entered upon the territory of Sechele, the king of the Bakuenas, who, with the exception of the two Bamangwato chiefs, owns more land than any of the Bechuana rulers.

Having made the transit of a little stream called the Malili, the bed of which was partly stony and partly sandy, we had to ascend through a forest where the sand was very deep; when we reached the top we could discern a chain of hills in the north, which seemed to be wooded. They were the central portion of the Bakuena heights, and on coming nearer we found that they were joined by another ridge of hills, high up on one of which was a white speck, like a whitewashed European building. Our guide informed us that it belonged to Molopolole, Sechele's residence. In order to reach the town, which was built on the slope of the range, we had to pass through a wide valley, the bottom of which was occupied by some meagre, ill-cultivated fields.

In the evening we made our camp about the middle of the valley, on a grass plot intersected by the bed of a brook, and near three native villages lying at the foot of a hill. About 300 yards to the east were the heights surrounding Sechele's villa, which was built several hundred feet above the level of the brook, and at the end of a shallow pass wind-

ing up the hills to the north. In close proximity to the villa, which was sheltered by a small rocky eminence, were the offices belonging to the royal household, the kotla, or enclosed conference-hall of the Bakuenas, and the residences of some traders, who were making a temporary stay in the place. Down below, on the edge of the valley, was a native village, also a portion of Molopolole; whilst a third part lay at the foot of the isolated southern ridge that was separated from the extensive northern and eastern chain by a long narrow pass called Kobuque by the natives. At the base of the northern hills, near a part that is fallen into ruins, there was yet another quarter of the town; this was not in the valley, but just outside, adjoining the fields that extended to the south-south-west. A second pass, the rocky entrance of which was called Molopolole, and gave its name to the town, ran from the valley in a northerly direction, and formed the course of the brook that descended from the Bakuena heights. Just where this pass joined the valley stood the mission buildings and the school, the chapel being situated in the upper portion of the town.

## CHAPTER X.

## FROM MOLOPOLOLE TO SHOSHONG.

Picturesque situation of Molopolole—Sechele's territory—Bakwena architecture—Excursion up the glen—The missionaries—Kotlas—My reception by Sechele—A young prince—Environs of Molopolole—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Religious ceremonies—Linyakas—Medical practice—Amulets—Moloi—The exorcising of Khamé—Rain-doctors—Departure from Molopolole—A painful march—Want of water—The Barwas and Masarwas—Their superstition and mode of hunting—New Year's Day in the wilderness—Lost in the woods—Saved by a Masarwa—Wild honey—The Bamangwato highlands—Arrival at Shoshong.



WHITE-ANT HILLS.

VIEWED from the grassy valley in which we were



standing, Molopolole appeared undeniably the most picturesque of all the Bechuana towns. Around us were the rocky heights, most of them absolutely perpendicular in their upper parts, the lower half being formed of huge masses of rock, thickly wooded on the less abrupt declivities, and occasionally adorned with some giant aloe; on our right, overhanging the pass, was the Molopolole rock, with its interesting geological formation, and between us and the mouth of the defile were fine trees shading the mission buildings and their little gardens with their tropical growth of bananas and sugar-canes; in front of us, at the base of a steep cliff on the east, was one native village, and at the foot of a wooded eminence to the west lay another, in which was the spacious store of Messrs. Taylor, which, next to that of Francis and Grant, is the most important in the whole Bechuana country; between the villages the eye rested upon the rocky pass known as the Kobuque, and high above the more easterly of the two stood the portion of the town occupied by the royal residence, and the abodes of the upper class of the tribe. Turning to the north and west, we could see the part of the town that lay at the foot of the northern ridge, whilst outside the valley were the red ruins of a deserted village, and beyond that again the open plain, bounded on the south and south-west by the dark verdure of the woods that we had just traversed. Nothing was more striking in the entire scene than some enormous ant-hills standing at the edge of the

brook at the foot of the hills on the north; the principal pyramid was as much as nine feet and a half in height, and, including some smaller ones at the side, occupied an area forty feet in circumference.

But greatly as the scenery of Molopolole is to be admired, a like measure of approval cannot be bestowed either on the agricultural industry of its population, or on their style of architecture; nevertheless, their ruler deserves some credit for his prudent choice of this natural stronghold for his residence.

Sechele, the present king, to whom Livingstone has devoted more than one chapter of his "Travels," and of whom I have some few further particulars to relate, formerly resided with his Bakuenas to the south-east of Molopolole, near the spot where we now find the town of the Manupi. His tribe had become considerably reduced in numbers, through its wars and skirmishes with the surrounding people. Nothing but ruins now marks the site of his former home, which was near the Transvaal frontier, and called Kolobeng. Here it was that, in 1842, he was visited by the Nestor of African travellers.

Driven from Kolobeng by the Boers, Sechele next settled in Liteyana; but, in 1865, he migrated about ten miles eastward to Molopolole, where already there was a settlement established, and where he was joined by Pilani from Masupa. His territory, which is the most northerly of the four Bechuana kingdoms that I have mentioned, is bounded on the west

by the great Namaqualand ; on the north by the eastern and western Bamangwato ; on the east by the Limpopo and Marico on the Transvaal frontier ; and on the south by the country of the Banquaketse. The southern frontier lies under lat.  $24^{\circ} 10'$  S., and runs down past Kolobeng, in a south-east direction, as far as the Dwars Mountains and the Great Marico ; the northern frontier, on the side of the two Bamangwato kingdoms, is in lat.  $23^{\circ} 30'$  S., and partly follows the course of the Sirorume River. I should estimate the number of Sechele's actual subjects to be about 35,000, whilst the Batlokas, Bakhatlas, and Makhosi that reside in the country, but are not tributary to him, amount to 18,000 or 20,000 more. The entire population of Banquaketseland is nearly 30,000 ; the subjects of Montsua, the Barolong king, muster 35,000 ; whilst the smaller Barolong tribes that reside further in the neighbourhood of such towns as Marokana, and do not pay tribute to Montsua, may be estimated at 30,000 more. Man-kuruane, the Batlapin king, has more than 30,000 people under his dominion ; and in the little Mamusa kingdom there are now scarcely 5000 inhabitants, although a few years ago there were at least 10,000 in the neighbourhood of Mamusa Town alone.

On the evening of the 21st, our encampment in the Molopolole valley was visited by an ill-clad Dutchman, who worked here as a smith, and by two natives, who directed us where to find pasturage for our oxen. They were soon followed by Mr. Price and Mr. Williams, the two missionaries, who came

to bid us welcome to the place. Mr. Williams has since returned to Europe, and Mr. Price has been ordered by his society to Central Africa. By his second marriage with Miss Moffat, this gentleman became related to Dr. Livingstone.

I took two excursions next morning—one to the ruined town on the west, and another up the glen that opened into the valley, by the Molopolole Pass. Amongst the ruins I noticed some vaulted buildings, constructed of reeds, twigs, and cement, similar to those which I had seen in Mosilili's Town on the Mosupa River. Turkish figs, and the well-known South African datura, with its violet-coloured blossoms, grew luxuriantly about the place.

The huts occupied by the Bakuenas, or Bakwenas, differed somewhat from those of the Batlapins and Barolongs. They were generally less substantially built, and in this respect were especially inferior to the Barolong huts; most of them, however, had the clay enclosures which are formed by the eastern Batlapins round their fire-places, but which are dispensed with by those of the south and west. In the villages, I found small meeting-rooms, or conference-halls, standing amongst the homesteads; they consisted of a conical straw roof, supported on twenty piles or more, the intervals between the piles being filled up half-way by a substantial wall of rushes, ornamented with simple devices in ochre.

My little expedition up the Molopolole glen well repaid me for the trouble. I shot several fish, and by the help of my rod caught no less than seven



sheat-fish. Under the overhanging, almost perpendicular cliff, that formed the left-hand side of the pass, was a deep place that by means of dams, partly natural and partly artificial, was kept perpetually full of water, which got dried up within the town. In arid seasons, this was an excellent refuge for the fish, better even than the smaller pools higher up the glen, which, being exposed to the ravages of otters and lizards, did not allow the fish to be propagated as rapidly as they otherwise would have been.

Accepting an invitation from the missionaries, I paid them a visit, and found that Mr. Price had a home that was furnished with much comfort and considerable taste. It must, however, have been a great difficulty for him to attain such an amount of domestic civilization. He had been one of the two missionaries appointed to conduct the mission into the country of the Makololos; their reverses, however, had been so many, and their non-success so complete, that they had been obliged to abandon their undertaking. His associate, Mr. Williams, belonged, like himself and the other missionaries in Kuruman, Taung, Kanya, and Shoshong, to the London Missionary Society; he had been several years in South Africa, and was now building himself a house. They offered to introduce me to the king. Accordingly, on the second day after my arrival, we proceeded to mount the rocky heights on which, like an eagle's nest, stands the part of the town that is occupied by Sechele and his retinue. Passing the unfinished house of Mr. Williams, we had first to

ascend a narrow section of the glen, at the end of which stood the chapel built by Mr. Price, an unpretending edifice, sixty feet long and twenty-one feet wide, with an aisle and a thatched roof. Thence we passed on through the south-east quarter of the



KING SECHELE.

upper portion of the town, and, before proceeding to the royal residence, had to direct our steps to the kotla, to pay our respects to the king, who had received formal notice of my arrival. By the "kotla," I mean one of the enclosures that I have described as erected in Bechuana villages and towns

for the purposes of conference and debate. On the side of the enclosure facing the royal residence was an opening, capable of being closed at pleasure by trunks of trees. Sitting on a bench near this spot, the king, surrounded by his relatives, subordinates, and the elders of his tribe, listens to the reports of his hunters, spies, and messengers, receives the visits of ambassadors from other kings, who are allowed to squat before him on the ground ; and delivers all his judgments, sometimes by his own word, and sometimes by the mouth of one of his representatives. Not unfrequently there is a small wooden hut close at hand within the enclosure, where a fire is kept burning, providing a place of assembly in wet weather. The kotlas are sometimes obliged to serve as forts ; and such as are situated at the foot of hills are protected on the side of attack by logs of extra size and weight as a defence against missiles.

Sechele received us standing. He was a man considerably over fifty years of age, stout, very tall, and with such a perpetual smile playing on his face as to give me at once the impression that I was in the presence of an utter hypocrite. This *prima facie* impression was subsequently confirmed.

After acknowledging our salutations, Sechele turned to Mr. Price, and begged him to tell me that my appearance pleased him more than that of any white man he had ever seen. Mr. Price had hardly finished interpreting what had been said, when, in turning towards the king in astonishment at receiving so flattering a compliment from a man



whom I had never met before, I caught him winking his right eye at a subordinate chief and his son with an expression that completely belied his words. The facility with which, on perceiving my surprise, he resumed his habitual smirk, proved that he had no inconsiderable amount of self-possession.

He then invited me and the two missionaries to accompany him to his house, and to take a cup of tea. It was only a few minutes' walk to the front of his residence, a new and trim-looking edifice. Close beside it was the old house, now occupied by the king's eldest son, and adjoining it were the dwellings of the various other members of the royal family. The new abode had just been erected by the firm of Messrs. Taylor at a cost of 3000*l.*, the money being raised by the sale of ostrich feathers and oxen.

Sechele's establishment is more luxurious than that of any other of the Bechuana sovereigns, and he has quite adopted the European style of living.

Before describing our reception I may say a few words about Sechele himself.

Although he was the first of the six Bechuana kings to profess himself a Christian, he has the reputation of standing lower in moral character than any of them, whilst his northerly neighbour, Khame, the present king of the Eastern Bamangwatos is ranked highest, our good friend Montsua being assigned the second place. Sechele is a thorough intriguer, double-faced, and evidently a firm believer in the maxim that "the end justifies the means."



The name of his tribe, the Bakuenas, is derived from two words, Ba or Ma, and Kuena, or Kwena, signifying "crocodile-men," i. e. the men who dance the crocodile-dance, implying that although they do not actually worship it, they regard the crocodile with a certain amount of veneration. The king's full title is Sechele M'Kwase Morena ea Bakuena.

Quite unprepared for our visit, the queen was reclining in the courtyard, Bakuena fashion, on an oxhide; but as we entered she rose to greet us, and conducted us to the house. She was a tall, muscular woman, wearing a handkerchief bound round her head and fastened behind. She had on a cotton gown, and a great woollen shawl. Her designation is Ma-Sebele, the mother of Sebele, which was the name of her youngest son.

Whilst the queen went to order us some refreshments, Sechele handed us into the reception-room, or, as he called it in broken English, the drawing-room. It was furnished throughout in European style, the chairs and couches being of walnut-wood, covered with red velvet. Nothing pleased the king better than to exhibit the interior of his palace to a white man, and the complacent grin that overspread his countenance, as he ushered me through the apartments, evidently showed that he considered that he was giving me a great treat. After requesting me to be seated, he spread out his pocket-handkerchief, which he did not appear to use for any other purpose, on the chair which he selected for himself, and sat upon it. The queen, when

she returned, seated herself upon a wooden stool.

Sechele now proceeded to question me, through the missionaries as interpreters, as to my own nationality, and the object of my journey. It was the case with him, as with most Bechuanas, that the only white men that he knew were Englishmen, whom he liked, and Boers, whom he did not like; and he was manifestly surprised when he learned that I belonged to neither of them. As soon as he thought he had got the word "Austria" impressed upon his memory, he inquired upon what river I resided, and whether I lived in a town or at a cattle-station, by which he meant in the country. The name of Prague was another puzzle for him, and his surprise was still further increased when he heard that it was twenty times as large as Molopolole; his manner of expressing himself being that "his heart was full of wonder at the greatness of the village."

Turning to his wife, he said,—

"He is a nyaka (a doctor); he is not an Englishman; he is not a Boer; but—"

His memory had failed him, and he had to turn to the missionaries to be prompted.

He caught the word Austrian, and, rising from his seat, stammered out,—

"O-o-stri-en!"

Then, looking round, he smiled as if he had accomplished a prodigious feat.

At this moment a new comer appeared on the

scene. A tall boy came in, about fourteen years of age, dressed in a shirt, trousers, waistcoat, and a red woollen cap. He shook hands with the missionaries, as old acquaintances, and laughed at everything that was said, especially when the queen introduced him to me as her "Tholing Beb (darling baby) Sebele." When he had been with us about half-an-hour he suddenly recollected that he had come to say that tea was ready in the dining-room.

Sechele immediately led the way; we followed him, the queen bringing up the rear. We were all in great good-humour, particularly Tholing Beb and myself, both of us looking forward to partaking (he for the second time that day) of the cakes of the Makoa (white man), which I had not tasted for the last two months. The young prince, however, was not allowed to join us at the round table, but was made to stand aloof, and do all the waiting, an office which he performed very fairly.

The dining-room table was handsome, and covered with a white cloth. Tea was served in cups shaped like little bowls. The king swallowed at least a quart. The sugar-basin, cream-jug, and the rest of the service were placed upon a side-table; they were all of silver, being, as I understood, a present from the merchants who made periodical visits to Molopolole. The tea was good, and the cakes unexceptionable.

There was now a renewal of the conversation that had commenced in the drawing-room, and I was catechised about the proceedings of the English

Government in the diamond-fields, and those of the Dutch Government in Pretoria and Bloemfontein. The queen clearly had no interest in these subjects, and gradually resumed the nap which had been interrupted by our arrival. Sechele appeared a little vexed at her breach of etiquette, and attempted to rouse her by some spasmodic coughs, which became more violent at each repetition. Failing, however, to awaken her from her slumber, which every moment grew more sonorous, he stealthily gave her such pushes with his elephantine foot that I had the hardest matter to keep from bursting out laughing.

Controlling myself as well as I could, I said, "Morena, when I was only thirteen years old, I read your name in Nyaka Livingstone's book. I little thought that I should ever see you and speak to you: far more surprising is it to me to find myself drinking tea in your palace."

The king, although he still practised rain-magic, had become familiar with some passages of Scripture, and said, with a sanctimonious air, "His ways are past finding out."

But while Mr. Williams had been interpreting what I said to him, he had kept one eye fixed on his wife; and, observing to his disgust that she was almost falling from her seat in her drowsiness, he only waited until he thought I was not watching him, to give her such a tremendous poke, that she had a narrow escape of knocking her cup off the table with her forehead.





RAIN-DOCTORS.

I occupied all my spare time at Molopolole in exploring the neighbourhood, and procured some good additions to my collection. As zoological specimens, I obtained a very fine head of the *Oryx capensis* with long horns, a leopard skin, one of the *Gueparda jubata*,

and several of the Hyrax. I also procured a skin of the *Viverra Zivetta*, which seems to be very rare, besides some of the *Felis caligata*. Mr. Williams brought me the carcass of a three-year-old caama-fox, that had on some previous occasion been caught in a trap and lost one of its hind paws ; it had now been caught a second time, and more effectually. The Bakuena heights are the habitat of the beautiful klipp-springer ; and in the country north of Molopolole, we for the first time came across elands and giraffes.

I was very much struck by the number of medium-sized birds of prey, such as sparrow-hawks, falcons, buzzards, and kites. Mr. Williams had killed as many of the kites as he could, on account of the depredations they made amongst his wife's poultry. A great variety of owls, white owls, barn-owls, and small screech-owls likewise had their abode in the cliffs, and in the crevices of the rocks there were many sorts of mammalia and reptiles, snakes and lizards finding there a most congenial home. Insects, such as lepidoptera and flies, abounded in the luxuriant vegetation, and in the decaying trunks of trees. I also made a large gathering of beetles, spiders, and centipedes. I may say, without the least hesitation, that a student in almost any branch of natural history could hardly fail to make a visit to the Bakuena hills highly remunerative.

Here, just as on the Bamangwato heights, and other rocky ridges of the high plateau of Central

South Africa in connexion with the Marico or Matabele mountain systems, we find either the steep, fissured slopes of table-hills, or table-lands studded with conical and isolated peaks. The ascent to this network of hills is effected by a wooded and sandy plain with a scarcely perceptible rise, and the descent is just as gradual to a shallow river-bed, beyond which rises again another similar ridge of heights. The geological composition of these highlands consists of granite, quartz-slate, trapdykes, veins of chalk, and ferruginous sandy clay. The vegetation is characterized by some gigantic aloes, which in places form regular groves.

In concluding my account of Molopolole, I may be allowed to introduce a brief notice of some of the religious and social customs of the Bechuanas generally. I obtained many details from the English missionaries, Messrs. Mackenzie, Hephrun, Price, Williams, Brown, and Webb; from the German missionary, Herr Jensen; and from several of the better educated Bechuanas themselves; and in the course of my three journeys into the interior, I was able to verify many particulars by my own observation.

In the strict sense of the word the Bechuanas, that is to say, the branches of that family in Central South Africa, cannot be said to have any religion at all; nevertheless the circumstance, that upon receiving their first instruction in Christianity, they at once applied to the Unseen God the designation of "Morimo," without attaching any difference to



the signification of the word, would lead to the inference that in bygone times they had rendered homage to some presumed divinity either visible or invisible. Another word, closely allied to Morimo, and not unfrequently heard in the vocabulary of the Bechuanas, is "Barimo," by which they appear to signify the spirits of the departed. But although they cannot be said to have any actual religion, the mass of the population put a kind of faith in certain ceremonies, which amongst other people professing polytheism would be regarded as religious rites; they likewise avow a degree of veneration for certain animals, inasmuch as they will not kill them, eat them, nor use their skins. We find also that ceremonies such as these to which I refer are performed and inculcated by persons educated and set apart for the purpose, with the king, or if the king should be a Christian, with the heathen next in rank to him, at their head; thus forming a sort of society of priests, having a high priest, called nyaka or nyaga.

As long as the Bechuanas, though subdivided into several families, were united under a single sceptre, the right of kingship was hereditary in the Baharutse tribe; and subsequently the old royal family retained the prerogative of performing what might be called the sacerdotal part in the ceremonials. For a long while after the empire was broken up, and the various tribes had branched off—one to the north, others to the south, east, south-east, and south-west, forming larger or smaller independent



states of their own—the ancient royal family was not only respected, but notwithstanding that their sovereign control was limited to the small clan from which they originally sprang, they still held the rank of high priests at all the great superstitious rites, so that even members of other reigning families, as well as the nyakas, would journey from the new states back to the court of the Baharutse to see the ceremonials duly performed by their former chief. Of late years, however, since the branch tribes have developed into important states, and many of their chiefs have become Christians, the custom has almost ceased; nevertheless the ancient royal family is always held in high veneration by the whole of the Bechuanas; and this, in spite of its members through mutual dissension having lost every vestige of power, and residing either as subjects of the Transvaal in and about the town of Linokana, or as subjects of Khatsisive in the town of Moshaneng. The present chief of the eastern Baharutse, and consequently the proper sovereign of the Bechuanas is a young man named Pilani.

In the detached Bechuana kingdoms the sovereign institutes and arranges the ceremonies; in districts where several tribes are united under one rule, this responsibility devolves upon the leading chief. The most important of the ceremonies is the formal partaking of the first-fruits, mainly of the gourd; but, in addition to this, there are the initiation into the healing art, the invocation of rain, and the magical

incantations. The partaking of the first-fruits must be performed by the chief alone, in his capacity of head doctor and magician; but in the other rites he is assisted by the linyakas or priests, who also practise the arts of rain-making and magic, and who are generally nyakas, having, in addition to their other attainments, a certain superficial acquaintance with the medicinal properties of plants.

Out of doors these linyakas are distinguished by a short mantle made from the skin of the baboon (*Cynocephalus Babuin*), and their homes are characterized by carpets made from the skins of the *Hycena crocata* or *maculata*, on which they sit to receive audiences. Many of them wear round their necks whole strings of the bones of different mammals, birds, and reptiles, and all, without exception, are provided with four little pegs, generally made of ivory, but sometimes of horn, and branded over with figures, which are thrown like dice, and used for the ostensible purpose of diagnosis; these pegs are called "dolos," and are occasionally carried by men who, though not actually linyakas, have paid a sum of money to be instructed in their use.

The office of linyaka is hereditary, but young aspirants may obtain admission into the order. Before entering upon the requisite course of study, every candidate must present his teacher with a cow, or some gift of equal value, or if he should happen to have gained some mali (money) in the diamond-fields, he has to hand over a fee, which may vary from 4*l.* to 7*l.* The first step in the course

is to dig up<sup>1</sup> the plants that are reputed to have medicinal virtues, and for this purpose the student is taken through the woods and plains, and made familiar not only with the plants themselves, but with the parts of them that are to be employed, and with the times and seasons when they ought to be gathered. The appropriate parts of the plants having been steeped in water to form decoctions, or dried and pounded into powders, are then, by the use of certain formularies, converted into "medicines;" other formularies being repeated when the remedies are administered, an operation which must of necessity be performed by the doctor himself, and which ordinarily takes place in the presence of a noisy crowd of lookers-on.

In disorders like typhus or dysentery, sudorifics are the remedy most frequently exhibited. The patient is made to lie down in his best fur jacket, or in a warm woollen shawl bought probably for the occasion, and when the medicines have done their work, the nyaka reappears and carries off the reeking garment, in order, as he says, to bury it, sweat and all. The patient may be rejoiced at having the disorder carried so effectually out of the house, but if, when convalescent, he should happen to see the doctor's wife parading the village in his jackal-skin, or in the comfortable shawl, he would never venture to hint at its restoration.

The latter portion of the course of study com-

<sup>1</sup> Digging forms a conspicuous element in all the Bechuana ceremonies.

prises the art of casting the dolos. Besides being doctors, the linyakas are conjurers and magicians, and accordingly have to teach their pupils how to procure, use, and sell the amulets, which, bound round the forehead, or worn on the neck, are supposed to secure protection from the malevolence of enemies, from the attacks of disease, from the pursuit of wild beasts, or from any injuries by gunshot. Such amulets are manufactured out of the tarsus bones of certain small quadrupeds, the scales of pangolins, the metatarsus bones and claws of several birds, the skins of snakes and lizards, small tortoise-shells, or the bodies of large weevils. None, however, of these are considered of more importance than the dolos, with their variegated devices, strung together either singly or mixed with beads on blades of grass, or hairs from the tail of the giraffe. The principal use that is made of them is for purposes of divination; they are brought into play to find out the whereabouts of stolen goods, or the retreat of a fugitive, as well as to exorcise obnoxious men and beasts; they are considered capable of charming away an enemy, and of averting mischief, certain formulæ generally being recited whenever they are employed.

Another department of the linyakas' functions is to perform certain public ceremonies for the common welfare, such as burying a couple of antelopes' horns on the paths leading to a town; placing pots on stakes in a prominent part of a village; hanging baboon-skulls near the entrance of a kotla; or set-



ting the heads of some large beasts of prey at the gate of a cattle-kraal, the design in each case being to provide a charm against external attack. Occasionally, also, fields are furnished with magic charms to ensure a fruitful harvest, or to keep off locusts; the amulets which are employed for these public purposes being always prepared with mysterious rites, and only the most venerable of the linyakas being permitted to officiate. Amongst the Marutse, on the Central Zambesi, human sacrifices have been made on these occasions.

The public amulets are called "lipeku," and there are some occasions in which the laity are allowed to take part in their preparation. Such is the case with the "khomo kho lipeku," i. e. the dedication of the ox to the lipeku. For this ceremony a bullock is selected that has never been in harness; its eyelids are tightly sewn together with fine sinews; it is then turned in again with the rest of the herd, and having been watched for a while, is slaughtered; its blood is then boiled up with other charms, and the mixture preserved in small gourd-vessels. In times of war the king and his generals either smear themselves with the compound, or hang little pots of it on various parts of their bodies.

But although the linyakas in general secure the veneration of the people, there is a class of them that is feared and hated. Such of them as have been known to act from revenge, or who have voluntarily done any injury, or whose magic has proved

unavailing, are called "mloi," or evil magicians, an epithet held so detestable that a Bechuana cannot be more insulted than by having it applied to himself. A mloi is considered more potent than a linyaka; it is believed that he can control nature without the aid of any formal enchantment; that he can clamber over rocks, and cross rivers without being heard; that fire does not harm him; and that jackals cease howling at his approach. Mothers often quiet their crying children by threatening them with the mloi.

These evil magicians are credited with the desire of injuring the crops. Sometimes a true linyaka of good repute may be employed by a chief to inflict this injury on an enemy, but in that case the odium would fall upon the chief, without at all affecting the position of the linyaka.

The Bechuanas maintain that the mloi dig up corpses and kill new-born infants, in order to apply certain portions of the bodies to their incantations; but their most formidable charms are believed to be prepared from large serpents and crocodiles, and from other animals that are most difficult to capture. If any one has a grudge against his neighbour he will betake himself to a mloi, under cover of darkness, and pay him a fee for his services; whatever death the intended victim may subsequently die is confidently attributed to the operation of the magician; if he should die a natural death, he has been poisoned by the subtle "molemo," or if he falls on a hunting excursion, he has assuredly been attacked by some beast that the mloi had enchanted.

The accompanying illustration depicts a scene that occurred in Shoshong, in 1866. King Sekhomo was so jealous of the exceeding popularity of his son



KHAME'S MAGIC.

Khame, that he determined to kill him. For this purpose he secretly engaged some moloi to go by night and enact their deadliest enchantments in

front of Khame's house. Awakened by the gleam of a fire just beyond his enclosure, Khame crept out and stood quietly surveying the preparations. One of the performers of the mysteries happening to look round, and catching the sight of Khame's face in the glare, gave a loud cry of surprise; this so startled his companions that they took to their heels. The young man came forward, smashed up all the magic apparatus, threw it as so much lumber on the fire, which he stopped carefully to extinguish, and the next morning, to the chagrin of the king and the discomfiture of the moloi, made his appearance in the kotla as well and hearty as ever.

In conformity with the rest of their character, the moloi have a singular antipathy to rain; they claim the ability to ward it off by burning a fresh green bough, with a suitable incantation, and maintain that they can frighten away the clouds by the mystic use of their guns. In every possible way they lay themselves out to thwart the proceedings of the recognized rain-doctors.

Perhaps the avocation of the linyakas and their chief representative which is really the most important, is the invocation of rain. In protracted periods of drought, when there seems a probability of the accustomed public incantations turning out a failure, recourse is had to linyakas who reside in more rainy districts, the Malokwanas, from the right bank of the central Limpopo, being always ready to put in an appearance in consideration of an adequate present of cattle.



But in ordinary seasons the task is entrusted to the native linyakas, who in the early spring, either alone or accompanied by a few volunteers, betake themselves to a fertile plot of ground selected as appropriate for the purpose, and proceed "tsimo ea pula," i.e. to dig the rain-field. In the four corners of the field the men plant a number of seeds of maize, gourds, or water-melons, over which the linyakas have repeated their incantations, and then the women commence the work of digging the soil. The day of the ceremonial is the occasion of a general holiday, the women not going on with their labour till the following morning.

From that day forward the people are forbidden to gather the young branches of trees, especially those of the warten-bichi, which is regarded with veneration by the Bechuanas. But as soon as the kaffir-corn is ripe, the men, with the linyaka at their head, and provided with hatchets and knives, assemble at the kotla, and proceed to cut some branches from the sacred acacia; with these they first repair the royal cattle-kraal adjoining the kotla, and then make good any defects in their other enclosures. To carry a bough of the *Acacia detinens* round a village at midday before harvest would be regarded as a great calamity to the tribe.

During harvest-time all fruits, ostrich-feathers, and ivory must be brought into the town from the woods covered up. If it has rained in the night, and continues to rain in the morning, no one works

in the fields that day for fear of disturbing the rain, and inducing it to stop. When the wet weather has fairly set in, or as the Bechuanas conceive, when the doctors have brought on the rain, the linyakas have to continue their operation, so as to ensure that the downpour may be of long duration.

For this purpose they are accustomed to resort occasionally by themselves, but much more frequently in company with their pupils and the owners of the land, to some isolated spot away among the hills, where they whistle, shout, mumble their formulæ, and light fires on the ledges of the rocks, into which from time to time they throw handfuls of their magic compounds.

When at any time the efforts of the linyakas seem unavailing, the fault is supposed not to lie with them, but with certain of the community who must have committed some undetected breach of the laws. Suspicion more often than not falls upon widows or widowers, who are presumed to have omitted some of the purifications prescribed for their condition; they are accordingly sentenced to undergo a public purifying, and the linyakas are paid to erect grass-huts outside the town, where the accused are obliged to reside for an indefinite time, their hair being all shorn from their heads, and whence they are not permitted to depart to their homes until they are pronounced thoroughly cleansed.

If this purification of individuals should prove

unavailing, a general purifying of all fires and fire-places is ordered, and the linyakas proceed to remove from every hearth the three stones upon which the kettle is supported, and having carried them all away, and laid them in a heap outside the town, they consecrate as many new ones. During this ceremony all fires must be put out; and either in the evening of the same day, or early on the following morning, one of the assistant officers brings some brushwood and a light, and kindles the fires afresh.

If it should turn out that even this proceeding is a failure, more vigorous measures still have to be adopted. An universal cleansing of the entire town is proclaimed, and all accumulations of the bones of animals, all fragments of skins, and all remnants of human remains, are scrupulously collected and buried in a deep grave; and if the grave should be anywhere near the burial-place of a former chief, which is generally kept a secret, a cow is slaughtered to appease his anger, which probably has been aroused; and very often hunting excursions, known as "letshulo," are set on foot for the purpose of securing particular animals, some parts of which are essential for the linyakas' enchantments and rain-charms.

Whatever effect Christianity may have had in ameliorating the condition of the wives of the converts, it has done very little to lighten the severity of their tasks; the introduction of the plough, however, which is driven by men with the

help of oxen (animals which the women never touch), has relieved the Bechuana women of one of their most fatiguing labours. It is to be hoped that it will gradually tend to the abolition of all the senseless ceremonies of the rain-magic, which I have made this long digression to describe.

I resume the account of our travels.

We left Molopolole by the Koboque-pass, and proceeded northwards along the valley of an affluent of the Tshanyana. The vegetation around us was luxuriant, the river-banks, valleys, and hill-sides being partially wooded with shrubs and trees, and clothed with flowers and grasses of many varieties. The steep cliffs, here red, there yellow, there again grey or dark brown, formed natural terraces of rock, whilst the great loose boulders, some sharp at the edges, some rounded, were set in a framework of verdure, spangled with blossoms of every hue.

The clouds were not propitious, and it was through a heavy downpour of rain that we had to toil along the sandy road. But this was neither the end nor the worst of our ill-luck. When we came to a halt after the exertions of the day, I found that Stephan and Dietrich, the two servants that I had brought from Musemanyana, had disappeared, and with them two of my strongest bullocks. I had noticed on the previous evening how the runaways had been repeatedly warning me that there were lions in the neighbourhood, and concluded that they had a desire to dissuade me from continuing my



journey. Our distance from Molopolole was about fifteen miles; nevertheless I determined to make my way back, and to ask Sechele to despatch some horsemen over Khatsisive's country in search of the rascals; and finding next morning that the rain had almost ceased, accompanied by Boly and Pit, I set out on foot to the town.

I walked for five hours, but my heavy boots had by that time rendered my feet so painful that I was obliged to stop; and sitting down on the grass at the edge of the pass leading into the Molopolole valley, I sent Boly and Pit to carry my messages to Sechele and Mr. Price.

Hour after hour went slowly by, foreboding no good for the success of their mission, and when they joined me again quite late in the afternoon, it was only to confirm my fear that all search had been unavailing.

It was little less than martyrdom that I endured all the way back to the waggon. Unable to bear the pressure of my boots, I was compelled to walk barefooted, and as the rain had washed down on to the road countless seeds of a kind of ranunculus (*R. crepens*), that the Boers on account of their prickliness have named "Devil's grit," my agonies can be better imagined than described.

Only just before midnight we caught sight of the blaze of our camp-fire, and were greeted with a cheer of welcome.

As the place had no pleasant associations for us, we started as soon as we could on the following

morning, pursuing our way through the sandy woods still to the north. The road led us across some shallow depressions that evidently indicated a slope of the land eastward, in the rainy season containing some of the affluent brooks of the Limpopo.



PIT, THE GRIQUA, DISCOVERS LEOPARD TRACKS.

On the 29th our travelling was exceedingly laborious, not simply on account of the sand, but from the rise of the ground in the direction we were going. The shortest distance by road between Molopolole and Shoshong is 128 miles ; but in consequence of the deficiency of water, it is only at certain times of the year that the direct route is

available, and a long circuit generally has to be made. On foot the journey is shorter, and may be accomplished in five days.

Some traces of lions and leopards that we observed next day on the edge of the barren depressions warned us to proceed with caution, and the sand into which our wheels sank seven or eight inches did not allow our progress to be as rapid as we could desire.

The numerous skeletons of antelopes, elands, and giraffes were a token that at no long period previously the district must have abounded with game. On none of the giraffe-skulls that I examined between this place and Shoshong did I find the bony protuberances on the forehead to be of equal height, and many had one or both covered with exostoses, which in some cases formed a bridge between them across the brow.

Once more, on the 31st, we found ourselves in a sandy forest. During the last two days there had been no rain, and the South African sun poured down upon us its glowing beams. While we were toiling along, Boly drew my attention to some dark objects hanging on an acacia. On closer approach we found them to be large pieces of dry giraffe-hide, which we conjectured that some huntsmen had hung up and forgotten; but while we were handling them we were accosted by a Makalahari, who told us that they belonged to the morena Sechele, and thus put an end to any idea we might have entertained of appropriating them to ourselves. The man told

us that he and a few others were stationed there for giraffe-hunting, the flesh being their own perquisite, while the skins were the property of the king. I gave him a little present, and he told me that we should not meet with any water until the middle of the following day, a piece of information that made us push on with all possible speed, and we did not bring our day's march to an end before it was quite late.

The New Year's morning of 1874 dawned dull and drear. Although the previous day had been so hot the sky was now overcast, and the temperature considerably lower. Towards the middle of the day the atmosphere became clearer, and we saw a small column of smoke rising from a wooded eminence above the valley before us which seemed to extend towards the east. Had it been a column of gold we could hardly have been more delighted than we were at the sight of that dingy vapour, and we had no sooner discerned the miserable huts from which it arose than we sent Pit on ahead to implore the inhabitants to let us have some water to allay our thirst. Some children were playing in the vicinity, and we soon came upon two men in the valley who appeared to be awaiting our arrival. To our grievous disappointment, when we came up with Pit, he told us that he had ascertained that the only places from which the people obtained their drinking-water were a few deep pools, much too small for any animals but goats to drink from, and there was no place in the neighbourhood where



we could water our cattle that it was possible for us to reach before sunset ; and here were two of the people, who having obtained the permission of their master, a Bakuenta, offered to show us the nearest way.

One of these volunteer guides was a Masarwa. I think that I have already mentioned that the Bechuanas, like the Korannas of Mamusa, possess servants, or more properly slaves, belonging to the Makalahari race, sometimes termed the Bakalahari, who formerly owned the territory between the Zambesi and the Orange River. Although really slaves they are generally treated with much consideration ; but besides them, there are two other tribes, the Barwas and the Masarwas, that are reckoned as slaves, and are regarded by the Bechuanas with much more disdain ; although at times there are alliances between the Makalahari and the Bakuentas, no free Bechuana would ever dream of allowing a connexion between himself and either of these two subject races.

The Barwas and the Masarwas, although perhaps not really identical, are known by either name promiscuously amongst the northern Bechuanas and the Madenassanas, who live in the upper central parts of the two Bamangwato kingdoms. They may be described as a cross between some branches of the Makalahari and the Bushmen. Their form, complexion, language, and customs afford various indications of their double origin, and I do not think I can be mistaken in supposing them to

be a link between the Bushmen and the Bantu family.

The Makalahari are generally employed by their Bechuana masters as cowherds, and especially as domestic servants, but these Masarwas are perpetually engaged as hunters, a pursuit in which they are far greater adepts than their owners.



NATIVE POSTMEN.

Like the Bushmen they use bows and arrows, to which Bechuanas are little accustomed; they are very adroit also in capturing animals by means of poisoned assegais, and in driving them into pits; and they are remarkably skilful in making battus; in this respect being very like the Madenassanas, a tribe closely allied to them in appear-

ance and language. It must be mentioned, however, that it is especially necessary to be on one's guard against their craft, treachery, and thievish propensities.

In districts where game is abundant they reside in detached villages. Their huts look something like large haycocks, consisting of a framework of stakes driven into the earth, fastened together firmly at the top about five feet above the ground, and covered with a layer of twigs and dry grass; they are surrounded by no enclosure whatever, and a few smooth stones on which seeds are crushed or bones broken, some piles of ashes, some clusters of dry vegetable pods, and a few worn foot-tracks are the sole signs of their being used for human habitation. Though they are slaves, they are entrusted with guns and ammunition, but all the skins, ostrich feathers, ivory, and rhinoceros-horn that they procure, as well as certain wild fruits, such as those of the baobab and fan-palm, have to be handed over to their masters. If while hunting with his slaves a Bamangwato or Barolong master has to return home, he leaves the control with the eldest of them; but after being left they have to go back every three or four months and present themselves at the town to deliver what they have secured. On their arrival they are not allowed to enter during the daytime, but are compelled to wait outside, and to give in their names and an account of themselves to the inhabitant next in rank to the chief, who communicates what they report to him; mes-

sengers are then sent out to conduct them to the kotla. Hunters who omit to attend the royal residence in the proper way are sent for, and by stern reprimand are compelled to perform this duty.

The Masarwas are of medium height, reddish-brown complexion, and a repulsive cast of countenance. Although in form they resemble the Bushmen, in colour and feature they are more like the Makalahari; they are not, however, so faithful and confiding as these, and consequently are rarely engaged either as domestic servants or as soldiers. At the same time, they act very well as spies upon a frontier, and are useful in bringing intelligence of the advance of an enemy.

No people in South Africa are more skilful than the Masarwas in foraging out water in dry districts, or more keen in tracking game. The rough treatment that they have received from the Bechuanas, as punishment for their misdemeanours, makes them very shy of the white man; and in travelling across the Kalahari desert, or through such woods as we had just traversed, or through those between Shoshong and the Zooga, or, again, between the Salt Lakes and the Zambesi, a European may be followed unawares by people of this tribe, who keep their distance from mere fear of being maltreated or put to hard work; but let a good head of game be brought down, and before the carcass is cold he will find himself surrounded by a number of them, ready to receive his commission to disembowel it, and



quite content to receive a good piece of the flesh for their remuneration.

The Masarwas may be said to bear somewhat the same relation to the other South African tribes as the vulture does to the birds and the jackal to the beasts. Wherever his keen eye espies a vulture hovering in the air, he hastens towards the spot where it seems about to settle; there, if (as perchance he will) he catches sight of a lion in the middle of his savage meal, by dint of shouting, hurling stones, and firebrands, he will make the brute retreat, and climbing up like a monkey into a tree, or scrambling like a weasel into a bush, he will take deliberate aim, choosing a vulnerable spot into which he may send his poisoned arrow, and lay the monarch of the forest low.

Like the Bushmen in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the Barwas and Masarwas have a great aversion to agriculture and cattle-breeding. In their primitive dwellings, they do not seem to practise stone-carving, or to use any stone utensils; and the only attempt that I ever saw at carving amongst them was in extremely simple patterns, something like those executed by the Makalahari. Out of ostrich-eggs, however, they cut circles and manufacture long chains and various other ornaments. I never saw or heard of any formation of caves or grottoes among them, nor of any attempt at adorning the rocks.

Superstition is very rife in the entire tribe. Before his hunting-excursions, whether he goes

alone or in attendance upon his master, the Masarwa never fails to rattle and throw his dolos, in order to ascertain the position and the number of the game he is going to catch, and he relies completely on the indications they give as to his success. The dolos



MASARWAS AROUND A FIRE.

are consulted also in cases of sickness, and even to find out the time at which his master is likely to arrive. He calls them his Morimos, the name having been picked up from the Bechuanas, who used it originally to specify the Deity, but who employ it now merely to signify some object higher than the

Morenas (princes). In speaking of his treasured possession, he will say, "Se se Morimo se" (This is my god); or, "Lilo tsa Morimo sa me" (These are the instruments of my god); or, "Lilo-lia impulelela mehuku" (These tell me all about him); and not only does he implicitly believe that some sort of supernatural power resides in his *dolos*, but that he himself in the use of them becomes a sort of inspired instrument.

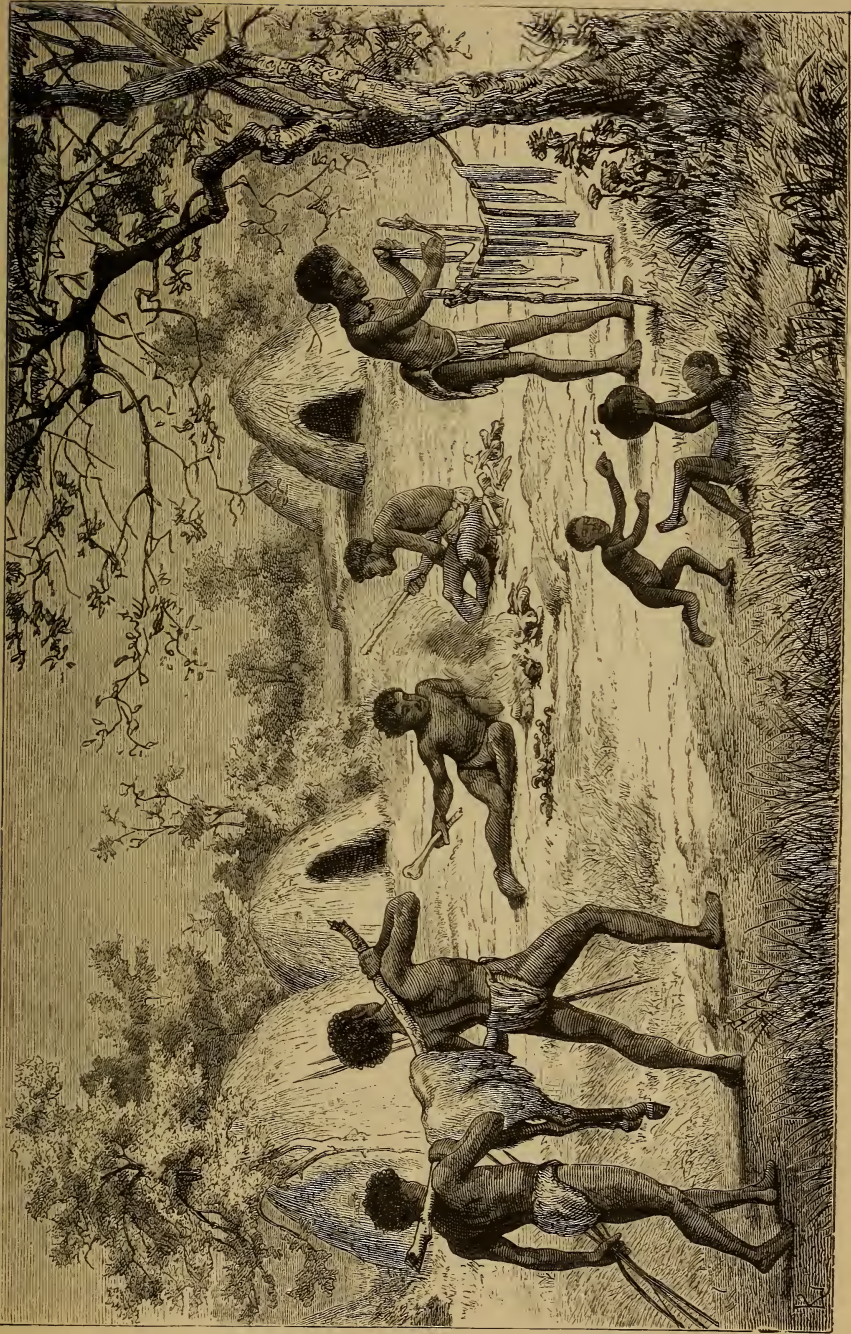
The Masarwas appear to act with more consideration for their wives than the Bechuanas and the Makalahari; they impose upon them no harder duties than fetching water, and carrying the ordinary domestic utensils; the vessels in which the water is conveyed being generally made of ostrich-shells, or of gourds bound with bast or strips of leather. They also show great regard for their dogs, and treat them in a way that is in marked contrast with the ill-usage that the Bechuanas bestow upon them.

As no traveller has ever resided amongst them for a sufficient length of time to become master of their language, very little is known about their habits and customs. It has, however, been ascertained about them that, on reaching maturity, the cartilage between the nostrils is pierced, and a small piece of wood is inserted and allowed to remain till a permanent hole is formed. The operation is described by the Sechuana word "rupa," and amongst the Bechuanas is preliminary to the rite of circumcision.

In many districts the Masarwas are above middle height, and sometimes, in the country of the Bamaugwatos and Bakuenas, are, like the dominant race, quite tall. After the repulsiveness of their features, there is nothing about them that strikes a traveller so much as the red, half-raw scars that they continually have on their shin-bones, and not unfrequently on their arms, feet, and ankles. Wearing only a small piece of hide round his loins, and carrying nothing more than a little shield of eland-hide, the Masarwa suffers a good deal from cold; but instead of putting his fireplace within an enclosure, like the Bechuana, or inside his hut, like the Koranna, he lights his fire in the open air, and squats down so close to it in order to feel its glow, that as he sleeps with his head on his knees, he is always getting frightfully scorched, and his skin becomes burnt to the colour of an ostrich's legs.

The Colonial Bushman is known to cover himself with the skin of some wild animal, so as to get within bowshot of his prey; and in very much the same way the Masarwa uses a small bush, which he holds in his hands and drives before him, whilst he creeps up close to the game of which he is in pursuit. A friend of mine once told me how he was one evening sitting over his fire, smoking, on the plains of the Mababi Veldt, where the grass was quite young and scarcely a foot high, and dotted over with little bushes, when all at once his eye rested upon a bush about fifty yards in front of him, at a spot where he felt sure that there had not been one before. Having





MASARWAS AT HOME.





watched it for nearly a quarter of an hour, and finding that it did not move, he came to the conclusion that he had been mistaken, and rose to go to his waggon. His surprise was great when, turning round a few minutes afterwards, he saw a Masarwa, who had gradually approached him under cover of the bush that he carried.



MODE OF HUNTING AMONG THE MASARWAS.

By the time we reached the water-pools to which we were being conducted, I was considerably better. The place, at which it was my intention to halt for a day or two, was strewn with zebras' hoofs clustered over with little excrescences formed by wasps' larvæ, with fragments of koodoo and bless-

bocks' horns, with the skulls of striped gnus, of a giraffe, and of a rhinoceros, so that there could exist little doubt but that comparatively recently it had been the site of a hunter's quarters. This impression was confirmed by the Masarwa guide, who told us that a party of Bakuenas, with one of Sechele's sons at their head, had not long since carried back with them to Molopolole a great waggon-load of skins and meat, besides a number of ostriches.

Having refreshed ourselves, we agreed that we were bound duly to celebrate our New Year's Day. Our festivities were necessarily of a very simple character, and were brought to a close by drinking the health of the Emperor of Austria in the heart of the South African wilderness. The Masarwa stared at us in great amazement; to him our cheers appeared like speaking to the air, and he inquired of Pit whether we were addressing our morimo.

Towards evening I felt myself so far recovered, that I ventured to take a little stroll into the woods to a spot where the road branched off suddenly from west to north, and where I had observed some trees of a remarkable height. In the different woods between Molopolole and Shoshong, some groves of trees are sixty feet high, and amongst them I saw a species of *Acacia horrida*, that I think I had not seen elsewhere.

In various places some old trunks of trees had fallen down, and their black bark had become partly



embedded in broken boughs, or they had rested in their fall obliquely against the standing trunks of other trees, while the vegetation that sprouted luxuriantly from the mould that formed upon the decaying wood grew up so thick as to make tracts in the forest that were perfectly impenetrable. I



PREPARING THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST IN THE FOREST.

heard the cackle of some guinea-fowl at no great distance, but as it was growing dusk, I felt it was unadvisable to proceed farther into the grove.

Having amply remunerated them, I sent our two guides back again, but according to their

advice, I had six large fires lighted round our encampment to keep off the beasts of prey that we were assured were very numerous. Then all unconscious that the next day was to be one of the most eventful of my experience, I lay down and was soon asleep.

I did not wake next morning till after my usual hour, and was only aroused by a strange chilly sensation running over my body. It was caused by one of the small snakes that lurked in the skulls that lay around, and that had been attracted towards us by the warmth of our camp-fires.

The sun was already quite high, and I found that some visitors had arrived, amongst whom I recognized the Bakuena who was the principal resident in the village which we had passed through on the previous day. He had brought some pallah-skins, a few white ostrich-feathers of inferior quality, and an elephant's tusk weighing about nine pounds, that bore manifest signs of having been shed some years, and having lain in the grass long before it was discovered.

About noon I shouldered the double-barrelled gun that I had brought from Moshaneng, took a dozen cartridges, and went off to get some fresh game for our larder. I had not gone many hundred yards before I observed some vestiges of gnus, which I tracked for some distance, until I came across several fresh giraffe foot-marks running in quite a different direction; at once I altered my course and followed them. The herd, I reckoned, must have

been at least twenty in number. After keeping along them for nearly two miles, I found the tracks divided, but I adhered to the line of the more numerous, taking, as I imagined, a north-west direction.

The turf was close and by no means deep, so that it was at times rather difficult to distinguish the footprints; the broken branches, however, showed clearly enough that the animals had gone that way quite recently. In some places the under-wood was very dense, and there were a good many irregularities in the soil. All the time that my attention had been given to the breaking off of the branches, I had quite forgotten to take any account of the direction in which I had been advancing, and after three miles it occurred to me that I might have some difficulty in returning. Whilst I was pondering over my position, I became conscious of a sickening sensation, which I attributed to being tired and hungry, but almost immediately afterwards I felt a most violent pain in my temples, and my head appeared to be whirling round like a windmill. I wandered about for a while, quite realizing to myself that I could not be more than five miles from the waggon, but finally started off rapidly in what must have been precisely the opposite direction. Whether I was overcome by fatigue and pain, or whether I had experienced a slight sun-stroke, I cannot say, but to this day it is a mystery to me why, from the time I left the giraffe-track, till the lengthened shadows told of the approach of

evening, it never once occurred to me to look at the sun.

Having discovered my mistake, I turned my course immediately to the east, indulging the hope that I might reach the road between Molopolole and Shoshong. But I was now too much exhausted to go far without resting. I could hardly advance more than twenty yards without stopping to recover my energies, and moreover I was beginning to suffer from the agonies of thirst. It came into my mind that perhaps I was really nearer to the waggon than I imagined, or that possibly I might be within hearing of any Masarwas that happened to have hunting-quarters somewhere near; accordingly, to attract attention, I fired off eight shots in succession. Between each I paused for a time and listened anxiously. My shots were spent in vain.

At the cost of getting severely scratched, I next clambered up an acacia, and fired two more shots from the top. They were as unavailing as the rest; there was no response, no movement in the woods.

Sensible that my strength could not carry me much farther, I began to despair. I felt unwilling to make use of my last two shots, but why should I not? My gun itself was a greater burden than I could bear.

Without considering that by doing so I should probably only attract some beast of prey, I began to shout, but the state of my exhaustion prevented my



shouting long, and I sunk down upon an ant-hill, from the slippery side of which I soon rolled to the ground, my gun at my side. Here I suppose I was overpowered by the heat, as I recollect nothing except waking with a shriek of laughter at the idea of making myself heard in such a desert; this brought on a fit of coughing, which seemed to relieve my brain, but only to make me more conscious than ever of the excruciating sufferings of thirst.

In vain I felt around me in the hope of reaching some leaf that might afford sufficient moisture to refresh my parched lips, but every leaf was either withered, or rough, or hairy; at last I laid hold upon one that was quite unknown to me, and put it in my mouth, but as if fate were mocking me, it proved as acrid as gall.

Toiling on a little farther I felt my gun drop from my shoulder to the ground, and did not care to pick it up. But I had not gone far before I realized how I had surrendered my sole means of defence, and how as night came on I should be exposed to the jackals and hyænas; accordingly by a desperate effort I retraced my steps, and recovered the weapon. It was loaded with my last two shots, one of which I determined to use to try and light a fire by which I might lie down till morning. The twigs, however, would not ignite, and as I abandoned my attempt, I was aware of the gloom of despondency that was settling upon me; the wildest projects entered my brain, and I could

not repress the words of delirium that I knew were escaping my lips. I fell on my knees, and the last thing I seem to recollect was finding myself in the grasp of a black man, who had pounced upon me suddenly.

That Masarwa saved my life. He had killed a



SUCCOURED BY A MASARWA.

gnu that morning, and in returning towards the village to fetch his companions he had discovered me. He waited until I revived, and at once understood the signs I made that I was thirsty; opening a little leather bag that he was carrying, he took out a few berries, which I devoured eagerly, and found a welcome relief in their refreshing juice.

When I had still farther regained my faculties, I set to work to make my timely benefactor comprehend that I wanted to get back to my waggon. I used the word "koloi" to designate the vehicle. It was not a Sechuana word, but had been very generally adopted, and the man grinned intelligently as he replied, "Pata-pata?" His answer was an inquiry whether I wanted the waggon-road, for which pata-pata is a corrupt Dutch expression. I nodded assent, and he pointed cheerily to the north-east; then lifting me up, he assisted me to move on; he was considerably shorter than I was, and taking my gun with his own three assegais over his left shoulder, he made me walk with my arm over his right. Hope gave new vigour to my steps, and by being allowed to rest now and then, I succeeded in getting along.

We reached the road only as the sun had set angrily in the west; in the east the sky was lowering, and occasional flashes of lightning were followed at some interval by the rumblings of thunder. The air became much cooler, and I shivered in the evening breeze, gentle as it was; I had been in a profuse perspiration, and my clammy shirt was now clinging to my skin; I had left my coat in the waggon. After walking on wearily for another half-hour, I pleaded to be allowed to sit down for a little while; but the Masarwa would not hear of it, and after following the road a little longer he made a sudden bend into the woods. At first I hesitated about accompanying him, but pointing to his mouth

and making a lapping sound, he made me comprehend that we were to get some drinking-water. "Meci?" I inquired. "E-he, e-he," he answered, and grinned again gleefully, so that I could not refuse to let him take me where he would.

True enough, in a little sandy hollow not far from the road was a pool full of water. Although some gnus had been there within an hour and made it somewhat muddy, it was a welcome sight to me, and I drank eagerly.

When I raised my head from the pool my guide pointed to the black clouds, and made signs to me that we were in for a storm. It grew darker and darker, and very soon the rain began to fall heavily; the huge drops beating like hailstones upon my shivering body, and increasing the wretchedness of my condition. With considerate thoughtfulness the good Masarwa wrapped up my gun in his short leather mantle, and never failed to give me the support of his shoulder. I had the utmost difficulty in holding on. In some places the rain was so deep that we were wading almost to our knees.

Never was sound more welcome than the barking of my dog, which at last greeted my ears. Eberwald and Boly came running to meet us, and were inclined to reproach me with the anxiety I had caused them; they had yet to learn the misery I had endured.

Once again safely sheltered in the waggon, I



found my energies rapidly revive. I gave directions that the Masarwa should be hospitably treated, and allowed to sleep with Pit by the side of our fire; and, having partaken of a good supper, I soon fell into a sound sleep, which I required even more than on the previous night.

I was able to move about next morning without assistance, and was ready to start again. The Bakuena, who had stayed with our people since the day before, assured us that we should find the direct road impassable; and we followed his advice in making a considerable *détour* through the bush. We had not gone many hundred yards when we came upon a dead *duykerbock* that had been killed during the night by a *hyæna*. It seemed incredible that a creature so fleet as the gazelle could have been caught by an animal comparatively so unwieldy; but the investigation of the tracks left no doubt that it was the case.

Subsequently we met some Masarwas returning home laden with honey. The bees are tracked in the woods by means of the honey-bird; but in open places they are pursued by following them on their homeward way, as they fly back one by one. Their nests are usually in hollow trees, and when the entrance-holes have been discovered, it is easy to drive the bees out by smoke, and to secure the combs. In exchange for a little piece of tobacco, rather more than an inch long and about as thick as my finger, I obtained a pint of honey.

The condition of the road did not improve, and

we had to make our way through a number of very marshy places, where we frequently found dead tortoises. In the course of the day's progress I noticed some plants of the cucumber tribe, which may be reckoned amongst the most striking of the South African creepers; their handsome lobed foliage is of a bright blue-green tint, and their bright green fruit, that when ripe is dotted over with scarlet and white, stands out in beautiful contrast to the bushes over which they climb. I have seen as many as ten heads of fruit on a single plant, and no three of them in the same stage of development; the lower tip will often be quite red, the end near the stalk still green, while the intermediate parts vary through every shade of orange and yellow.

On the 5th we still found our route lying through a good deal of sand, but the woods were gradually becoming lighter, and, after a time, we emerged upon a grass plain, where the bushes grew only in patches. After travelling for about eleven miles we met a Makalahari wearing his leather apron, and carrying nothing but a couple of assegais and a hatchet. Upon my asking him whether there was any water to be found, he offered to conduct our bullocks to some pools about three miles away, and, meanwhile I proceeded to prepare our camp for the night.

A journey of an hour and a half on the 6th brought us to the Bamangwato district, and into the wide, but shallow valley of a river, of which, in the rainy season, the Shoshon is an affluent. This

valley divides the Bamangwato heights into two distinct parts, the most southerly of which is characterized by several ridges separated by transverse passes; the northern part consists of an interesting network of hills intersected by valleys running some parallel, some crosswise, in the most important of which are the Shoshong and Unicorn Rivers. These northern highlands are marked by conical peaks that rise above the table-land, and by rocky passes, of which the stones that form them are enormous. By some of their peaks the Bamangwato hills are connected with the ridge I have already mentioned on the Limpopo, and consequently also with the range in the Marico district. By the Tschopo chain the highlands are in connexion also with the hill-system of Matabele-land. The whole valley has been the scene of important episodes in the history of the Bamangwatos, and I ventured to call it the "Francis Joseph Valley;" whilst to the highest hill above it I gave the name of the "Francis Joseph Peak."

I entered Shoshong on the 8th of January. There were various considerations that induced me to make this place the northern limit of my journey. My provisions were getting low, and I had not sufficient means to procure a fresh supply; then I was unable, for want of funds, to get the servants I should require if I went farther; and, lastly, after an absence of three months, I was afraid I should be lost sight of by my patients at the diamond-fields, amongst whom I reckoned upon gaining, by my

medical practice, the means for prosecuting my third journey, to which the others were regarded by me as merely preliminary.

Before, however, turning my steps to the south, I settled upon staying some time in Shoshong, the account of which will be given in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER XI.

### FROM SHOSHONG BACK TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Position and importance of Shoshong—Our entry into the town—Mr. Mackenzie—Visit to Sekhomo—History of the Bamangwato empire—Family feuds—Sekhomo and his council—A panic—Manners and customs of the Bechuanas—Circumcision and the boguera—Departure from Shoshong—The African francolin—Khame's saltpan—Elephant tracks—Buff-adders—A dorn-veldt—A brilliant scene—My serious illness—Tshwene-Tshwene—The Dwars mountains—Schweinfurth's pass—Brackfontein—Linokana—Thomas Jensen, the missionary—Bahartse agriculture—Zeerust and the Marico district—The Hooge-veldt—Quartzite walls at Klip-port—Parting with my companions—Arrival at Dutoitspan.

SHOSHONG, the capital of the eastern Bamangwatos, is undoubtedly the most important town in any of the independent native kingdoms in the interior of South Africa. In the main valley of the interesting Bamangwato heights lies the bed of an insignificant stream which is full only after the summer rains, and which receives a periodically-flowing brook, called the Shoshon. On this the town is situated, so that it would seem that Shoshong is the ablative of Shoshon, i.e., on the Shoshon.

Ten years ago, before the war broke out between

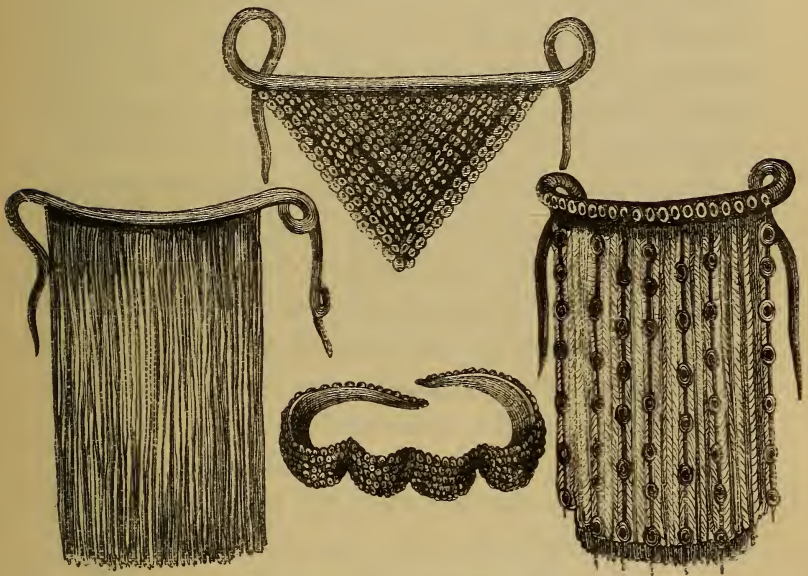
the various members of the royal family, Shoshong with its 30,000 inhabitants held the highest rank of any town throughout the six Bechuana countries, (viz. those of the Batlapins, Barolongs, Banquaketse, Bakuenas, and the eastern and western Bamangwatos) where the strength of the ruling power is



A BAMANGWATO BOY.

usually centred in their capital for the time being. The population of Shoshong is now scarcely a fifth part of what it formerly was, a falling-off to be attributed to Sekhomo, who was king of the eastern Bamangwatos at the time of my first visit; not only was he the promoter of the civil war, which cost the

lives of many of the people, but he was the means of causing a division of the tribe, which resulted in the migration of the Makalakas. Under the rule of Khame, Sekhomo's son, decidedly the most enlightened of the Bechuana princes, the town is manifestly reviving, and if during the next few years it should remain free from hostilities on the



APRONS WORN BY BAMANGWATO WOMEN.

part of the Matabele Zulus, it may be expected to rise again into its old pre-eminence amongst Bechuana towns. For white men, traders, hunters, and explorers alike, it is and always must be a place of the utmost importance, and that for the following reason: there are three great highways that lead into the four southernmost Bech-

uana kingdoms, viz., from Griqualand West, from the Transvaal, and from the Orange Free State; the whole of these unite at Shoshong, whence they all branch off again, one to the north, towards the Zambesi, another to the north-east to the Matabele and Mashona countries, and another to the north-west, to the country of the western Bamangwatos and to the Damara country, so that it follows as a matter of necessity that the admittance of a traveller into Central Africa from the south depends upon his reception by Khame at Shoshong.

The valley of the Bamangwato highland is five or six miles wide, and overgrown with grass and bush-wood; it is partly cultivated, and at its point of union with the Shoshong pass it is speckled over with some hundreds of thatched cylindrical huts, about twelve feet in diameter, and rarely more than seven feet in height, some of them overgrown with the rough dark foliage of the calabash-gourd.

Approaching the town from the south, we noticed three farmsteads and five detached brick houses about 600 yards before we entered the place. These houses were built with gables, and had much more of an European than of a Bamangwato aspect. We learnt that they were called "the white man's quarters," being occupied during part of the year by English merchants, who come to transact business with the natives, and, in years gone by, supplied provisions to the hunters, to be paid for on their return in ivory and ostrich-feathers. Amongst the



firms of this character, the most important, I believe, was that of Messrs. Francis and Clark, but, like other inland traders, they must latterly have experienced very unfavourable times.

Hitherto the king has refused to allow Europeans to purchase any land, but has permitted them to occupy the sites of their premises gratuitously.

The chief thing that struck me as we approached the town was the number of residences that had been abandoned, although in many of these repairs were now going on. In one place I observed some women daubing clay with their bare hands over a wall six feet high, made of stakes as thick as their arms driven about a foot into the ground, and fastened together with grass; while close by was a lot of children, varying from six to ten years old, busily preparing the material for their mothers' use; these youngsters evidently enjoyed their occupation vastly; they were dressed in nothing beyond their little aprons of beads or spangles, and accomplished their task by treading down the red clay in a shallow trench, chanting continually a kind of song, which was not altogether unmusical; an old woman whose scraggy limbs, parchment-skin, and general mummy-like appearance did not say much for the amount of care bestowed upon her, was pouring water into the trench from the vessels which stood beside her.

In other places women were clambering on to the newly-constructed roofs, and making them tidy by pulling off the projecting stalks, or were putting the

finishing touch to their work by fastening thin bands of grass all over the thatch.

All along the paths, in the courtyards, and especially at the hedges, crowds of inquisitive women with infants in their arms, and clusters of small children around them, had assembled to criticize the makoa (white men) and freely enough they passed their opinions about us. Most of them wore several strings of large dark blue beads round their necks, and the breasts of most of them were bare, although occasionally they had cotton jackets or woollen handkerchiefs, the prevailing colours being red and black; nearly all of them had skirts reaching to the knees, if not to the ankles.

It took us about an hour to make our way through the labyrinth of huts before we entered the glen that contains the town. This glen is about 400 yards wide at its mouth, but gradually converges to a narrow rocky pass; at first sight, indeed, it presented the appearance of a *cul-de-sac*, but the semblance was only caused by the western side of the steep pass projecting so far as to conceal the eastern, which is covered with rugged crags, and called the monkey-rock. The pass has played an important part in the history of the town.

The mission-house of the London Missionary Society lies on the side of the pass, and as we went towards it we saw three groups of houses on the right, forming the central portion of the town, of which another section lies in a rocky hollow on the other side.





BAMANGWATO HUTS AT SHOSHONG.





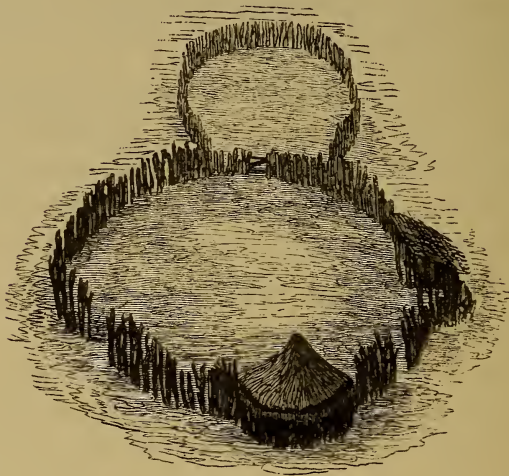
High above the river-bed on the steep to the left, could be seen the ruins of a European building, the remains of the Hermannsburg Mission Chapel, which had been used as a rampart in one of the native battles, and had been all but destroyed. The mission had previously withdrawn from Shoshong and been replaced by the London Missionary Society, of which the buildings are very comfortable, and form an important settlement, as besides the chapel and school, they include the dwellings occupied by the married native students.

At the time of my first visit to Shoshong, the principal of the mission was Mr. Mackenzie, one of the noblest-hearted men I ever met with in South Africa; since 1876, when he removed with his school to Kuruman, his place has been vacant, but his associate, Mr. Hephrun, still continues to reside at Shoshong in another house.

Having been kindly entertained at tea by Mr. Mackenzie and his wife, we started off under his escort to pay our respects to the king, who, we were told, was waiting to receive us in the kotla. We saw throngs of women in the pass under the monkey-rock carrying vessels full of water from the spring in the centre of the glen; their garment generally was a sort of toga of untanned skin, with the hair inside, fastened round the body, and leaving the right hand free to balance their pitchers on their heads, which they did so adroitly, that not a drop was spilled upon the roughest roads. The dress was commonly adorned profusely with bead orna-

ments and strips of leather, and the calves of the women's legs were covered with rings of beads and brass-wire.

The king's residence, as usual, was built round the kotla, and on our way thither, we had the opportunity of observing the respectful greetings which our conductor received from every one who met us, young and old. The place was a circular space



KOTLA AT SHOSHONG.

enclosed by a fence of strong stakes, the entrance being on the south side, opposite to which was an opening leading to another smaller enclosure, which was the king's cattle-kraal, where his farm stock was kept at night, the horses being accommodated in the kotla itself. Every night the entrances are made secure with stakes, and in times of war large fires are kindled and kept blazing inside.

I have the utmost pleasure in recording my obligations to Mr. Mackenzie. He is an accomplished man, the author of "Ten Years North of the Orange River," but his kindly attentions to myself have made me regard him with a sincere affection. I was introduced to him through having been asked to convey some letters to him in 1874 by his fellow-workers in Molopolole, and his courteous reception of me, and his subsequent kindness in the time of illness, have so endeared the remembrance of his name, that I count it as one of the chief recompenses of all my hard experience that I became acquainted with him. I regard him thoroughly as a messenger of love.

As missionary in Shoshong during the incessant discords in the royal family, he had a most difficult position to maintain. But he was the right man in the right place: with much circumspection he acted as mediator between the contending parties; gifted with discretion, and full of sympathy for all that is noble, he succeeded in smoothing down many difficulties, and arousing something like a proper sense of justice and humanity. It is entirely owing to him that Sekhomo's son, Khame, is now one of the best native sovereigns in the whole of South Africa.

I had placed our waggon at the south-east end of the town, where it was quickly surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, and there I left it while I paid my visit to the king.

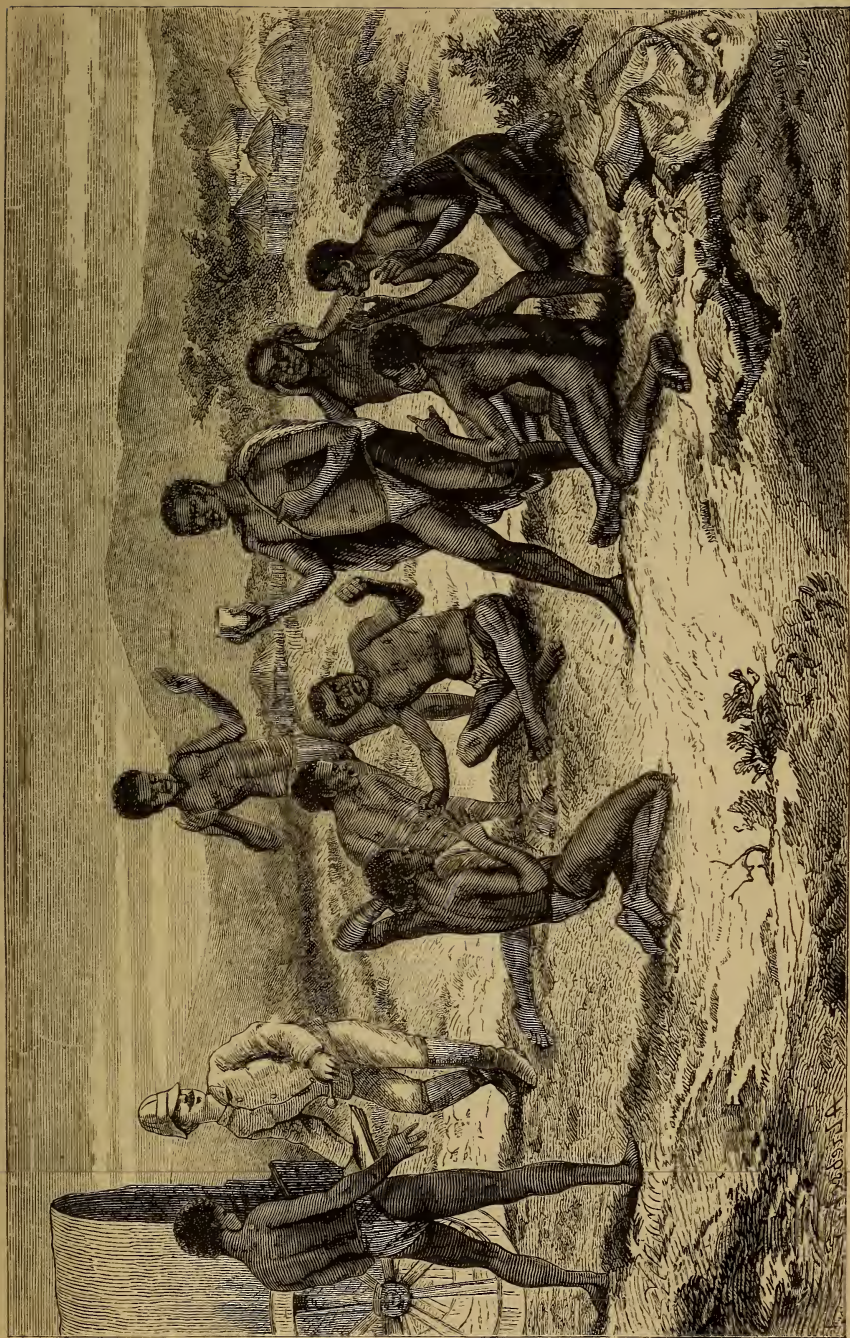
We were soon in the royal presence, and seated upon stools set for us in the kotla.

Except his begging propensities, I had no cause to complain of Sekhomo's behaviour to myself during my short sojourn in his town. He was a man above middle height, rather inclined to be stout, but with nothing in either his appearance or comportment to distinguish him from any of the courtiers who attended him, or to mark him out in any way as the ruler of an important tribe. A small leather lappet was fastened round his loins, and a short mantle of the same material hung from his shoulders; this mantle, amongst the eastern Bamangwatos, is usually made of hartebeest skin, tanned smoothly except in five spots, and sometimes ornamented in the lower corner with a black circle cut from the skin of the sword-antelope, and trimmed round the neck with glass beads.

My first visit to the king was very brief. After the interchange of a few formal phrases, which Mr. Mackenzie interpreted, I took my leave under an engagement to come again on the following day; but before entering upon the details of my intercourse with Sekhomo and his subjects, I may introduce a few episodes in the history of the Bamangwatos.

According to traditions collected by Mr. Mackenzie the Bamangwatos are descended from the Banguaketse. I have already described how the Baharutse became subdivided, and migrated from their ancestral home. After a similar subdivision had subsequently led to the formation of the two tribes of the Banguaketse and the Bakuenas, the Bamangwatos disengaged themselves from the former





SEKHOMO AND HIS COUNCIL.



of these, and took possession of a territory north of the Bakuenas, right away to the Zambesi and the Chobe. During the lifetime of Matifi, Sekhomo's great-grandfather, a fresh rupture took place, resulting in the establishment of two distinct Bamangwato communities, the western on Lake Ngami and the eastern at Shoshong.

Of the eastern empire, the founder was Towane, the younger of Matipi's two sons; Khame, the elder son, maintaining his rule in the old Bamangwato highland. Towane, in his revolt, carried off his father with him, but he treated him so badly, that the aged man sought refuge once again with Khame; but Khame, although he allowed him to enter into his territory, would not grant him permission to reside in the town, a refusal that distressed him so sorely, that he died of a broken heart. The spot where he was buried is now regarded by the Bamangwatos with much veneration.

The most upright of the seven Bamangwato kings whose names have been handed down was Khari; of him it is reported that he was bold and warlike and prudent in council, governing his dependents the Makalahari, the Madenassanas, and the Masarwas with a gentle rule. So respected was he by the neighbouring tribes, that several of them, such as the Makalakas and some of the more eastern Mashonas paid him voluntary tribute. Unfortunately, his ambition, a characteristic only too common amongst Bechuana princes, led him to destruction, and introduced a complete anarchy into his dominions.



Honoured as he was in his own country, respected by his allies, feared by his foes, he coveted a yet wider power, and in grasping at his aim courted his own fall. He formed a design against one of the inferior Mashona chiefs, but the Mashonas, already acquainted with the military tactics of the Bamangwatos, adroitly divided their army into two sections; the younger regiments were directed to advance and

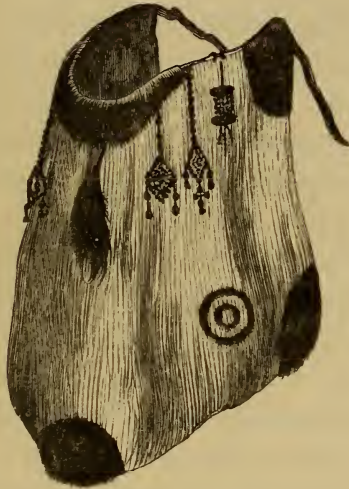


BAMANGWATO HOUSE.

attack, and then to feign a retreat; the elder troops were to be in readiness to close in at the rear and to surround the enemy in Zulu fashion. The stratagem succeeded perfectly; the Mashonas brought their pretended flight to a sudden end, and turned upon their pursuers. Khari and his people had been lured into an ambushade, and not only was he himself ruthlessly massacred, but his whole army was all but annihilated.



Immediately upon this disaster, the surviving chieftains in the town proceeded to take steps for putting one of Khari's sons upon the throne. This created considerable opposition, but before the civil war that was threatening had time to develop itself, the country was invaded by the Basuto tribe of the Makololos from the Orange River district, who carried off with them all the members of Khari's



COURT DRESS OF A BAMANGWATO.

family into the north, where they were founding a new settlement on the Chobe. The prisoners succeeded after a while in effecting their escape, and Sekhomo, Khari's eldest son by birth (although not being the child of the chief wife, he was not the proper heir to the throne) lost no time in scouring the country and collecting stragglers as adherents to himself. He gathered together a force so con-

siderable, that not only did he repel an attack of the Makololos, but he cut to pieces their reserve force in the Unicorn Pass; a victory so decisive, that it gained for him the allegiance of most of the chiefs, who, at his instigation, murdered his step-brother, the true heir. Another brother, Matsheng, was saved from a similar fate by the queen-mother, who gave him timely warning to save himself by flight.

The one victory was followed up by others, and it was not long before the Bamangwatos under Sekhomo felt themselves strong enough to make a successful stand against the Matabele Zulus, who for the last thirty years had been in the habit of invading the Bechuana countries for the purpose of plunder; they recaptured much of the cattle that had been carried off, and so impressed was the Matabele king, Moselikatze, with their military skill that he long hesitated to attack them, and when he next ventured to molest them he found them more than a match for him; he sent forty armed Zulus to demand tribute from Sekhomo, but his messengers were all put to death, so that he did not make any further attempt to disturb them during the next twenty years, during which the Bamangwatos brought their cattle as far as the Matliutse. In March, 1862, at the instigation of Kirekilwe, a fugitive sub-chieftain of the Bamangwatos, the Matabele king renewed hostilities; some Makalahari while tending cattle on the Matliutse and Serule were put to death, and a village on the eastern Bamangwato heights was destroyed, only two men

escaping to carry the news to Shoshong. Without delay Khame and Khamane, the king's sons, set off to avenge the injury; they routed two companies of the Matabele without difficulty, but were almost overpowered by a third company which had been attracted to the scene by the sound of fire-arms, and although they killed some forty of their adversaries, they lost at least twenty of their own men, and had some difficulty in making a safe retreat to Shoshong. Encouraged by this temporary advantage the Matabele came on to the Francis Joseph Valley, and to the hills immediately overhanging Shoshong; they laid waste some fields, but had not the audacity to enter the Shoshon pass; after many endeavours to entice the Bamangwatos into the open plains, they were obliged to retire, and although they carried off with them a considerable quantity of cattle, Sekhomo started off in pursuit, and recovered it all within a fortnight.

As the result of all this the Bamangwatos rose in importance. They were manifestly establishing their superiority over the Matabele, hitherto regarded as the stoutest and most invincible of warriors, and the consequence was that numbers of Makalalas, Batalowtas, Mapaleng, Maownatlalas, and Baharutse, came as fugitives from the Matabele district and craved permission to settle on the Bamangwato heights.

But in order to convey a correct conception of the order of events, it is necessary to relate the proceedings of Matsheng, who, as I have

already mentioned, had saved his life by flight. He had betaken himself to the Bakuenas, and had been taken prisoner by the Matabele on one of their marauding expeditions, and although once released, he had again fallen into their hands, and had been trained and treated by them as a "le-chaga," or common soldier.

Sechele had for a long time been anxious to establish his own claim over the Bamangwatos, as being descended from his people, the Banguaketse, but finding himself unable to assert his pretensions openly, he tried secretly to enlist the sympathies of the Bamangwatos in behalf of Matsheng, and so far did he succeed that by Dr. Moffat's influence he obtained the release of the captive, and gave him a pompous reception, a proceeding that had such an effect upon Churuku, the man next in importance to Sekhomo, that he declared himself to have espoused the cause of Matsheng, who was accordingly installed at Shoshong as king, Sechele being rewarded for his services with ostrich-feathers and ivory. The dethroned Sekhomo fled to Sechele, who received him with open arms.

Matsheng, however, did not long retain the position to which he had been raised. He had been brought up as a Matabele soldier, and his spirit of despotism was far too strong for the conservative instincts of the Bamangwatos; his arrogance and cruelty soon cost him his throne, Churuku being the very first to revolt against him and to restore Sekhomo to his former power. Again Matsheng



returned to Sechele, who received him with unvarying courtesy and kindness. All this happened in 1859, consequently before the attack of the Matabele that I have described.

It may be interesting to know that although Matsheng was universally regarded as Sekhomo's step-brother, he was not really the son of his father Khari; he was the son of the acknowledged queen, but he was not born until some years after Khari's death; the rank, however, of the first-born and legitimate son was conceded to him, whilst Sekhomo, a son by a wife of the second grade, though older in years, was reckoned as illegitimate.

It was in 1864 that Sekhomo frustrated Sechele's attack upon Shoshong. In the following year, when the "boguera" was being celebrated, and Sekhomo observed that neither of his two sons was taking part in the ceremonial, he was so angry that he caused them to be "enchanted" by the molois for a whole year, a proceeding on his part that had no other effect than enlisting the sympathies of the younger regiments on their behalf. His rage reached its height when Khame, who had married Churuku's daughter, not only refused for himself, but prohibited his wife from taking any share in the rites of the boguera, a time-honoured institution which Sekhomo positively insisted on as indispensable for any one aspiring to be acknowledged as a future queen. He would have liked to procure the assassination of Churuku, but he dared not seek his assassins amongst the Bamangwatos, nor could

any Matabele fugitive be induced to undertake the task. He tried all manner of threats and persuasions to alienate their adherents, and even determined upon an assault upon the huts where his sons resided. Getting together a number of his partisans, he bade them fire; not a man, however, would obey his orders, and when he raised his own gun to take aim, it was struck out of his hand. Dreading the vengeance which he felt sure would follow upon his deed, he ran off and took refuge with his mother; but his sons, so far from exacting retribution, agreed to keep him upon the throne upon the sole condition that he would commit no further act of hostility against themselves or any other members of the Christian community. Although Sekhomo did not hesitate to give the required pledge, it was only in accordance with his character that he should continue to devise clandestine schemes against the objects of his hatred.

Accordingly, before long, he sent to Sechele's quarters and invited Matsheng to come and join him in a conspiracy against his sons. In March he made his attack, having by this time gained so many of the Bamangwatos to his side, that Khame and Khamane, after holding out as long as they could in the ruins of the chapel, were obliged to retreat with their followers to the mountains.

For about a month fighting went on in a desultory way without bringing decided advantage to either party, when Sekhomo, with the assistance of some

Makalahari, stormed the peaks of the mountains to which his sons had withdrawn. They held out firmly for more than a week, when the want of water compelled them to make a complete surrender. Khame distinctly refused, however, to return to paganism; his life was spared, but no mercy was shown to his followers, many of them, including Churuku, being ruthlessly slaughtered.

In May, Matsheng reappeared in Shoshong once more to assert his claim. Khame and Khamane openly avowed their opposition, but did not take up arms. Sekhomo, too, was weary of his step-brother, and again resorted to stratagem. He called an assembly, inviting both his sons and Matsheng to his kotla, intending to get them to enter first, when they might be surrounded and disposed of at a single blow; but they got scent of his design, and took care to enter last, so that the plot was defeated. A second scheme failed as totally as the first; his friends deserted him, and he was compelled to fly. Thus Matsheng was for the second time declared ruler of the Bamangwatos.

Sekhomo fled from quarter to quarter. He first betook himself to the Manupi in the country of the Banguaketse; then to the Makhosi, whence he was expelled by Sechele's order, and finally he took refuge with Khatsisive at Kanye.

Matsheng had no sooner again felt his feet as sole governor, than he fell into his old ways, and showed himself a thorough autocrat. He set to work to undermine the influence of Khame and Khamane,

declared that Christianity was hostile to the welfare of the tribe, and persevered in every possible way in doing violence to the religious sentiments of his people. Finding his instructions disregarded, he determined to dispose of Khame. He dared not use violent means, and the only course that suggested itself was to call in the aid of the molois; but neither did the operation of magic prove effectual, nor did he succeed in getting some poison, for which he applied to a European trader.

His reign at last came to an untimely end. Whilst Khame was on a visit to Khatsisive he met Sechele, who furnished him with troops to enable him to expel Matsheng. An encounter took place in the Francis Joseph valley, at the mouth of the Shoshon pass, in which Matsheng was worsted, the engagement being remarkable for the circumstance that Matsheng's allies, the Matabele, under the command of Kuruman, the son of Moselikatze, fought on horseback. Prepared for this, Khame posted his best marksmen as advanced skirmishers behind the bushes so effectually, that the mounted Matabele, once dispersed, were exposed to a concealed fire, and unable to recover themselves. Kuruman deserted in the very middle of the fight, and Matsheng, with all his followers, after plundering the house of Mr. Drake, a trader in the district, fled in great disorder.

From that day forward the legitimate ruler was never again seen in Shoshong. He retired first to the Mashwapong heights on the central Limpopo in



the eastern Bamangwato land, but was not allowed to remain in peace. Khamane drove him from his refuge, and he retreated to the Mabolo Mountains. After his expulsion Khame was declared king, and for a time there seemed some chance of the bitter feuds coming to an end.

Khame, however, appeared incapable of learning by experience. His soft heart revolted at the thought of keeping Sekhomo in banishment, and after exacting a promise from him that he would keep the peace, he recalled him to Shoshong, when he very soon resumed his old devices. First of all he promoted dissension between the two brothers, by awarding Khamane not only the cattle taken from Matsheng, but by assigning him a village of the Manansas, a people of the Albert country, the mountain district south of the Victoria Falls. Khamane unfortunately suffered himself to be beguiled by his father's wiliness; his ambition to secure the sovereign power led him to turn a deaf ear to Khame's representations, neither would he be swayed by the remonstrances of Mr. Mackenzie, who tried hard to bring about such a good understanding as might promise a lasting peace in the land.

To avoid further collision, Khame now migrated with a very considerable proportion of the Shoshong population, settling on the River Zooga, in the territory of the western Bamangwatos, where he was received with much cordiality and regarded with esteem and affection by the Batowanas. Unfortunately

his people began to be decimated by fever, so that before long he had no alternative but to make his way back to his own country.

Such was the state of affairs on my first arrival at Shoshong.

My first concern now was to replenish my stock of provisions, which was very low. I found this a much more difficult matter than I expected, and it was only by Mr. Mackenzie's assistance that I was able to procure the simplest and most indispensable articles. It was of itself a difficulty quite enough to make me renounce all intention of extending my journey as far as the Zooga, or Botletle.

On the 9th, I was favoured with a visit from the king and his linyakas, an honour subsequently repeated so often as to become a positive nuisance, as henceforward, so long as we stayed in the place, we had to receive his majesty and his council of "black crows" once a day, and occasionally twice. When he arrived, Sekhomo would keep on shaking my hand, while his factotum, who could speak Dutch, would be perpetually begging for something in his master's name. The king at other times would stand with his arms akimbo, his myrmidons squatting around him in a semicircle and imitating everything he did; if he laughed, they laughed; if he gaped, they gaped; if he yawned, they yawned; and one day, when his majesty burnt his mouth with some tea that was too hot, they all puckered up their faces as if they likewise were experiencing the pain; when

he turned to go home, they rose and followed him in single file, like a flock of geese.

One day I received a visit from a travelling Dutch hunter, who was returning with his family from a six months' excursion in the Zooga and Mababi districts; during that time he had killed twenty-one elephants and fifteen ostriches. He recounted two interesting adventures that he had with lions, in one of which his little son had played quite an heroic part. His object in coming to me now was to consult me professionally, as three of his children were lying ill with intermittent fever.

According to Mr. Mackenzie's estimate, Sekhomo's actual revenue was equivalent to about 3000*l.* a year, and consisted of cattle, ivory, ostrich-feathers, and skins. He had no state-expenditure whatever. The free Bamangwatos were allowed the produce of their herds, such ostrich-feathers as were of inferior quality, and one tusk of every elephant that they killed.

Throughout our stay in Shoshong the downpour of rain was almost incessant; nevertheless, our waggon was constantly besieged by a crowd of visitors and workpeople, so that quite a brisk trade was carried on; this, on one occasion, was slightly interrupted by our bullocks becoming suddenly restive.

In the midst of the general peace the population was thrown one morning into a state of disturbance by the intelligence that hostile Matabele were on their way to the place. The residents were seized with a panic, the king came hurrying down to me

in a state of excitement, and borrowed one of my guns, which, as I might have expected, I had considerable difficulty in getting back again. He showed me his palladium, an amulet made of a lion's claw, which was supposed to render him invulnerable; he had at once given orders that his people should betake themselves to the heights overhanging the town. Everybody, therefore, with all speed, was collecting his few effects and preparing to drive the sheep and cows to the hills. The state of confusion reached its height when the report of fire-arms was heard close outside the town, but although it was soon ascertained that the shots had only been fired at a stray hyæna, it was long before the apprehension could be allayed that the Matabele were commencing an assault. Next day a Boer hunter from the western Matabele country, a son of the renowned elephant-hunter Pit Jacobs, who resides on the Tati River, came into the place, and assured the people that there was not the least foundation for their alarm; but so completely had the impression of their danger got possession of them that his representations received no credit whatever, and even the European traders began to take measures for defence. Under the circumstances, Mr. Mackenzie advised me to take my departure as quickly as I could, as although there was nothing likely to happen to compromise my personal safety, there was no answering for the security of my property.

When Sekhomo heard that we were going away,



he expressed his regret that we, whom he regarded as his friends, should be forsaking him in his trouble. As a parting gift I gave him a blue woollen dress for one of his seven wives, and he in return presented me with a bundle of grey ostrich-feathers.

In no other native town throughout my journey did I succeed so well as here in making additions to my ethnographical collection. The resident traders showed some annoyance at my proceedings, but I managed to exchange nearly all the goods I had in my waggon for various objects of local handicraft. I obtained a great many assegais and hatchets, some daggers, knives, kiris, and sticks, wooden pillows, pots, pans, spoons, magic dice of various materials, as well as a large variety of snuff-boxes, gourd-vessels, articles for the toilet, ornaments, aprons, cups, dolls, and toys made of clay. Perhaps the most noteworthy amongst my acquisitions were some of Sekhomo's war and rain drums, a little ivory fetish, some kiris made of rhinoceros horn, and several whistles. I bartered away some of my skins of pallah-antelopes, leopards, lynxes, and caracals, and for a small extra payment had some of them back again after they had been converted into garments. The Bamangwato workmanship differs very little from that of all other Bechuana tribes; their huts, though somewhat smaller and more slightly built, are most like those of the Barolongs, but they have larger corn-bins of unbaked clay than any I saw elsewhere.

Nor did my naturalist's collection fail to gain some curious contributions. Amongst the lizards I found a beautiful striped sort, with a metallic lustre of brown, dark green, and blue; and some of other kinds, without stripes, that seemed particularly tame.

Before describing my return journey, I will append some further details of Bechuana customs to those which I have given in the previous chapter.

As a rule a heathen Bechuana has but one wife, though the more well-to-do not unfrequently have two; the number allowed to the sub-chieftains varies from three to six; the kings being permitted to have more, although not so many as those in the Marutse empire. A man of competent means presents his newly-married wife with several head of sheep or oxen.

On entering a town, a traveller picks up some of the stones in his path, and after throwing them into a bush, or laying them in a forked branch of a tree, breathes a prayer that he may reach the end of his journey in safety.

The skin, horns, or flesh of a sacred animal, such as the duykerbock among the Bamangwatos or the crocodile among the Bakuenas, are not allowed to be touched.

An owl, sitting upon a hut, is considered of evil omen; and the linyakas are called in to purify the spot that has been defiled by the touch of the bird.

An animal observed to do anything that accord-

ing to Bechuana notions is unusual, is at once considered dangerous, and must be either killed or submitted to the treatment of a linyaka. For instance, if a goat should spring upon a housetop, it would be immediately struck with an assegai; or if a cow in a cattle-kraal should persist in lashing the ground with its tail, it would be pronounced not to be an ordinary cow, but would be considered "tiba," and as such sure to bring disaster, disease, or death upon its owners. A rich man would forthwith have the animal put to death; but a poor man is permitted to sell it either to a white man, or to one of another tribe. It is only in cases of this kind that a Bechuana parts with his cows at all.

Ordinarily no woman is allowed to touch either a cow or a bullock; the tending of cattle, except in Hottentot families, being always assigned to boys and men.

As I have already implied, the Bechuana form of government is to a certain extent constitutional; all legislation or decisions of public importance having to be discussed in the "pitsho" or assembly-house; it must be acknowledged, however, that in most cases, especially those in which the king has any influence with the sub-chiefs, every question is settled by a foregone conclusion. As with other Bantu peoples, the king (the morena or koshi) is practically paramount in all public functions; the chiefs that are associated with him belonging either to his own tribe or being such as have fled to him for protection, or have obtained leave to settle in his

land. Khatsisive and the chiefs of the Manupi and western Baharutse may be cited as examples of this ; they occupy separate villages, at divers distances apart, some of them lying close together and others being a considerable way from the royal residence. Wherever they are, each of these villages has a small enclosure which represents the kotla, and where the matters to be discussed in the royal kotla are submitted to preliminary debate ; and when the king wants to gather a general concourse of chiefs for important business he sends a messenger, who lays a bough of a tree in the enclosure, which is understood to be a summons.

When war is contemplated, the council is generally held in the outskirts of the town in preference to the kotla, as being less likely to be overheard ; the name given to such a council is "letshulo," the same that is used for the hunt instituted by the linyakas for the purpose of procuring rain.

Under the presidency of their chiefs all the inhabitants of a village are at liberty to attend the council, and as every minute circumstance is discussed with the most unlimited freedom the clatter of voices is often something extraordinary.

When a meeting has been called to administer justice, it must be confessed that the first thing taken into account is whether the accused is a favourite at court ; in that case, as often as not, he is allowed to depart scot free. When a theft has been committed, a royal herald is sent through the town, who at once announces the fact, and declares



the king's intention to punish the offender; the threat, more often than not, has the effect of inducing the culprit to lay the stolen goods under cover of night in some public place, whence they may be restored to their owner. Very frequently the services of the linyakas are called in, the magic dice are thrown, and other devices adopted to detect the offender.

I may mention one of the linyakas' modes of operation in these cases. After a full investigation of the matter, all the parties suspected are summoned to the kotla. The linyaka places them in a circle and walks round them several times, monotoning as he goes, "The thief who has done this deed must die to-day." He next sends for a bowl of maize-pap, which he doles out with a wooden spoon, saying over every spoonful, "The thief that swallows this pap shall die to-day." This done, he proceeds to make a careful scrutiny of each separate countenance, and then retires to throw his mysterious dice. In a short time he cries aloud, "I have found the thief!" Going once more round the circle, he compels every one in succession to open his mouth, the result ordinarily being that all but one has swallowed the mouthful. In his fear of bringing the curse of death upon himself, the culprit has retained the pap in his mouth, intending to spit it out at the first chance, the precaution he uses of course revealing his guilt.

A criminal on his first conviction of theft has to restore double or fourfold what he has stolen; on

being repeatedly convicted he is sentenced to have the tips of his fingers scalded off; an incorrigible offender has to lose the whole of his hand. Murder is usually considered a capital offence; but a man under sentence of death may redeem his life by paying a sum of money, or its equivalent in kind, to the victim's next-of-kin.

During the time of Matsheng's rule a singular case occurred of a man killing his brother from avarice. The aged father had announced his intention of leaving the bulk of his property to his elder son, and the younger determined to get rid of his brother, hoping thereby to inherit the whole. "Brother," he said to him one day, "did you not hear our father say that the linyaka wanted a monkey's skin to restore him the use of his limbs? Will you go with me to the hills and shoot a monkey?" The elder brother acquiesced, and they started off together. An hour brought them to the foot of the rise, when the younger suggested that it would be better for them to begin to scour the hill from opposite directions, a proposition to which the elder brother readily assented. An old woman was gathering berries on the hill, and observing the peculiarity of the young man's movements could not help suspecting that he intended some mischief, and following him unperceived saw that, instead of going straight up the hill, he crept round to the right and as soon as he came within sight of his brother, took deliberate aim and shot him dead. In pretended consternation, he returned to the town, relating how

by miserable misadventure he had shot his poor brother, supposing him to be an ape in the bushwood. The old woman hurried to Matsheng and gave her evidence as to the real facts of the case so clearly, that instead of furthering his scheme to become his



TRAINING THE BOYS.

father's heir, the wretch was by the king's order carried back to the scene of his crime, and was there himself shot with his brother's gun.

Among other customs which seem to belong more or less to all the Bantu tribes with whom I came in contact, there are some which remind us of the

Mosaic law. Held as of the highest importance by the heathen Bechuana is the rite of circumcision; until it has been submitted to, no youth is supposed to have arrived at man's estate, and no woman is considered of marriageable age. The ceremony, however, does not universally or necessarily indicate the attainment of a state of maturity, as is the case with the breaking off of the front teeth by the Matongas and Mashukulumbe; it is rather an initiation into the system of hardening which every youth is required to undergo before he is counted worthy of the titles of "mona" or "ra" which betoken a man's estate.

Called the "boguera," the observance is put into force upon boys after they have reached their ninth year. The ceremony is performed at intervals varying from two to five years, according to the extent of a tribe; the period of its exactment being held to be a time of great festivity in the towns. If the boys do not present themselves voluntarily, they are brought under compulsion, and as a preparatory office they are smeared all over with a solution of chalk; the girls wear nothing but belts made of pieces of reed or aprons of genets' tails, their breasts and faces being also whitened with chalk. The solemnization of the rite takes place outside the town, old men acting as operators with the boys and old women with the girls.

The boguera happened to be celebrated at the time of my visit to Shoshong, so that I had the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with its details.



Singing as they go, the young people of both sexes, accompanied by the linyakas, proceed beyond the town to the appointed spot, where the boys are put through a drill in manly exercises, and the girls are formally initiated into domestic duties, such as carrying wood and fetching water; throughout their performances they keep up their monotonous chant; and as their figures are all white by the application of chalk, nothing can be imagined much more grotesque than the appearance they present as they go through their series of gymnastics.

The boys are next marched off in detachments to the kotla, where they have all to be beaten with rods. Bare of all clothing, except their little girdle and their sandals, which they are permitted to hold in their hands, they are placed in two rows, back to back, and made to kneel down whilst a man, generally their next-of-kin, stands in front of each and proceeds to deliver his lashes, which the lads parry as best they can by the dexterous manipulation of the sandals; they are required to keep on singing, and to raise each foot alternately, marking the measure of the chant.

All the youths who submit to the boguera at one time are formed into a company, and the more sons a Bechuana can bring to the ceremony, the prouder he is. A chief will generally try to introduce a son of his own or of a near relative to take command of the troop, and an *esprit de corps* is frequently excited which sometimes has a beneficial effect upon the quarrels that arise at court. The friendship thus formed

often remains unbroken, in spite of the commander avowing himself a Christian and being baptized.

The girls, so long as the ceremonial lasts, are not allowed to sleep; to keep them awake they are made to spend the night sitting upon wooden corn-pounders, of which the equilibrium is so unstable



BAMANGWATO GIRLS DRESSED FOR THE BOGUERA.

that the first attempt to get a wink of sleep sends the damsel toppling over.

The real object of the entire ceremonial is to discipline and harden the young, particularly the boys; the rite is followed by a succession of hunting excursions, organized and kept up for several succes-

sive years; the members of a company are told off into sets, and under the guidance of an experienced hunter are taken out first to chase antelopes and gazelles, and in course of time to pursue elephants and buffaloes. On these expeditions they are designedly exposed to many hardships; they are compelled to make long marches through districts where there is no water; only in exceptional cases are they suffered to approach the fire even in the severest weather, and they are forced to experience the long-continued pangs of hunger.

A Bechuana will commonly reckon his age from the date of a boguera; when asked how old he is, he will mention the company to which he belongs, and will refer to the names of one or two of its best-known members.

According to Mr. Mackenzie, the "tshwaragana moshang," or ceremonial of alliance between two chiefs, ought not to be omitted from an account of Bechuana customs. When vows of fidelity are exchanged between a ruler and any other chief or refugee, some domestic animal is slaughtered; and the stomach being cut open so as to expose the entrails, the two parties plunge their hands into the midst of them, and mutually shake them together.

The various forms of purification should likewise be mentioned. There are special rites to be performed by all who return either from war or from hunting-expeditions; arms, prisoners, plunder, have all to be subjected to a process of cleansing; whoever has touched a corpse must be purified; women

after childbirth have to live apart from their husbands from one to three months, according to their means; a period of seclusion is prescribed for all who have been seriously ill; in all these cases the linyakas are invariably consulted and receive substantial rewards, one of the most common directions which they give consisting, as I have said, in ordering the woolly hair to be cut off with a knife or small sharpened horn.

We left Shoshong for the Marico district on the 16th of February. The weather was still unpropitious, and our progress was retarded by the miry state of the soil; in many places the water was two feet deep, and the dense growth of the woods did not permit us to make a *détour* to avoid it. The entire district south-eastwards between Shoshong and the Limpopo was one great forest. In some places the soil continued salt, and salt-pans were of not unfrequent occurrence; towards the south, on the banks of the Sirorume, it became rather undulated and very sandy. The journey occupies three days; and in the winter there are only two places where fresh water can be obtained.

In the course of the next day's march I made my first acquaintance with a bird that throughout South Africa is known as "det fasant." Hearing a sharp, shrill cackle in the underwood, I turned and saw a brown bird (*Francolinus nudicollis*) perched on a tree-stump. It belongs to the part-ridge tribe, and is to be found in many of the wooded and well-watered districts that I afterwards



visited. It is common likewise in Central South Africa. The francolins live either in pairs or in small coveys, and the cock would appear to be a most watchful guardian, not only calling out upon any approach of danger, but even whilst scratching the ground for food, and on retiring to a tree to roost; the habit of crying out whenever it perches, makes it an easy prey to the sportsman.

On the 18th we passed a shallow salt-pan, nearly elliptical in shape, about two feet deep, and some hundred yards in its greater length; it contained a very salt, milky-looking fluid. When the weather is dry, fresh water is only to be found in some pools in the rocks at the northern end. The lake lay still and silent in a slight depression in the forest, surrounded by a broad band of bright green sward; neither rushes nor water-lilies rose above its surface, but its shores, sloping gently down, were covered by trees and bushwood, in some parts so impenetrable that only the fleet little duykerbock would have a chance of making its way between the stems; in other places low acacia bushes sprouted up below the underwood from a single stock; flowers were abundant everywhere, and the whole scene was like a dead sea set in the midst of a fragrant and richly-wooded tract of land.

As a mark of esteem for the magnanimous king of the Bamangwatos, I gave this lake the name of Khame's Salt-pan. On the shore I found fragments of greenstone and chalcedony, and further back, amongst the thorn-bushes, quartzite and limestone.

There were numerous vestiges of the smaller gazelles, gnus, zebras, and giraffes, all of which find rich pasturage on the plains extending east and west of the Limpopo.

Amongst the trees I was particularly struck by



KHAME'S SALT-PAN.

one, the wood of which I afterwards learned was of great value; this was a mimosa, known amongst the Boers as the "Knopi-dorn;" it often grows straight up to the height of fifty feet, without a single bifurcation; its yellowish-grey bark is

covered by excrescences sometimes two inches long, with sharp, hooked thorns at their ends. The timber is in use for building purposes, but it is considered a material especially adapted for making waggons.

In the afternoon we passed some salt-pools, in which I was surprised to find some half-starved fish. The fish themselves were not of any uncommon kind; to me the perplexing thing was how they could have made their way to so great a height above the table-land, and the only explanation I could give was that they had been carried thither by birds.

Evening overtook us in the valley of the upper Sirorume, just at the spot where the stream makes its way over interesting shelves of sandstone, thence to turn south, and then south-south-east to join the Limpopo.

While proceeding through the sandy forest in the inner bend of the Sirorume, we noticed from the waggon an appearance in the ground as though the long grass had been flattened by a heavy roller six or seven feet wide. It proved to be an elephant-track, and two Bamangwatos on their way to the Transvaal informed us that it was made by a herd of the great small-tusked elephants that were known to be wandering about the boundaries of Sekhomo's and Sechele's territory. I entertained no doubt that it was the same herd of which I had heard before, and which continued to haunt the same region for two years afterwards, when it was destroyed by the Damara emigrants.

At no great distance ahead of us the river-valley made a turn, above which, westwards and southwards as far as the eye could reach, stretched a dense underwood. Soon afterwards we descended for the second time into the river-valley of the Siro-rume, designated by the English as the "brack reeds." Here for miles both ways the river-bed is flat, and forms a sort of fen overgrown with rushes. I crossed this no less than three times, on each occasion finding it very prolific in puff-adders. Our search for drinking-water proved unavailing, and as our stock of meal was rapidly diminishing, we felt the necessity of hurrying on as quickly as possible; but on the 21st we came on the top of the tableland upon one of those unexpected rain-pools, which I described in my account of my first journey.

Three days before, I had shot two specimens of the puff-adder (*Vipera arietans*), each over three feet long, and as thick as my arm; they had heart-shaped heads, and two very long and crooked fangs. The scaly skin of this snake varies in colour from yellow to dark brown, consisting of alternate light and dark bands. It is to be met with almost everywhere between the sea and the Zambesi, but is far more abundant in some districts than in others; especially frequenting places overgrown by thorns, as less liable to be visited by snake-eagles. Most of the specimens I saw were lying dormant on the margins of thickets, or on the edges of pathways, coiled round and round, and flat as a platter; their sluggishness is quite remarkable, and



I noticed more than one in pools of water from which they could never escape. So sharply are the fangs bent backward, that the puff-adder does not inflict a wound in the same way as the ordinary species; it has to turn the front part of its body quite back, lower its head, and in this position to fling itself at its victim; this it is capable of doing from a distance of several feet, and I have been a witness of this mode of attack both in Cape Colony and in Natal.

There is another peculiarity about this kind of adder which has been noticed particularly in the western parts of Cape Colony. When any one comes across one of them, his attention is very often attracted to it in the first instance by the singular noise it makes between hissing and spitting; and on looking at the creature more closely, he occasionally finds its body all perforated, and a number of little snakes issuing from the orifices; it has hence been concluded that the brood of the puff-adder thus eats its way into the world. For my own part, I do not concur with this theory, and I would offer an explanation of the phenomenon, in which I am supported by the testimony of an eye-witness. I believe that of all the South African snakes, none more than this is distinguished by devotion to its young; and whenever danger approaches, I think it inflates itself, and in its agitation rushes upon its foe with expanded jaws, and, whether designedly or not I do not say, swallows some portion of its teeming brood. These are prevented by another inflation of the mother's

jaws from escaping where they had entered, and so force for themselves an exit where they can.

After descending the Puff-adder heights on the lower Sirorume, we entered the valley of the Limpopo, known also as the Crocodile River; the hilly district on the left shore terminated in a woody table-land to the west, the right shore being quite flat, and enclosed by prairie-like plains. The river-bed was sandy, and varied from thirty to ninety feet in width; the bank was steep, and covered with impenetrable bush or long grass. On the shore I found frequent traces of crocodiles, and a few of hippopotamuses; in the more open and clayey parts I also noticed the tracks of lions and leopards. In the adjacent places we observed indications of the existence of koodoos, pallahs, waterbucks, bushbucks, hartebeests, gnus, giraffes, and zebras.

On the 22nd we reached the mouth of the Notuany, a river that rises in the Transvaal, in the western Marico district; it flows only after very heavy rain, and even then not over the whole of its course, which is 150 miles long; it is deep, and lies, as it were, in a trench; ever and again pools occur along its shores, which always contain fish, and sometimes crocodiles. From the west, the Notuany takes up a considerable number of sand-rivers. The stream was now flowing, and as its mouth was much blocked up by reeds, we felt pretty sure that no crocodiles would have made their way overland to the water, and so we ventured to enjoy a bath at the ford, which was moderately deep.

On the southern side of the river-mouth we found one of the "dornveldts" common in the Limpopo valley, a wide tract of rich soil, densely overgrown with bushes of the *Acacia horrida*, six feet in height. These are districts which might well rejoice the heart of a European landowner; but for years to come no doubt they are destined to lie fallow.

For two days I remained on the banks of the Notuany, finding both in the animals and plants most interesting material for study. I shot a grey-horned owl and a carrion kite.

Just as we were approaching the mouth of the Marico, while we were crossing one of the numerous rain-channels that make their way down, our axle broke, but we managed to make it hold together till we reached a farm at no great distance.

I had the good fortune next day to meet with two herds of pallahs. These creatures appear to range over the whole country, thence to Central Africa, and hereabouts take the place of the blessbocks of the southern grass plains.

Our progress began now to be very considerably retarded by the rains; for some weeks it had been as wet as it was in Shoshong, so that we had to go through a succession of marshes for nearly half the distance along the Limpopo and Marico valley, being perpetually unable to find a dry spot for our encampment at night.

During the morning march of the 26th, our attention was arrested by a brilliant scene. On the left bank of the Marico, spreading out over the best

half of a large meadow, was a carpet of fiery red, set in a frame of verdant sward, and enclosed with the dark green foliage of the mimosa. This spectacle of beauty was caused by masses of flowering aloes, which sent forth their gorgeous spikes of blossom some three or four feet above the cluster of prickly leaves. Where the aloes were thickest, I noticed that they were not unfrequently overhung by a beautiful sulphur-coloured creeper.

An attack of illness on the 28th made me discontinue our march. Whether it was the result of my continuous exertions, or the effect of the miasma of the district, or whether I had taken a chill from the dampness of the places in which we had camped, I cannot tell, but certain it was that I found myself quite unable to move, and had to be lifted out of the waggon; a violent sickness came on, my head became as heavy as lead, and I was quite incapable of answering the numerous questions which my friends in their anxiety kept putting to me. My senses soon quitted me altogether, and for two hours I lay in a condition of delirium, from which I was only roused by being vigorously bathed with cold water. Böly sobbed aloud in his distress. F. ran hither and thither like a madman, and Eberwald showed me such sympathy and unremitting attention as endeared him to me more than ever. Recovering my consciousness, I resolved to bleed myself. I was quite satisfied that no gentler measure could relieve the extreme pressure of blood on the head. The operation was quite successful, and im-



mediate relief followed. Nature did the rest, and in three days' time I had so far recovered, that we were able to proceed on our way.

Leaving the actual valley of the Marico on the 3rd of March, we crossed the saddle, and entered a valley intersected by the Bechuana-spruit, and enclosed on the southern side by the interesting Bertha heights. On their south-western spurs lies Chwhene-Chwene, the town belonging to the Batlokas, under Matlapin, their chief; it is situated in Sechele's territory, which extends from the mouth of the Sirorume to the Dwars mountains. In the underwood in the hollow I found some morula-trees bearing ripe fruit.

As soon as we could on the following day we made our way towards the town, which was tolerably clean, the farmsteads and huts being larger and more commodious than those of most Bechuanas; in some cases they were surrounded by gardens. The fields were sown, but only partially, with corn, maize, and Kaffir sugar-cane. Just outside the town I came to a halt, because some of the Batlokas told me that there were merry-makings going on within, and the Morena was tipsy.

Descending the slope from the table-land, we found several deep holes in the hard grey limestone containing cool spring water. The view from the springs was very striking. The thinly-wooded valley in front of us was several miles in width, and stretched away eastwards to the Marico. It was bounded on the south by the countless summits of

the chain of the Dwars hills. To the pass by which we crossed these heights, I gave the name of "Schweinfurth's Pass," whilst the next one, further to the west, I called "Rohlf's Pass." From the top of the hills we could see the first of the farms on the plain; on reaching the bottom, we met a Boer migrating into the Damara country.

It was satisfactory, on arriving at Brackfontein Farm, to find that its owner was a smith, and able to repair our broken waggon. His two sons asked me to join them on a hunting excursion, but I did not feel myself sufficiently convalescent to accept their invitation, although the abundance of game in the locality made it very enticing. In the densely-wooded parts of the Dwars mountains there were gazelles and koodoo-antelopes, and in the more open parts at the base, and on the eastern and southern grass-plains were both kinds of gnus, zebras, and springbucks; other antelopes and ostriches were likewise occasionally to be seen.

When I left Brackfontein on the 12th, I turned to the south, crossing the Bushveldt, in order to reach Linokana, the native town in the Marico highlands.

Without entering into a minute description of the Bushveldt, I may here simply mention that it is a wooded hill-country, consisting of low ridges, sandy eminences, and isolated peaks, the soil being covered with rich grass.

I left the district by the Buisport or Buispass, passing the Markfontein, Sandfontein, and Witfontein farms. Zwart, the owner of the first of these,

bought it for 300*l.*; it is of very considerable size. Zwart had previously been an elephant-hunter, and



BUISPORT, ROCKY CLEFT IN THE BUSHVELDT.

had visited the Damara country and the falls of the Zambesi before he settled down to farming. At a hartebeest-hunt at Sandfontein we met with a Dutch-



man, who sold goods on account of Mr. Taylor, the merchant at Sechele. Although he only stayed here for a few days in each month, we were most hospitably entertained by him and his kind old mother.

The Buisport, through which we passed the next morning, is one of the most charming spots in the Marico highlands; it is traversed by a spruit, that retains water all through the year in the deep hollows of its rocky beds. We crossed the spruit several times; the travelling was very rough, and we had to proceed with the greatest caution, but all our trouble was amply repaid by the enjoyment of the picturesque scenery of the glen. Enclosed on every hand by the most diversified rocks, sometimes wooded, sometimes perpendicular, and sometimes running in terraces, it presents a prospect singularly attractive.

It likewise offers no little interest to the student of natural history. Bushbocks, pallahs, klipp-springers, apes and baboons, and some smaller animals of the feline race are amongst the most common mammals, while leopards, lynxes, and koodoos are by no means rare. The variety of birds, snakes, insects, and plants is most remarkable. With the exception of the two kinds of bustard, I found nearly all the birds that I have hitherto mentioned, and besides these, I saw some quails, two new species of thrushes, a wryneck and two rollers.

The plateau upon which we entered at the farther



end of the pass was splendid meadow-land, cultivated in many places. On the east and west it sloped towards the foot of the Notuany and Zeerust heights. We followed these hills for some distance in a south-



BAHARUTSE DRAWING WATER.

westerly direction, until we came to the valley of the upper Notuany, that was only divided by one ridge from the Matebé valley just in front of us, being cultivated over about half its area. This was a token of the proximity of Linokana, a Baharutse

town, of the agriculture of which I had already heard very glowing reports.

At the distance of only a few miles from its source the Notuany was flowing in a deep entrenched bed, across which a few trunks of trees had been thrown, forming a primitive bridge, over which we had no alternative but to take our waggon. Once through the valley, we were at the Linokana hollow, in the centre of which, and extending up its northern and eastern sides, lay the town of the same name.

The reeds in the Matebe teemed with animal life. Morning and evening were the best opportunities of watching their movements, but at those times we could see the grey wild cat creeping stealthily after snipes and long-tailed cape-finches; the water-lizard lying craftily in wait for its prey; or occasionally the caracal driven by hunger from its rocky lair to seek a meal in the security of the reeds of the river-bed.

In the eastern portion of the valley, our attention was directed to a group of trees near some well-cultivated fields, conspicuous among them being some eucalyptus, two feet in diameter, and certainly not much less than sixty feet high. Beneath their shade stood several houses built in European style. These were the quarters of a missionary, whose instruction and example have had such a beneficial influence upon the Baharutse, that they have become the most thriving agriculturists of all the Transvaal Bechuanas. The name of this missionary is Thomas

Jensen, and he is a representative of the Hermannsburg Society. He received us most kindly, and introduced me to Moilo (or Moiloa) the chief, as well as to Chukuru and other chiefs who resided on the hills. Moilo was a tall, grey-headed man, with hard features, but of a kindly disposition; he was a faithful vassal of the Transvaal Republic, considerate



CHUKURU, CHIEF OF THE BAHARUTSE.

for his followers, and in many respects superior to most of the neighbouring rulers. He introduced me to his sons, none of whom, however, he considered competent to succeed him as chief; the son of a relative living in Moshaneng, a scion of the old Bechuana royal family, being, with his sanction, universally regarded as the rightful heir.

Each of the larger farms in the town possessed a plough, and waggons could be seen in considerable numbers, standing amidst the cone-shaped huts. Following Mr. Jensen's advice, the people have turned the Matebe springs to good account; not only have they conducted the water into the town so as to ensure a good supply for domestic purposes, but they have cut trenches through their fields and orchards, thereby securing a thorough irrigation. The adult male population, besides paying a poll-tax of ten shillings to the Transvaal, pledged themselves to provide a certain number of beasts of burden in times of war. Mr. Jensen was entrusted with the collection of the tax, but, although he handed over as much as 400*l.* annually to the Government, he received no remuneration whatever for his trouble.

In the fields round the mission-building maize and wheat were growing, and in the gardens adjacent to the dwelling peaches, apricots, pears, figs, oranges, and citrons were thriving admirably, and, together with the vegetables, contributed a welcome addition towards the support of the modest establishment. The little flower-garden revived pleasant recollections by the abundance of old favourites it contained; there were roses, both as standards and climbers, irises, lilacs with their graceful bloom, and carnations with their pleasant fragrance; tulips and hyacinths had been in bloom, but had now gone off.

The family life of the missionary beneath the blue-gum trees on the Matebe was quite idyllic in its peacefulness; nothing could surpass the ex-







BAHARUTSE VILLAGE.

cellence of the pattern which it set to the dusky population which surrounded it. My own pleasure for the time, however, was seriously damped by the intelligence which Mr. Jensen said he had received from Zanzibar on good authority, that Livingstone had fallen a victim to dysentery by the Bangweolo Lake. At the same time he told me that the companion of Livingstone's first journey was still alive.

The Baharutse possess large herds of cattle, but the periodic recurrence of lung-disease is so fatal, that they lose very large numbers of them.<sup>1</sup>

Linokana (from *li* = *the* and *nokana* = a *little river*), during the lifetime of Moilo, was called by his name in his honour. As Karl Mauch has already observed, it is a place where a naturalist may spend weeks with advantage. With the exception of mammalia, nearly all kinds of animals abound. The heights (the eastern of which is called the To, or Elephant hill, and the northern the Po, or Buffalo hill), as well as the meadows and marshes on the Matebe, and the woods on the Notuany, exhibit an immense variety of birds, amongst which birds of prey, long-tailed finches, bee-catchers, green doves, and purple herons especially predominate.

On the 16th we turned our backs upon the hos-

<sup>1</sup> In my opinion it is only a strong Government measure and the free provision of sulphuric acid, to be used diluted, that will be of any avail to check this disorder, which annually costs a large sum of money that ought to be saved.



pitiable fields of Moilo, proceeding southwards towards Zeerust. The next farm of any considerable extent that we came to was that belonging to Martin Zwart, whom we found engaged in distilling peach-brandy; he was the owner of two farms here, and had purchased several others on the frontier, but nevertheless he was by no means in flourishing circumstances; his love of hunting had prevented him from ever steadily devoting himself to farm life and, like many others, he had failed to get on. During the twenty-one years in which he had been a hunter, he had killed as many as 294 elephants.

Near the sources of the Notuany I took an excursion up the valley to Oosthuisen's farm. He resides in a lovely hollow, with several of his relations. His property contains a certain quantity of copper ore, which is collected by the natives, and, after being smelted, is made into bracelets and other ornaments. He cultivated maize, wheat, and tobacco, and spent a good deal of his time in tanning skins purchased from hunters coming back from the interior. Returning by Zwart's farm, we proceeded for two hours, and reached Zeerust, the headquarters of the local government for the Marico district. Though containing little more than forty houses, the little town possessed a Dutch church, surrounded by high walls, behind which, during the recent unsettled state of things, the population sought refuge.

Zeerust is situated on the Little Marico, which wends its way eastwards through the hills to join



the Great Marico. Nearly the whole of the district is highland, traversed by a multitude of brooks, and broken by some exceedingly fertile valleys; in comparison with the rest of the Transvaal, it may be said to be fairly cultivated; a part of it is covered with mimosas and various kinds of underwood; good pasturage for cows and horses may be seen almost everywhere. The farms lie close together, but although garden produce appeared to occupy a certain amount of attention, it was only in a few instances that we saw anything like abundance, the farmers, being, as I have said, addicted to elephant-hunting, and giving all their profits to that expensive amusement. The prohibition of hunting decreed by the Bechuana chiefs may probably compel these enthusiasts to stay at home, and by inducing them to mind their farms, may tend to bring about a more prosperous condition of the district.

Quitting Zeerust on the 19th, we made our way up the valley of the Little Marico. After passing several farms in the main valley and side valleys, and on the slopes, bearing the names of Quarifontein, Quaggafontein, Kaffirkraal, and Denkfontein, we emerged on to the Hooge-Veldt (high field), which is one of the most extensive grass plains on the South African plateau. The Zwart Ruggens (black ridges) were visible on the east. The plain abounds with game, and forms the eastern portion of the high land between the Molapo and the Harts River, where both of them, as well as the Marico

and many of their affluents, take their rise; its subsoil consists of the grey limestone which I have so frequently mentioned. We only passed two farms hereabouts, Pitfontein and Witfontein, and these lay in small depressions that seemed to lead down to the Harts River.

On the 22nd we commenced a gradual descent, and entered the valley of the Makokspruit, in which the Makokskraal is situated. In this valley was a farm, the owner of which was a relative of a man whom I had attended in the diamond-fields. Although they were very poor, the people were very anxious to treat us hospitably. Next day we came to the valley of the upper Schoenspruit; the stream was flowing freely, and all along its shores farm followed farm in close succession. Between the Schoenspruit and Potchefstroom we had to cross several low ridges, the south-western spurs of the Hooge Veldt lying parallel to the Mooi and to the affluents of the Schoen.

I discovered an interesting rocky pass on the first ridge on the way to Potchefstroom, with walls of quartzite nearly semicircular, and rising almost perpendicularly. The farm shut in by them was called Klipport; another, a little further on, was called Klipfontein, the quartzite veins in the ferruginous slate being here also quite apparent.

Arrived at Potchefstroom, I carried out my intention of selling two of my bullocks, as I had come to the end of my resources. Here, too, I said good-bye to my three companions, two of whom, Eber-

wald and Boly, went off to the Lydenburg gold-diggings, trusting to be rewarded with better fortune than they had found in the diamond-fields.

I travelled thirty-four miles the next day, meeting on my route a large number of waggons containing emigrants, merchants, and canteen-keepers, all on their way to Lydenburg, their thirst for gold being now as ardent as once it had been for diamonds. I halted at Klerksdorp only till evening, when I hurried on to the Estherspruit. On the 1st of April I forded the Bamboespruit, and after crossing the Vaal, seventeen miles below Christiana, at Blignaut's Pont, I arrived in Dutoitspan on the 7th.

Of all my curiosities, of which I brought back forty cases closely packed, I considered my ethnographical specimens, 400 in number, the most valuable; but in addition to these I had a great collection of insects, horns, plants, reptiles, skins of quadrupeds and birds, minerals, skeletons, spiders, crustaceans, mollusks, and fossils.

Although I had succeeded somewhat better than during my former journey in making a cartographical survey of the route, many obstacles with which the reader has been made acquainted in the previous pages, prevented me from making a map as complete as I desired.

My pecuniary position was now very much what it had been on my first appearance in Dutoitspan; to say the truth, it was rather worse, for immediately

on my arrival, an attorney called upon me to fulfil my obligations with respect to the bond into which I had entered on behalf of the young man who absconded; and very shortly afterwards I was obliged to pay off the 117*l.* which had been advanced to me before starting. My necessities compelled me forthwith to dispose of the greater portion of my skins and ostrich feathers, and I had to part with my waggon and team for whatever prices they would fetch. For a time my difficulties seemed to increase, as it was at least a month before I could work up anything like a remunerative practice.

I took the smallest of houses, consisting only of a single room, in one of the side streets; it was built of clay, and had a galvanized iron roof; there was a shed of the same materials close to its side; and the whole stood in a little yard containing a well, two sides of which were blocked up by a stable. For this accommodation I had to pay a rent of 5*l.* a month.

By June, however, I had succeeded in working up so much practice that I was obliged to keep a saddle-horse, and very shortly had to procure a chaise and a couple of ponies in addition. The winter of 1874 was a bad time in the central diggings; the measles broke out, and for several weeks I had to pay as many as forty visits a day; and, when the sickness was at its height, the average number was fifty-two.

From the very commencement of the increase in my business, I set about the preparations for my



third and most important journey. I purchased a new waggon, and gradually got together a team of ten picked oxen. Offers to accompany me were freely volunteered on all sides, but my experience made me aware that I could not be too particular in the choice of my associates. I had a half-caste Cape-servant, Jan Van Stahl, who soon proved a great comfort to me; he could not only write both Dutch and English, but very quickly fell into the way of helping me in my preparation of medicines; he was, moreover, a very excellent accountant. I made the acquaintance, too, of a young man engaged as a clerk in one of the stores, who was manifestly superior both in education and manners to the generality of his order; and having thoroughly satisfied myself as to the integrity of his character, I made him the offer of accompanying me. His employers were at that time relinquishing their business, and he came and resided with me. His name was Theunissen. He became a good friend, and remained with me more than a year, until we reached the Zambesi, where he quitted me on account of his fear of fever.

It was a disappointment to me that Van Stahl's dread of lions prevented his going with me; but Pit Dreyer, the shepherd, decided to accompany me in his place.

Previous to this time, and throughout my stay, the general state of things in the diggings had been undergoing very considerable change. More than a quarter of the white population had left, returning

either to the colony, to their homes in the Orange Free State, or to Europe, except that many of them had migrated to the gold-diggings in the Transvaal. Much greater care, too, was being bestowed upon the buildings, iron and wooden, that were being put up in Kimberley.

A great many of the people, moreover, were expressing themselves dissatisfied with the Governor in a way that led to an open revolt very soon after my departure.

Since 1872 the diamonds themselves had depreciated in value, although the "claims" had grown into higher demand, as they were worked with larger capital and improved machinery.

In November I took a fortnight's holiday, in anticipation of my prolonged absence. I went to the Vaal, and pitched my camp at the mouth of the Harts River, where the time sped rapidly away in hunting-excursions, and in seeking new materials for my scientific collection.

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# SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

TRAVELS, RESEARCHES, AND HUNTING ADVENTURES,  
BETWEEN THE DIAMOND-FIELDS AND THE ZAMBESI (1872-79).

BY

DR. EMIL HOLUB.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN E. FREWER.

WITH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TRAVEL REVOLUTION

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# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### FROM THE DIAMOND FIELDS TO THE MOLAPO.

	PAGE
Departure from Dutoitspan—Crossing the Vaal—Graves in the Harts River valley—Mamusa—Wild-goose shooting on Moffat's Salt Lake—A royal crane's nest—Molema's Town—Barolong weddings—A lawsuit—Cold weather—The Malmani valley—Weltufrede farm . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

### FROM JACOESDAL TO SHOSHONG.

Zeerust—Arrival at Linokana—Harvest-produce—The lion-ford on the Marico—Silurus-fishing—Crocodiles in the Limpopo—Damara-emigrants—A narrow escape—The Banks of the Notuany—The Puff-adder valley . . . . .	21
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

### FROM SHOSHONG TO THE GREAT SALT LAKES.

Khame and Sekhomo—Signs of erosion in the bed of the Luala—The Maque plains—Frost—Wild ostriches—Eland-antelopes—The first palms—Assegai traps—The district of the Great Salt Lakes—The Tsitane and Karri-Karri salt-pans—The Shaneng—The Soa salt-pan—Troublesome visitors—Salt in the Nataspruit—Chase of a Zulu hartebeest—Animal life on the Nataspruit—Waiting for a lion . . . . .	42
--	----

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM THE NATASFRUIT TO TAMASETZE.

	PAGE
Saltbeds in the Natasfruit—Poisoning jackals—A good shot —An alarm—The sandy pool-plateau—Ostriches— Travelling by torchlight—Meeting with elephant- hunters—The Madenassanas—Madenassana manners and customs—The Yoruah pool and the Tamafopa springs—Animal-life in the forest by night—Pit's slumbers—An unsuccessful lion's-hunt—Watch for elephants—Tamasetze . . . . .	70

## CHAPTER V.

## FROM TAMASETZE TO THE CHOBE.

Henry's Pan—Hardships of elephant-hunting—Elephants' holes—Arrival in the Panda ma Tenka valley—Mr. Westbeeck's depôt—South African lions—Their mode of attack—Blockley—Schneeman's Pan—Wild honey —The Leshumo valley—Trees damaged by elephants— On the bank of the Chobe . . . . .	95
--	----

## CHAPTER VI.

## IN THE VALLEYS OF THE CHOBE AND THE ZAMBESI.

Vegetation in the valley of the Chobe—Notification of my arrival—Scenery by the rapids—A party of Masupias— My mulekow—Matabele raids upon Sekeletu's territory —Gourd-shells—Masupia graves—Animal life on the Chobe—Masupia huts—Englishmen in Impalera— Makumba—My first boat-journey on the Zambesi— Animal life in the reed-thickets—Blockley's kraal— Hippopotamuses—Old Sesheke . . . . .	110
---	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

## FIRST VISIT TO THE MARUTSE KINGDOM.

My reception by Sepopo—The libeko—Sepopo's pilfering propensities—The royal residence—History of the	
---	--

## Contents.

v

PAGE

Marutse-Mabunda empire—The various tribes and their districts—Position of the vassal tribes—The Sesuto language—Discovery of a culprit—Portuguese traders at Sepopo's court—Arrangements for exploring the country—Construction of New Sesheke—Fire in Old Sesheke—Culture of the tribes of the Marutse-Mabunda kingdom—Their superstition—Rule of succession—Resources of the sovereign—Style of building—The royal courtyard—Musical instruments—War-drums—The kishi dance—Return to Impalera and Panda ma Tenka—A lion adventure . . . . .	136
---	-----

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### TRIP TO THE VICTORIA FALLS.

Return to Panda ma Tenka—Theunissen's desertion—Departure for the falls—Orbeki-gazelles—Animal and vegetable life in the fresh-water pools—Difficult travelling—First sight of the falls—Our skerms—Characteristics of the falls—Their size and splendour—Islands in the river-bed—Columns of vapour—Roar of the water—The Zambesi below the falls—The formation of the rocks— <i>Rencontre</i> with baboons—A lion-hunt—The Manansas—Their history and character—Their manners and customs—Disposal of the dead—Ornaments and costume—The Albert country—Back again . . . . .	180
--	-----

### CHAPTER IX.

#### SECOND VISIT TO THE MARUTSE KINGDOM.

Departure for Impalera—A Masupia funeral—Sepopo's wives—Travelling plans—Flora and fauna of the Sesheke woods—Arrival of a caravan—A fishing excursion—Mashoku, the king's executioner—Massangu—The prophetic dance—Visit from the queens—Blacksmith's bellows—Crocodiles and crocodile-tackle—The Mankoë—Constitution and officials of the Marutse kingdom—A royal elephant-hunt—Excursion to the woods—A	
--	--



	PAGE
buffalo-hunt—Chasing a lioness—The lion dance— Mashukulumbe at Sepopo's court—Moquai, the king's daughter—Marriage festivities . . . . .	214

## CHAPTER X.

## UP THE ZAMBESI.

Departure from Sesheke—The queens' squadron—First night's camp—Symptoms of fever—Agricultural advan- tages of the Zambesi valley—Rapids and cataracts of the Central Zambesi—The Mutshila-Aumsinga rapids— A catastrophe—Encampment near Sioma—A conspiracy —Lions around Sioma—My increasing illness . . . . .	266
--	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

## BACK AGAIN IN SESHEKE.

Visits of condolence—Unpopularity of Sepopo—Mosquitoes —Goose hunting—Court ceremonial at meals—Modes of fishing—Sepopo's illness—Vassal tribes of the Marutse empire—Characteristics of the Marutse tribes— The future of the country . . . . .	283
--	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MARUTSE TRIBES.

Ideas of religion—Mode of living—Husbandry and crops— Consumption and preparation of food—Cleanliness— Costume—Position of the women—Education of chil- dren—Marriages—Disposal of the dead—Forms of greet- ing—Modes of travelling—Administration of justice— An execution—Knowledge of medicine—Superstition— Charms—Human Sacrifices—Clay and wooden vessels —Calabashes—Basket-work—Weapons—Manufacture of clothing—Tools—Oars—Pipes and snuff-boxes— Ornaments—Toys, tools, and fly-flappers . . . . .	300
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE LESHUMO VALLEY.

	PAGE
Departure from Shesheke—Refractory boatmen—An effectual remedy—Beetles in the Leshumo Valley—The chief Moia—A phenomenon—A party of invalids—Sepopo's bailiffs—Kapella's flight—A heavy storm—Discontent in the Marutse kingdom—Departure for Panda ma Tenka . . . . .	354

CHAPTER XIV.

THROUGH THE MAKALAKA AND WEST MATABELE COUNTRIES.

Start southwards—Vlakvarks—An adventurer—The Tamasanka pools—The Libanani glade—Animal life on the plateau—The Maytengue—An uneasy conscience—Menon the Makalaka chief—A spy—Menon's administration of justice—Pilfering propensities and dirtiness of the Makalakas—Morula trees—A Matabele warrior—An angry encounter—Ruins on the Rocky Shasha—Scenery on the Rhamakoban river—A deserted gold-field—History of the Matabele kingdom—More ruins—Lions on the Tati—Westbeech and Lo Bengula—The leopard in Pit Jacobs' house—Journey continued . . . . .	372
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.

FROM SHOSHONG TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Arrival at Shoshong—Z.'s chastisement—News from the colony—Departure from Shoshong—Conflict between the Bakhatlas and Bakuenas—Mochuri—A pair of young lions—A visit from Eberwald—Medical practice in Linokana—Joubert's Lake—A series of salt-pans—Arrival in Kimberley . . . . .	418
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

LAST VISIT TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Resuming medical practice—My menagerie at Bultfontein—Exhibition at Kimberley—Visit to Wessel's Farm—	
---	--

	PAGE
Bushmen's carvings—Hunting hyænas and earth-pigs— The native question in South Africa—War in Cape Colony and Griqualand West—Major Lanyon and Colonel Warren—Departure for the coast . . . .	432

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THROUGH THE COLONY TO THE COAST.

Departure from Bultfontein—Philippolis—Ostrich-breeding —My first lecture—Fossils—A perilous crossing—The Zulu war—Mode of dealing with natives—Grahams- town—Arrival at Port Elizabeth—My baggage in danger—Last days in Cape Town—Summary of my collections—Return to Europe . . . . .	454
---	-----

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. II.

	PAGE
Frontispiece.	
Pond near Coetze's Farm . . . . .	4
Graves under the Camel-thorn Trees at Mamusa . . . . .	6
Shooting Wild Geese at Moffat's Salt Pan . . . . .	9
Hunting among the Rocks at Molema . . . . .	11
Baboon Rocks . . . . .	14
On the Banks of the Matebe Rivulet . . . . .	24
Crocodile in the Limpopo . . . . .	32
Battle on the Heights of Bamangwato . . . . .	43
Grottoes of the Luala . . . . .	46
Troop of Ostriches . . . . .	49
Masarwas chasing the Eland . . . . .	50
Pursued by Matabele . . . . .	52
The Soa Salt Lake . . . . .	57
Hunting the Zulu Hartebeest . . . . .	62
In the Tree . . . . .	66
Startled by Lions . . . . .	76
"Pit, are you asleep?" . . . . .	91
Nocturnal Attack by Lion . . . . .	102
Elephant Hunting . . . . .	107
Elephants on the March . . . . .	108
Boating on the Zambesi . . . . .	110
Impalera . . . . .	111
Removal to New Sesheke . . . . .	122
Masupia Grave . . . . .	127
On the Banks of the Chobe . . . . .	129
Hippopotamus Hunting . . . . .	132
Game Country near Blockley's Kraal . . . . .	133
In the Papyrus Thickets . . . . .	136
Reception at Sepopo's . . . . .	137
Port of Sesheke . . . . .	140



	PAGE
Musical Instruments of the Marutse . . . . .	147
Kishi-Dance . . . . .	169
Mask of a Kishi-Dancer . . . . .	170
On the Shores of the Zambesi . . . . .	176
A Troop of Giraffes surprised . . . . .	184
Aquatic Life in a still Pool by the Zambesi . . . . .	187
The Victoria Falls . . . . .	194
The Lion expected . . . . .	201
Encounter with a Tiger . . . . .	213
Hunting the Spur-winged Goose . . . . .	214
King Sepopo . . . . .	220
The Prophetic Dance of the Masupias . . . . .	229
Visit of the Queens . . . . .	232
Chase of the Water-Antelope . . . . .	249
Lion Hunt near Sesheke . . . . .	253
Mashukulombe at the Court of King Sepopo . . . . .	258
Sepopo's Doctor . . . . .	264
A Mabunda. A Makololo . . . . .	265
Mankoe . . . . .	266
Types of Marutse . . . . .	267
A Mambari. A Matonga . . . . .	271
Ascending the Zambesi . . . . .	274
My boat wrecked . . . . .	276
Night Visit from Lions at Sioma . . . . .	280
In the Manekango Rapids . . . . .	281
Otter-shooting on the Chobe . . . . .	283
Spearing Fish . . . . .	290
Walk through Sesheke . . . . .	292
A Masupia.—A Panda . . . . .	297
Singular Rock . . . . .	299
Drowning useless People . . . . .	300
Sepopo's Head Musician . . . . .	302
Marutse-Mabunda Calabashes for Honey-mead and Corn . . . . .	305
Bark Basket and Calabashes for holding Corn, used by the Mabundas . . . . .	308
Mabunda Ladle and Calabashes . . . . .	311
Marutse-Mabunda Pipes . . . . .	344
Pipes for smoking Dacha . . . . .	345
Scene on the Zambesi Shores at Sesheke . . . . .	351

*List of Illustrations.*

xi

	PAGE
Camp in the Leshumo Valley . . . . .	354
Wana Wena, the new King of the Marutse . . . . .	357
Ruins of Rocky Shasha . . . . .	372
Boer's Wife defending her Waggon against Kafirs . . . . .	402
Masarwas Drinking . . . . .	405
Lioness attacking Cattle on the Tati River . . . . .	409
Leopard in Pit Jacobs' House . . . . .	415
Return to the Diamond Fields . . . . .	418
Koranna Homestead near Mamusa . . . . .	420
Mission House in Molopolole . . . . .	424
Night Journey . . . . .	430
Fingo Boy . . . . .	432
My House in Bultfontein . . . . .	434
Rock Inscriptions by Bushmen . . . . .	438
Capture of an Earth-Pig . . . . .	440
Colonel Warren . . . . .	449
Bella . . . . .	454
Narrow Escape near Cradock . . . . .	460
Main Street in Port Elizabeth . . . . .	468
Fingo Village at Port Elizabeth . . . . .	469



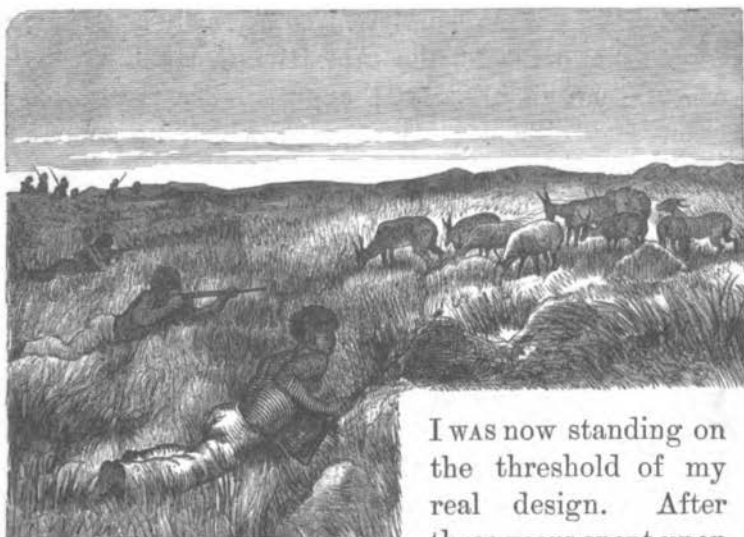
# SEVEN YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

## THIRD JOURNEY INTO THE INTERIOR.

### CHAPTER I.

#### FROM THE DIAMOND FIELDS TO THE MOLAPO.

Departure from Dutoitspan—Crossing the Vaal—Graves in the Harts River valley—Mamusa—Wild-goose shooting on Moffat's Salt Lake—A royal crane's nest—Molema's Town—Barolong weddings—A lawsuit—Cold weather—The Malmani valley—Weltufrede farm.



I WAS now standing on the threshold of my real design. After three years spent upon

the glowing soil of the dark continent, the scene of the



endurances and the renown of many an enthusiast, I had now arrived at the time for putting into execution the scheme I had projected. My feelings necessarily were of a very mingled character. Was I sufficiently inured to the hardships that could not be separated from the undertaking? Could I fairly indulge the hope of reaching the goal for which I had so long forsaken home, kindred, and friends? The experience of my two preliminary journeys made me venture to answer both these questions without misgiving. I had certainly gained a considerable insight into the nature of the country; I had learned the character of the contingencies that might arise from the disposition of the natives and their mode of dealing, and I had satisfied myself of the necessity as well as the comfort of having trustworthy associates on whom I could rely. Altogether I felt justified in commencing what I designed to be really a journey of exploration. At the same time I could not be otherwise than alive to the probability that some unforeseen difficulty might arise which no human effort could surmount.

It was a conflict of hopes and fears, but the picture of the Atlantic at Loanda seemed to unfold itself to my gaze, and its attraction was irresistible; hitherto in my lesser enterprises I had been favoured by fortune, and why should she now cease to smile? I felt that there was everything to encourage me, and definitely resolved to face the difficulties that an expedition into the interior of Africa cannot fail to entail.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was on the 2nd of March, 1875, that I left

Dutoitspan. I went first of all to a friend at Bultfontein, intending to stay with him until the 6th, and there to complete my preparations. Not alone was it my scheme to explore Southern-Central Africa, but I hardly expected to return to Cape Colony at all, consequently my arrangements on leaving this time were rather more complicated than they had been on the two previous occasions.

Quitting Bultfontein on the day proposed, I proceeded for eleven miles, and made my first halt by the side of a sandy rain-pool, enclosed by the rising ground that was visible from the diamond-fields. We slept in the mimosa woods, through which the road to the Transvaal runs for several miles, and the deep sand of which is so troublesome to vehicles.

On the 7th we passed the Rietvley and Keyle farms, around which we saw a good many herds of springbocks in the meadow-lands.

The next day's march took us by the farms at Rietfontein, and Pan Place, and we made our night camp on Coetze's land. Near these farms, which lay at the foot of the considerable hill called the Plat Berg, I secured some feathered game, amongst which was a partridge. To me the most interesting spot in the day's journey was a marshy place on Coetze's farm; it was a pond with a number of creeks and various little islands, which were the habitat of water-fowl, particularly wild ducks, moor-hens, and divers. In the evening I called upon Mynheer Coetze, and in the course of conversation mentioned his ponds with their numerous birds. He surprised me somewhat by his reply. "Yes," he said, "the birds breed there, and we

never disturb them; we allow strangers to shoot them, but for our own part we like to see them flying about." I admired his sentiment, and wished that it was more shared by the Dutch farmers in general.

The property was partially wooded, and extended



POND NEAR COETZEE'S FARM.

both into Griqualand West and into the Orange Free State. Amongst other game upon it, there was a large herd of striped gnus.

On the next day but one we made the difficult passage of the Vaal at Blignaut's Pont. From the two river-banks I obtained some skins of birds, and several varieties of leaf-beetles (*Platycorynus*).

At the ferry, on the shore by which we arrived, stood a medley of clay huts, warped by the wind, and propped up on all sides, claiming to be an hotel; on the further shores were a few Koranna huts, the occupiers of which were the ferrymen. For taking us across the river they demanded on behalf of their employer the sum of twenty-five shillings.

The rain had made the ground very heavy, and it was after a very tedious ride that we reached Christiana, the little Transvaal town with which the reader has been already made acquainted, and made our way to Hallwater Farm (erroneously called Monomotapa), where we obtained a supply of salt from the resident Korannas.

We next took a northerly course, and passed through Strengfontein, a farm belonging to Mynheer Weber, lying to the east of the territory of the independent Korannas. The country beyond was well pastured, and contained several farmsteads; although it was claimed by the Korannas, by Gassibone, by Mankuruane, and by the Transvaal government, it had no real ruler. The woods afforded shelter for duykerbocks, hartebeests, and both black and striped gnus, whilst the plains abounded with springbocks, bustards, and many small birds.

After passing Dreifontein, a farm that had only a short time previously been reduced to ashes by the natives from the surrounding heights, we encamped on the Houmansvley, that lay a little further ahead. Near the remains of the place were some huts, from which some Koranna women came out, their intrusive behaviour being in marked con-



trast with that of some Batlapins, who modestly retired into the background. Not far off was a vley, or marshy pond, where I found some wild ducks, grey herons, and long-eared swamp-owls (*Otus capensis*). Houmansvley was the last of the farms we had to pass before we entered the territory of the Korannas of Mamusa.



GRAVES UNDER THE CAMEL-THORN TREES AT MAMUSA.

We reached the Harts River valley on the evening of the 15th. Before getting to the river we had to traverse a slope overgrown with grass, and in some places with acacias which must be a hundred years old, and under the shadow of which were some Batlapin and Koranna graves, most of them in a good state of preservation. The river-

bed is very often perfectly dry, but as the stream was very much swollen, the current was too strong to allow us to cross without waiting for it to subside; the district, however, was so attractive that it was by no means to be regretted that we were temporarily delayed. The high plateau, with its background of woods, projected like a tongue into the valley, and opposite to us, about three-quarters of a mile to the right, rose the Mamusa hills.

We visited Mamusa, encamping on its little river a short distance from the merchants' offices under the eastern slope of the hills. A few years back it had been one of the most populous places representing the Hottentot element in South Africa, but now it was abandoned to a few of the descendants of the aged king Mashon and their servants. Some of the people had carried off their herds to the pasture-lands; others had left the place for good, to settle on the affluents of the Mokara and the Konana, on the plains abounding in game that stretched northwards towards the Molapo. This small Koranna principality is an enclave in the southern Bechuana kingdoms, a circumstance which is not at all to their advantage, as any mixture of the Hottentot and Bantu elements is sure to result in the degeneration of the latter.

The merchants received me most kindly. One of them, Mr. Mergusson, was a naturalist, and amused himself by taming wild birds. He showed me several piles, at least three feet high, of the skins of antelopes, gnus, and zebras, which he intended taking to Bloemhof for sale. He and his brother had twice extended their business-journeys as far as Lake Ngami.

While in the neighbourhood, I heard tidings of the two dishonest servants that I had hired at Musemanyana, and who had decamped after robbing me on my second journey.

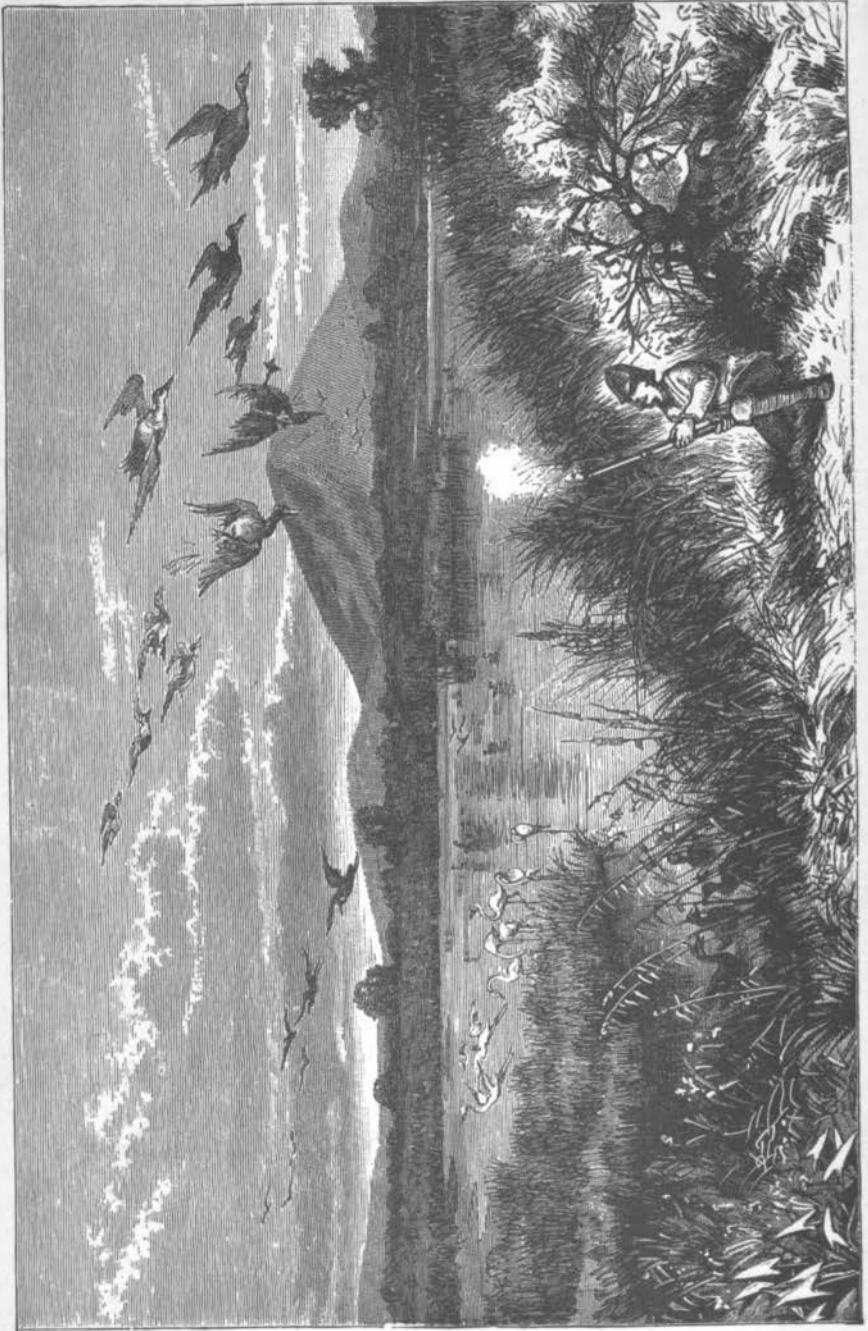
Leaving Mamusa on the 17th, we had to mount the bushy highland, dotted here and there with Koranna farmsteads, and in the evening reached the southern end of the grassy quagga-flats. The soil was so much sodden with rain, that in many places the plains were transformed into marshes; on the drier parts light specks were visible, which on nearer approach turned out to be springbock gazelles. On every side the traveller was greeted by the melodious notes of the crowned crane, and the birds, less shy here than elsewhere, allowed him to come in such close proximity, that he could admire the beauty of their plumage. The cackle of the spurred and Egyptian geese could be heard now in one spot and now in another, and wild-ducks, either in rows or in pairs, hovered above our heads.

Our next march afforded us good sport. It was rather laborious, but our exertions were well rewarded, as amongst other booty, we secured a silver heron, some plovers, and some snipes. I had our camp pitched by the side of a broad salt-water lake, proposing to remain there for several days, the surrounding animal-life promising not merely a choice provision for our table, but some valuable acquisitions for my collection.

At daybreak next morning, I started off with Theunissen on a hunting-excursion. There had been rain in the night, and the air was somewhat cool, so that it was with a feeling of satisfaction that







I hailed the rising sun as its early beam darted down the vale and was reflected in the water. On the opposite shore we noticed a flock of that stateliest of waders, the flamingo, with its deep red plumage and strong brown beak. Close beside them was a group of brown geese wading towards us, and screeching as they came was a double file of grey cranes, whilst a gathering of herons was keeping watch upon some rocks that projected from the water. High above the lake could be heard the melodious long-drawn note of the mahem, and amidst the numbers of the larger birds that thronged the surface of the water was what seemed a countless abundance of moorhens and ducks. I stood and gazed upon the lively scene till I was quite absorbed. All at once a sharp whistle from my companion recalled me to myself. I was immediately aware of the approach of a flock of dark brown geese; though unwieldy, they made a rapid flight, their heavy wings making a considerable whirr. A shot from each of my barrels brought down two of the birds into the reeds; the rest turned sharply off to the left, leaving Theunissen, disappointed at not getting the shot he expected, to follow them towards the plain to no purpose. Great was the commotion that my own shots made amongst the denizens of the lake. Quickly rose the grey cranes from the shallow water, scarce two feet deep, and made for the shore where we were standing. In the excitement of their alarm, the crowned cranes took to flight in exactly the opposite direction; the flamingoes hurried hither and thither, apparently at a loss whether to fly or to run, until one of them catching sight of me rose high into the air, screeching

wildly, and was followed by the entire train soaring aloft till they looked no larger than crows; the black geese, on the other hand, left the grass to take refuge in the water, and the smaller birds forsook the reeds, as deeming the centre of the lake the place of safety.

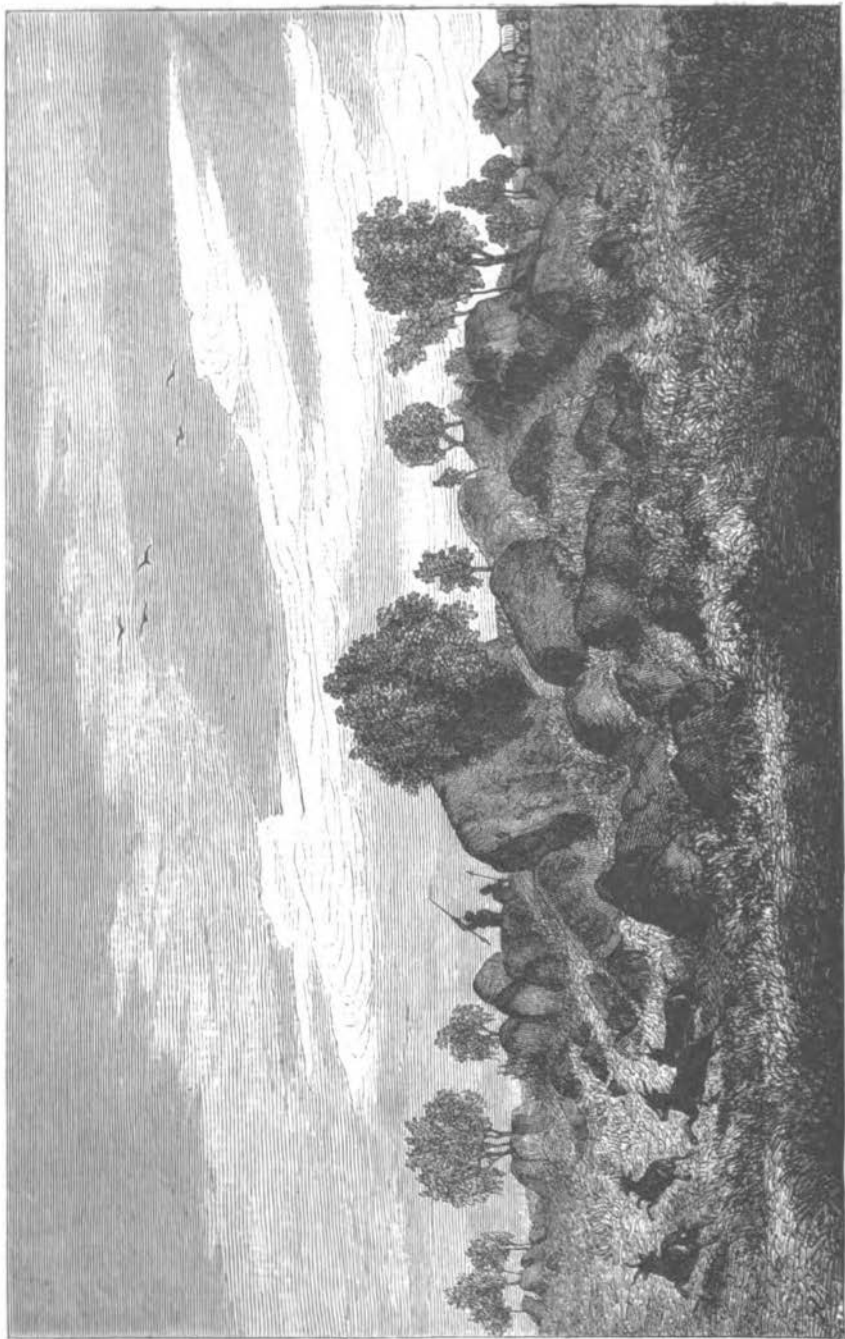
We were not long out. We returned to breakfast, and while we were taking our meal we caught sight of a herd of blessbocks, numbering at least 250 head, grazing in the depression of the hills on the opposite shore. Breakfast, of course, was forgotten and left unfinished. Off we started; the chase was long, but it was unattended with success. Our toil, however, was not entirely without compensation, as on our return we secured a fine grey crane. Pit likewise in the course of the day shot several birds, and in the afternoon excited our interest by saying that he had discovered the nest of a royal crane.

I went to the reedy pool to which he directed me, about a mile and a half to the north of our place of encampment, and on a little islet hardly more than seven feet square, sure enough was a hollow forming the nest, which contained two long white eggs, each about the size of my fist. I took the measurement of the nest, and found it as nearly as possible thirty inches in diameter, and six inches deep.

While I was resting one afternoon in a glen between the hills, I noticed a repetition of what I had observed already in the course of my second journey, namely, that springbocks, in going to drink, act as pioneers for other game, and that blessbocks and gnus follow in their wake, but only when it has been ascertained that all is safe.







To the lake by which we had been making our pleasant little stay, I gave the name of Moffat's Salt Lake. On the 23rd we left it, and after quitting its shore, which, it may be mentioned, affords excellent hiding-places for the *Canis mesomelas*, we had to pass several deepish pools which seemed to abound with moorhens and divers. On a wooded eminence, not far away from our starting-place, we came across some Makalahari, who were cutting into strips the carcase of a blesbock. On the same spot was a series of pitfalls, now partially filled up with sand, but which had originally been made with no little outlay of labour, being from thirty to fifty feet long, and from five to six feet wide.

In the evening we passed a wood where a Batlapin hunting-party, consisting of Mankuruane's people, had made their camp. They commenced at once to importune us for brandy, first in wheedling, and then in threatening tones.

Game, which seemed to have been failing us for a day or two, became on the 25th again very abundant. The bush was also thicker. A herd of nearly 400 springbucks that were grazing not far ahead, precisely across the grassy road, scampered off with great speed, but not before Theunissen had had the good luck to bring down a full-grown doe. As we entered upon the district of the Maritsana River, the bushveldt continued to grow denser, and the country made a perceptible dip to the north-west. Several rain-glens had to be crossed, and some broad shallow valleys, luxuriantly overgrown, one of which I named the Hartebeest Vale. In the afternoon we reached the deep valley of the Maritsana. On the right hand slope stood a Barolong-Makalahari village,

the inhabitants of which were engaged in tending the flocks belonging to Molema's Town. The valley itself was in many parts very bushy, and no doubt abounded in small game, whilst the small pools from two feet to eight feet deep in the river-bed, here partaking of the nature of a spruit, contained Orange River fish, lizards, and crabs; two kinds of ducks were generally to be seen upon them.

As we passed through a mimosa wood on the morning after, we met two Barolongs, who not only made me aware how near we had come to Molema's Town, but informed me that Montsua was there, having arrived to preside over a trial in a poisoning case. I had not formed the intention of going into the place, but the information made me resolve to deviate a little from my route, that I might pay my respects to the king and his brother Molema.

Descending the Lothlakane valley, where Montsua was anxious that his heir should fix his residence, we reached the town on the 28th. The Molapo was rather fuller than when I was here last, but we managed to cross the rocky ford, and pitched our camp on the same spot that I had chosen in 1873.

As soon as I heard that the judicial sitting had adjourned, I lost no time in paying my personal respects to the Barolong authorities. I found the king with Molema and several other chiefs at their mid-day meal, some sitting on wooden stools and some upon the ground; but no sooner were they made acquainted with my arrival, than they hastened to show signs of unfeigned pleasure, making me shake hands with them again and again. Montsua at once began to talk about the

cures I had effected at Moshaneng, and begged me to stay for at least a few days. After spending a short time in Molema's courtyard, we all adjourned to the house of his son, which was fitted up in European style, and where we had some coffee served in tin cups. Molema was upon the whole strong and active, but he was still subject to fits of asthma, and requested me to supply him with more medicine like that he had had before; and so grateful was he for my services, that he gave me a couple of good draught-oxen, one of which I exchanged with his son Matye for an English saddle.

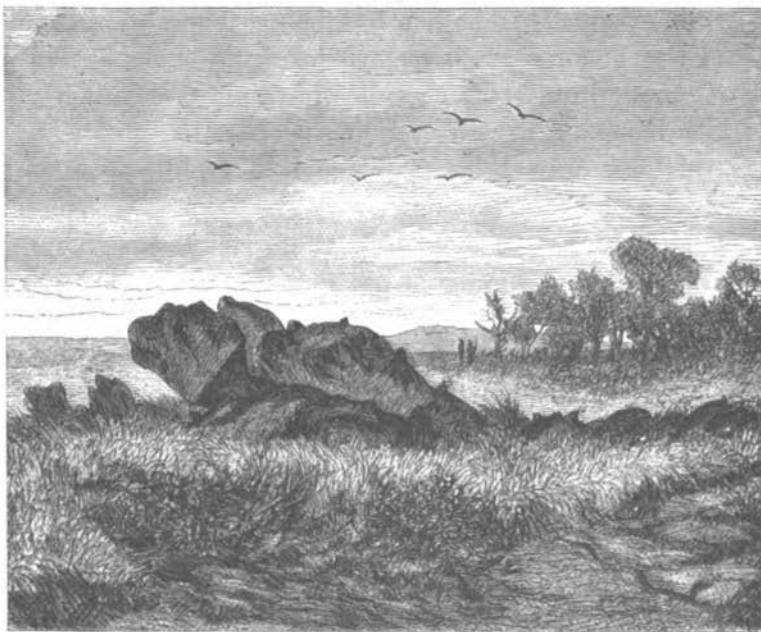
Molema is a thin, slight man of middle height, with a nose like a hawk's beak, which, in conjunction with a keen, restless eye, gives to his whole countenance a peculiarly searching expression. At times he is somewhat stern, but in a general way he is very indulgent to his subjects, who submit implicitly to his authority; this was illustrated in the issue of the cause over which Montsua was now visiting him to preside. He is very considerate for his invalid wife, and, considering his age, he is vigorous both in mind and body; although his sons and the upper class residents of the town have adopted the European mode of fitting up their houses, he persists in adhering to the native style of architecture.

During our stay here, Mr. Webb had to perform the marriage service for three couples; one of the bridegrooms had a remarkable name, the English rendering of which would be "he lies in bed." Singular names of this character are by no means unusual among the Bechuana children, any accidental circumstance connected with their parentage or



birth being seized upon to provide the personal designation for life. Taking a stroll through the place late in the evening, I heard the sound of hymns sung by four men and ten women, bringing the wedding observances to a close.

Wandering about the town, I noticed that although the garments worn were chiefly of European manu-



BABOON ROCKS.

facture, the inhabitants very frequently were dressed in skins either of the goat, the wild cat, the grey fox, or the duyker gazelle. Boys generally had a sheepskin or goatskin thrown across their shoulders, although occasionally the skin of a young lion took its place; girls, besides their leather aprons, nearly always covered themselves with an antelope-hide.

As far as I could learn, the disputes between the Transvaal government and the Barolongs had in great measure subsided, owing to Montsua having threatened, in consequence of the encroachments of the Boers, to allow the English flag to be planted in his villages.

I have already referred to the trial which had brought Montsua to the town, and in order that I may convey a fair idea of the way in which Bechuana justice is administered, I will give a brief outline of the whole transaction.

A Barolong, quite advanced in years, had set his affections upon a fatherless girl of fifteen, living in the town; she peremptorily refused to become his wife, and as he could not afford to buy her, he devised a cunning stratagem to obtain her. He offered his hand to the girl's mother, who did not hesitate to accept him; by thus marrying the mother, he secured the residence of the daughter in his own quarters; the near intercourse, he hoped, would overcome her repugnance to himself; but neither his appearance nor his conversation, mainly relating to his wealth in cattle, had the least effect in altering her disposition towards him. Accordingly, he resorted to the linyaka. Aware of the pains that were being taken to force her into the marriage, the girl carefully avoided every action that could be interpreted as a sign of regard. As she was starting off to the fields one morning to her usual work, her stepfather called her back, and if her own story were true, the following conversation took place,—

“I know you hate me,” he said.

“E-he, e-he!” she assented.

"Well, well, so it must be!" he answered, but he stamped his staff with rage upon the ground.

"Yes, so it must be," replied she.

"But you must promise me," he continued, "that you will not marry another husband."

"Na-ya," she cried, bursting out laughing, "na-ya."

"Then I'll poison you," he yelled.

The girl, according to her own account, was alarmed, and went and told her mother and another woman who were working close by the river. They tried to reassure her, telling her that her stepfather was only in joke, but they did not allay her apprehensions.

That very evening, while she was taking her simple supper of water-melon, he called her off and sent her on some message; when she returned she finished her meal, but in the course of an hour or two she was writhing in most violent agony. In the height of her sufferings, she reminded her mother and the friends who gathered round her of what had transpired in the morning. Her shrieks of pain grew louder and louder, and when they were silenced, she was unconscious. Before midnight she was a corpse.

The stepfather was of course marked out as the murderer; the evidence to be produced against him seemed incontestible; the old man had actually been seen gathering leaves and tubers in the forenoon, which he had afterwards boiled in his own courtyard.

The accused, however, was one of Molema's adherents; he had served him faithfully for half a century, and Molema accordingly felt it his duty to

do everything in his power to protect him, and so sent over to Moshaneng for Montsua to come and take the office of judge at the trial. He was in the midst of the inquiry when I arrived.

Meanwhile, the defendant had complete liberty he might for the time be shunned by the population, but he walked about the streets as usual, trusting thoroughly to Molema's clemency and influence, and certain that he should be able to buy himself off with a few bullocks.

The trial lasted for two days; after each sitting the court was entertained with bochabe, a sort of meal-pap.

The evidence was conclusive; the verdict of "guilty" was unanimous. Montsua said he should have been bound to pass a sentence of death, but Molema had assured him there were many extenuating circumstances; and, taking all things into account, he considered it best to leave the actual sentence in his hands. Molema told the convicted man to keep out of the way for a few days until Montsua had ceased to think about the matter, and then sending for him, as he strolled about, passed the judgment that he should forfeit a cow as a peace-offering to the deceased girl's next-of-kin, the next-of-kin in this case being his wife and himself!

Before quitting the place, I went to take my leave of Mr. Webb. While I was with him a dark form presented itself in the doorway, which I quickly recognized as none other than King Montsua. He had followed me, and, advancing straight to my side, put five English shillings into my hand, requesting me to give him some more of the physic



which had done his wife so much good at the time of my visit to Moshaneng.

On the afternoon of the 2nd of April we left Molema's Town, to proceed up the valley of the Molapo. Next morning we passed the last of the kraals in this direction, in a settlement under the jurisdiction of Linkoo, a brother of Molema's.

Early morning on this day was extremely cold, and the keen south-east wind made us glad to put on some overcoats. We made a halt at Rietvley, the most westerly of the Molapo farms in the Jacobsdal district, the owner of which was a Boer of the name of Van Zyl, a brother of the Damara emigrant to whom I shall have subsequently to refer.

From this point the farms lay in close proximity to each other, as far as the sources of the Molapo. The river valley extended for about twenty-two miles towards the east, retaining its marshy character throughout, but growing gradually narrower as its banks became more steep and wooded. Although its scenery cannot be said to rank with the most attractive parts of the western frontier of the Transvaal, yet, for any traveller, whether he be ornithologist, botanist, or sportsman, the valley is well worth a visit.

The waggon-track which we had been following led, by way of Jacobsdal and Zeerust, direct to the Baharutse kraal Linokana, by which I had made up my mind to pass. We kept along the road as far as Taylor's farm, "Olive-wood-dry," where the density of the forest and the steepness of the slopes obliged us to leave the valley, and betake ourselves to the table-land. Olive-wood-dry is unquestionably one

of the finest farms on the upper Molapo; it has a good garden, and is watered by one of the most important of the springs that feed the river, whilst the rich vegetation in the valley, thoroughly protected as it is from cold winds, forms quite an oasis in the plateau of the western Transvaal. A dreary contrast to this was the aspect of the Bootfontein farm, where the people seemed to vegetate rather than to thrive.

In the evening we crossed the water-shed between the Orange River and the Limpopo, and spent the night near a small spruit, one of the left-hand affluents of the Malmani, which I named the Burger-spruit. Next day we entered the pretty valley of the Malmani, the richly-wooded slopes of which looked cheerful with the numerous farms that covered them.

Quitting the Malmani valley on the 5th, we journeyed on eastwards past Newport farm, along a plain where the grass was short and sour. In the east and north-east could be seen the many spurs of the Marico hills; the hills, too, of the Khamé or Hieronymus district were quite distinct in the distance, all combining to form one of the finest pieces of scenery in what may be called the South African mountain system.

The slope towards the side valley, which we should have to descend in order to reach the main valley, was characterized by a craggy double hill, to which I gave the name of Rohlf'sberg. Further down, I noticed a saddle-shaped eminence, which I called the Zizka-saddle. The descent was somewhat difficult, on account of the ledges of rock, but we were amply compensated by the splendid scenery, the

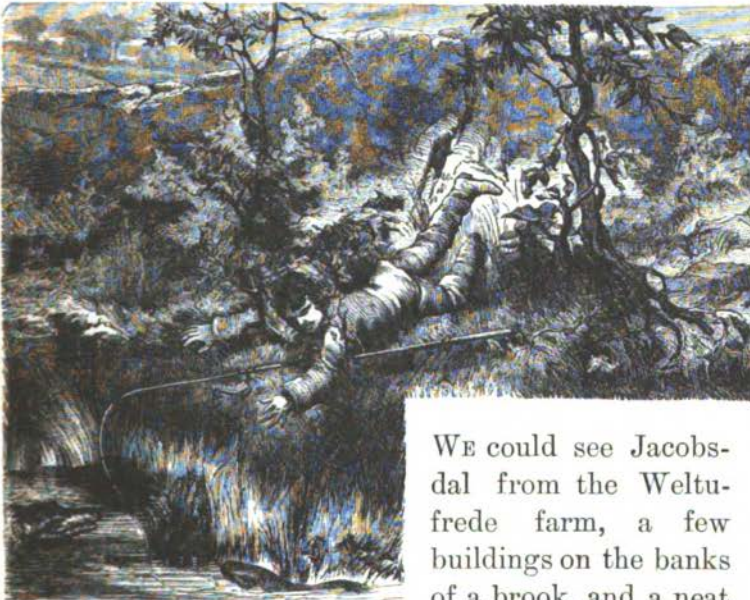
finest bit, I think, being that at Buffalo's-Hump farm, where in the far distance rises the outline of the Staarsattel hills.

By the evening we reached the valley of the Little Marico, and the Weltufrede farm. This belongs to Mynheer von Groomen, one of the wealthiest Boers in the district. His sons have been elephant-hunters for years, and have met with exceptional success, having managed to earn a livelihood by the pursuit. In the paddock of the farm they showed me a young giraffe that they had brought home with them from one of their expeditions.

## CHAPTER II.

FROM JACOBSDAL TO SHOSHONG.

**Zeerust—Arrival at Linokana—Harvest-produce—The lion-ford on the Marico—Silurus-fishing—Crocodiles in the Limpopo—Damara-emigrants—A narrow escape—The Banks of the Notuany—The buff-adder valley.**



WE could see Jacobsdal from the Weltufrede farm, a few buildings on the banks of a brook, and a neat little church, being all that this embryo town of the western Transvaal had then to show. After leaving it we turned north, then north-east towards Zeerust, the most important settlement in the



Marico district. On our way thither we passed one of the most productive farms in the neighbourhood ; it belonged to a man named Bootha, and was traversed by the Malmani, which wound its way through a low rocky ridge to its junction with the Marico.

I made a preliminary visit by myself to the little town, but we did not actually move our quarters into Zeerust till next day. It covers a larger area than Jacobsdal, and any one devoted to natural science would find abundant material to interest him in its vicinity. We, however, only remained there a few hours, and started off for Linokana, outside which we encountered Mr. Jensen, who was bringing the mail-bag from the interior. The missionary received us with the utmost cordiality, and gave us an invitation, which I accepted most gratefully, to stay with him for a fortnight ; the time that I spent with him was beneficial in more ways than one, as not only did it afford me an opportunity of thoroughly exploring the neighbourhood, but it permitted my companions to enjoy a rest which already they much required.

In 1875, the Baharutse in Linokana gathered in as much as 800 sacks of wheat, each containing 200 lbs., and every year a wider area of land is being brought under cultivation. Besides wheat, they grow maize, sorghum, melons, and tobacco, selling what they do not require for their own consumption in the markets of the Transvaal and the diamond-fields ; it cannot be said, however, that their fields are as carefully kept as those of the Barolong. A great deal of their land has been transferred to the Boer government, and they only retain the ownership of a few farms.

On the 9th I went to the sources of the Matebe and wandered about the surrounding hills, where mineral ores seem to abound. The following day I employed myself in drawing out a sketch-map of my route, and when I had completed it, I amused myself by an inspection of the plantations and gardens which surround the mission-station. I attended the chapel, where the service consisted of a hymn, the reading of a portion of one of the gospels, then another hymn, followed by a sermon; the impression made upon the congregation as they squatted on their low wooden stools being very marked, and the whole service in its very simplicity being to my mind as solemn as the most gorgeous ritual.

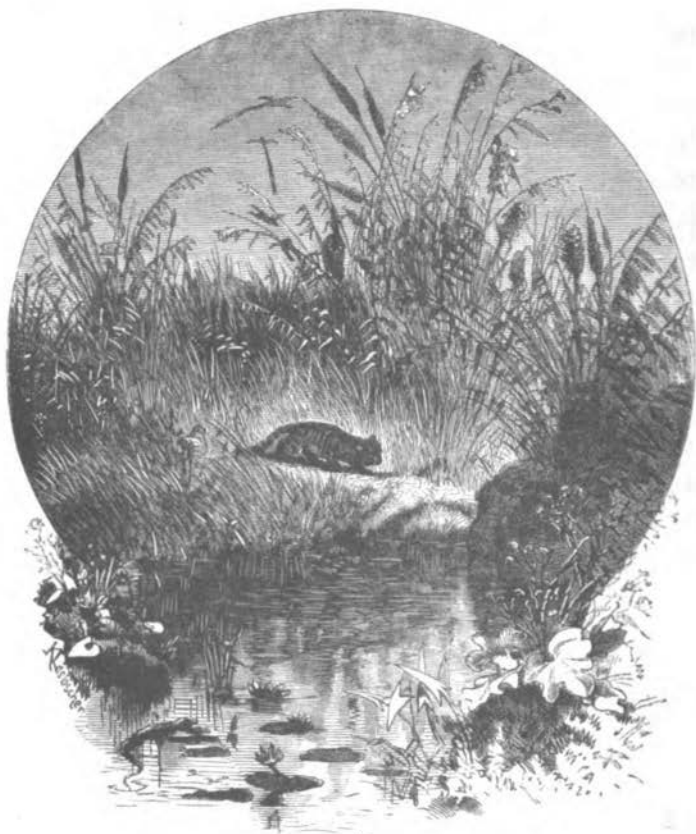
The native postman from Molopolole arrived late on the evening of the 15th, the journey having taken him three days; he only stayed one night, and started back again with the European mail that came through Zeerust from Klerksdorf. To my great surprise it brought me a kind letter from Dr. A. Petermann, the renowned geographer at Gotha.

An English major likewise arrived from the Banguaketse countries; he was in search of ore and was now on his way to Kolobeng and Molopolole; he gave us an interesting account of the reasons that had induced him and Captain Finlayson to explore the north-eastern Transvaal.

The Baharutse girls seem to be particularly fond of dancing, and we hardly ever failed of an evening to hear music and occasionally singing in various parts of the town.

One of the most picturesque spots in the whole

neighbourhood is in the valley of the Notuany, about three miles below its confluence with the Matebe; it is enclosed by rocky slopes broken here and there by rich glens and luxuriant woodlands



ON THE BANKS OF THE MATEBE RIVULET.

that afford cover for countless birds, whilst in the sedge-thickets on the Matebe wild cats nearly as large as leopards lurk about for their prey.

We left Linokana on the 23rd, and crossed the Notuany, a proceeding that occupied us nearly two

hours, as the half-ruined condition of the bridge made it necessary for us to use even more caution than on my previous journey.

I spent a pleasant day in the Buisport glen, and had some good fishing in the pools of the Marupa stream, as well as some excellent sport on its banks. The upper pools contain many more fish and water-lizards than those near the opening of the glen, for being deeper and more shady they are less liable to get dried up. Some of the mimosas and willows that overhang the stream were sixty feet high, and as much as four feet in diameter.

Next day we passed the Witfontein and Sandfontein farms, both in the Bushveldt. The residents at Witfontein were making preparations for a great hunting-excursion into the interior, where they expressed a hope that they might meet me again. Zwart's farm I found quite forsaken, its owner having started off on a similar errand the week before; from his last excursion he had brought back some ostriches and elands. Some Boers that we met informed me that fresh stragglers from the Transvaal were continually joining Van Zyl, and that the Damara emigrants would soon feel themselves sufficiently strong to continue their north-westerly progress; their place of rendezvous was on the left bank of the Crocodile River between the Notuany and the Sirorume.

Before the day was at an end we reached Fourier's farm at Brackfontein, and spent the night there, encamping next day at Schweinfurth's Pass, in the Dwars mountains. By the evening we had come as far as the springs in the rocks on the spurs of the Chwene-Chwene heights, whence we skirted the



town of Chwene-Chwene itself, and after crossing the valley on the Bechuana spruit, took up our quarters on the northern slope of the spur of the Bertha hills. On the banks of the spruit I noticed a deserted Barwa village containing about fifteen huts ; they lay in an open meadow, and consisted merely of bundles of grass thrown like a cap over stakes about five feet long bound together at their upper ends.

The Great Marico was reached on the afternoon of the 30th. We made our encampment at a spot where a couple of diminutive islands, projecting above the rapid, made it possible to get across without any danger from crocodiles. The probability of there being an abundance of game on the opposite side induced me to stay for two or three days. Regardless of Pit's warning that he had seen a lion's track close by, I selected a place some hundred yards lower down, and resolved to go and keep watch there for whatever game might turn up. I took the precaution to enclose the spot with a low fence.

Soon after sunset I proceeded to carry out my intention. The passage of the river with its somewhat strong current in the dark was troublesome as well as fatiguing. I reached my look-out, which I found by no means comfortable, and as the darkness gathered round me, I became conscious of a strange yearning for my distant home, and the image of my mother seemed to arise so visibly before me, that I could hardly persuade myself that she was not actually approaching. Phantasies of this kind were altogether unusual with me, and as the sense of awe appeared to increase, I began to debate with myself whether I had not better

retire from my position and make my way back to the waggon. It came, however, to my recollection that this was just the hour when the crocodiles left the water and made their way to the banks, in order to avoid the rapids.

The night continued to grow darker, and dense masses of cloud rose up to obscure the sky. I came to the final decision that my watch would be to no purpose, and was just about setting out to return, when I became aware of the movement of some great object scarcely ten yards away. Of course in the dark no reliance was to be placed upon my gun; my long hunting-knife was the only weapon on which I had to depend; this I grasped firmly, and stooped down, straining every power of vision to penetrate the gloom; but nothing was to be discerned; only a strange and inexplicable glimmer still moved before my eyes. Again, with startling vividness, the image of my mother rose before me; I could not help interpreting it to betoken that some danger was near, and once more I determined to hasten back at all hazards to our encampment. I placed my foot upon the twigs with which I had built up my fence, and it came down with a crash which sounded sufficiently alarming. Gun in one hand, and knife in the other, I proceeded to grope my way along, but recollecting that my gun was useless, and finding it an incumbrance, I threw it into a bush; after it had fallen I heard a noise like scratching or scraping, and I am much mistaken if I did not distinguish a low growl, and it occurred to me that it was more than likely that some beasts of prey had been stealthily making their way to my place of retreat. Having no longer the shelter

of my fence-work I confess a feeling of tremor came over me, and my heart beat very fast. Still slashing about with my hunting-knife, I cut my way through the overhanging boughs, pausing at every step, and listening anxiously to every sound. In spite of all my care I came from time to time into collision with the branches, and I staggered in wonder whether I had not at last encountered some gigantic beast of prey.

It took me a considerable time to get over that hundred yards by which I was separated from the stream, but at length I accomplished it, and reached a narrow rain-channel, that facilitated my descent to the brink of the water. It was with extreme caution that I placed one foot before another, as my sole clue to the direction of the ford was derived from the increase or decrease in the sound of the current; more than once I lost my footing, and fell down bodily into the water, but after a time, with much difficulty, managed to get on to the first of the two islands; upon this I did not rest for a minute, but plunged at once into the main stream, whence I succeeded in gaining the second island. Here I paused long enough to recover my somewhat exhausted breath, and then re-entering the seething waters, tottered over the slippery stones till I found myself safely on the shore. As I set my foot upon the ground I could not do otherwise than experience a great sense of relief, although I was quite aware that there might be danger yet in store. I was so tired that I should have been glad to throw myself upon the ground then and there, but the chance of exposing myself to the crocodiles at that hour was too serious to be risked.

Just as I was on the point of clambering up the bank I heard a rustling above my head; I kept perfectly silent, and soon discovered that the noise came from a herd of pallahs, on their way to drink. I recognized them by the crashing which their horns made in the bushes, and by their peculiar grunt. Swinging myself up by means of the branches, I reached the top of the bank, and wending my way along the glen, before long recognized the barking of the dogs, which had been disturbed by the antelopes. My whistle quickly brought my faithful Niger to my side, and his company agreeably relieved the rest of my way back to the fires which marked the place of our encampment.

Taking Pit with me next morning, I made an investigation of the place where I had spent so much of the previous dreary night. It was covered with lion-tracks, and the little barricade was completely trampled down. One of my dogs at this place fell a victim to the flies, that settled in swarms on its eyes, ears, and nose, so that the poor brute was literally stung to death.

Shortly afterwards I took Pit on another long excursion inland. Having heard that the colonists are accustomed to creep into the large hyæna-holes under ground, and that when they have ascertained that the hyæna is "at home," they kindle a fire at its mouth, so that the animal is obliged to make an exit, when it is either shot or killed by clubs, I made Pit put the experiment into practice. We found the hole, and we lighted the fire, but we did not secure our prey; somehow or other Pit was not able to make the smoking-out process go off successfully.



We continued our journey the same day. A few miles down the river I met an ivory-trader from the Matabele country, who had instructions from the Matabele king to convey the intelligence to the English governor in Kimberley that a white traveller had been killed amongst the Mashonas, on the eastern boundary of his domain.

I had throughout the day noticed such a diversity of birds, reptiles, insects, plants, and minerals, that I was further disposed to try my luck at fishing, and taking my tackle, I lost no time in dropping my line into the river. I succeeded in hooking three large sheatfish, the smallest of which weighed over six pounds, but they were too heavy for me to drag to land; two of them broke my line, and the other slipped back into the stream. I had almost contrived to get a fourth safely ashore, when my foot slipped, and overbalancing myself, I fell head foremost down the bank; happily a "wait-a-bit" bush prevented my tumbling into the river.

Guinea-fowl I observed in abundance everywhere along the Marico, in parts where the bushes were thick; but I noticed that they never left their roosting-places until the heavy morning dew was dry. The speed at which they ran was quite incredible.

Proceeding on our way we came up with several Bechuana families belonging to the Makhosi tribe, who had been living on Sechele's territory, near the ruins of Kolobeng; but they had been so much harassed by Sechele that they were now migrating, and about to settle at the foot of the Dwars Mountains. Sechele had been preparing an armed attack upon both the Makhosi and the Bakhatlas, but the

latter having gained intelligence of his scheme, took prompt measures to resist him, and made him abandon the design. It is in every way desirable, both for traders and travellers, as well as for the neighbouring colonies, that the integrity of the six existing Bechuana kingdoms should be maintained. Any splitting-up into smaller states would be attended with the same inconveniences as the European colonists and travellers have to suffer on the east coast north of Delagoa Bay.

Whilst we were passing through the light woods of the Marico on the 4th, we caught sight of a water-bock doe in the long grass. Theunissen stalked it very adroitly, but unfortunately his cartridge missed fire, and before Pit could hand him a second, the creature took to flight. In spite of our having had frost for the last two days, the morning was beautifully fine.

Leaving the Marico, only to rejoin it again at its mouth, we traversed the triangular piece of wood which lies between it and the Limpopo. On our way we fell in with a party of Makalakas, who were reduced almost to skeletons, having travelled from the western Matabele-land, 500 miles away, for the purpose of hiring themselves out at the diamond-fields, each expecting in six months to earn enough to buy a gun and a supply of ammunition. We were sorry not to be able to comply with their request that we would give them some meat, but as it happened we had not killed any game for several days.

The next morning found us on the Limpopo; and as I purposed staying here for a few days, we set to work and erected a high fence of mimosa boughs,

for the greater security of our bullocks. In the afternoon Theunissen and I made an excursion, in the course of which we shot two apes and four little night monkeys, that were remarkable for their fine silky hair and large bright eyes. As a general rule they sleep all day and wake up at night,



CROCODILE IN THE LIMPOPO.

when they commence spending a merry time in the trees, hunting insects and moths, eating berries, and licking down the gum of the mimosas.

One of our servants had a *rencontre* that was rather alarming, with one of the crocodiles, from which the river derives its name. He was washing

clothes upon the bank, when a dark object emerged from the water, startling him so much that he let the garment slip from his hands. He called out, and had the presence of mind to hurl a big stone at the crocodile's head, and succeeded in clutching the article back just as the huge creature was snapping at it. An adventure of a somewhat similar character happened to myself. Finding that the Limpopo was only three feet deep just below its confluence with the Marico, I determined to make my way across. We felled several stout mimosa stems, and made a raft; but the new wood was so heavy that under my weight it sank two feet into the water. Convinced that my experiment was a failure, I was springing from one side of the raft on to the shore, when a crocodile mounted the other side—an apparition sufficiently startling to make me give up the idea of crossing for the present.

Taking our departure on the 7th, we proceeded down the stream, having as many as fifteen narrow rain-channels to pass on our way. The whole district was one unbroken forest, and we noticed some very fine hardekool trees. On the left the country belonged to Sechele, on the right to the Transvaal republic.

Though our progress was somewhat slow, being retarded by the sport which we enjoyed at every opportunity, we reached the mouth of the Notuany next evening, having passed the first of the two encampments where the Damara emigrants were gathering together their contingent. It contained about thirty waggons, and at least as many tents; large herds of sheep and cows, under the care of armed sentinels, were grazing around, while the



people were sitting about in groups, some drinking coffee and some preparing their travelling-gear. I was rather struck by the circumstance that nearly all the women were dressed in black. Some of the men asked us whether we had seen any Boer wag-gons as we came along; and on our replying that we had passed a good many emigrants, they expressed great satisfaction, and said that their numbers would now very soon be large enough to allow them to start. They all declared their intention to show fight if either of the Bamangwato kings attempted to molest them or oppose their movements. When I spoke to them about the difficulty they would probably experience in conducting so large a quantity of cattle across the western part of the kingdom, where water was always very scarce, they turned a deaf ear to all my representations. It was just the same with the emigrants at the other camp, whom I saw at Shoshong on my return; they would pay no attention to any warning of danger; nothing could induce them to swerve from their design.

When I pressed my inquiries as to their true motive in migrating, they told me that the president had taken up with some utterly false views as to the interpretation of various passages in the Bible, and that the government had commenced forcing upon them a number of ill-timed and annoying innovations. If their fathers, they said, had lived, and grown grey, and died, without any of these new-fangled notions being thrust upon them, why should they now be expected to submit to the novelties against their will? And another thing which they felt to be peculiarly irritating was, that these state

reforms were being brought about by a lot of foreigners, and chiefly by a clique of Englishmen. What President Burgers was aiming at effecting would have an effect the very reverse of remedying the deep-seated evils that oppressed them. It seemed to me that the project which they considered the most obnoxious was that for the formation of a railroad which should connect Delagoa Bay with the Transvaal.

Were it not for their own statements, it would be quite incredible that men, who already have had to struggle hard for their property and farms, should for trivial reasons such as these, and at the instigation of one man, give up their homes and wander away into the interior. The first troop of them, without including stragglers, soon amounted to seventy waggons. They were anxious to get possession of the fine pasturage on the Damara territory, and prepared, in the event of opposition, to drive the Damaras away altogether. They experienced so much difficulty through the scarcity of water, that, after reaching Shoshong, they had to return to the Limpopo, and wait until after a plentiful rain had fallen upon the country they had to traverse.

Under the impression that the emigrants intended to purchase whatever land they required, both the Bamangwato kings granted them a safe pass across their dominions; but as soon as it transpired that they were going to establish themselves by force of arms, Khamé immediately withdrew his promise. He could not see why his own territory might not be subject to a like invasion. This led the emigrants openly to avow their determination,

in the event of a long drought, to overcome the Matabele Zulus, otherwise they would have to fight their way through the eastern Bamangwatos.

At the end of my journey, after my return to the diamond-fields in 1877, I took up this matter publicly, anxious to do anything in my power to prevent any overt conflict between the emigrants and the noble Bamangwato king. The tenour of my views will be apprehended from the concluding paragraph of my first article, published in the *Diamond News* of March 24th: "It is absurd for people like these Boers, who are not in a condition to make any progress whatever in their own country, and who regard the most necessary reforms with suspicion, to think of founding a new state of their own."<sup>1</sup>

Two months after writing that article, I heard they were in expectation of securing the friendship of Khamane, while he was living with Sechele at enmity with Khame. Their scheme of raising him to the throne failed, and no better success attended them in their subsequent attempt to form an alliance with Matsheng.

During 1876 and the following year, the condition of the emigrants, as they still lingered about the Limpopo, changed decidedly for the worse; they had ceased to talk about the conquest of a hostile country, but on the contrary took every means to avoid a battle; many of them had succumbed to fever, and sickness continued to make such ravages amongst them that they resolved to start once more. Again they applied to Khame for a safe passage through his land, but made a move in the direction

<sup>1</sup> Boers of this kind are not to be confounded with the more cultivated portion of the Dutch community in South Africa.

of the Mahalapsi River, instead of to Shoshong, in order to mislead him. Khame meanwhile kept himself all ready for a battle; he drilled his people every day; and having kept spies on the watch, he soon learnt that the emigrant party had fallen into a state of complete decay; but instead of taking advantage of their condition, and seizing their cattle and property, he sent Mr. Hepburn to ascertain the facts of the case; and when he found that the statements already brought to him were confirmed, he renewed his guarantee to them that they should traverse his country in security; he was really afraid that they would fail in the strength to move on at all. Their difficulties increased every day. Between Shoshong and the Zooga the district is one continuous sandy forest, known amongst the Dutch hunters as Durstland; it contained only a few watering-places for cattle, most of these being merely holes in the sand or failing river-beds; dug over night, they would only contain a few buckets full of water in the morning; and this was all the provision they had for their herds; their bullocks, consequently, became infuriated, and ran away, so that when the concourse reached the Zooga they were in a most helpless plight.

Their want of servants, too, was very trying. I saw quite little children leading the draught-oxen, and young girls brandishing the cumbrous bullock-whips. By slow and painful degrees, however, sadly diminished in numbers by sickness, and having suffered the loss of half their goods, they reached Lake Ngami, only to begin another march as tedious and fatal as that they had already accomplished. At last, what might almost be described as a troop of



helpless orphans reached Damara, the sole representatives of the wild and ill-fated expedition.

In London in the present year (1880) I heard that the survivors of this wild enterprise were in a condition so destitute that the English Government, assisted by free-will offerings from the Dutch and English residents, had sent out to them several consignments of food and clothing, despatched by steamer, *via* Walvisch Bay. Such was the end of the undertaking originated by a party of headstrong men, who, in ignorant opposition to reform, and from motives of political ill-feeling, rushed with open eyes to the destruction that awaited them.

Before reaching the Notuany, I had found out that the game which at the time of my last visit had been very abundant on the Limpopo, had been considerably reduced by the continual hunting carried on by the emigrants. I found only a few traces of hippopotamuses and some giraffe-tracks in the bushes by the footpath down by the river, but neither had I opportunity for hunting myself, nor did I wish to reveal their existence to the Boers.

During one of our excursions I had a narrow escape of my life. We were chasing a flock of guinea-fowl that were running along in front of us, one of which kept rising and looking back upon us. Coming to a broadish rain-channel about twelve feet in depth, and much overgrown with long grass, I called out to Theunissen, who was close behind me, to warn him to be careful how he came; but his attention was so entirely engrossed by the bird of which he was in pursuit that he did not hear me, and at the very edge of the dip he stumbled

and fell forward. His rifle was at full cock, ready for action; his finger slipped and touched the trigger; the bullet absolutely grazed my neck. Another eighth of an inch and I must have been killed on the spot.

To explore the neighbourhood, we remained for a few days upon the banks of the Notuany. I first went southwards down to the confluence of the river with the Limpopo. In striking contrast to the time of my previous visit, when the entire district seemed teeming with game, I had now to wait long under the shade of the mimosas before getting any sport at all; at length a solitary gazelle bounded out of the grass in front of me, and as I was all ready with a charge of hare-shot, I soon put an end to its graceful career. Some Masarwas, dependents of Sechele, residing in the wood close at hand, brought me some pallah-skins, of which I made a purchase.

The shores both of the lower Marico and the Limpopo are composed of granite, gneiss, and grey and red sandstone, the last often containing flints; these rocks sometimes assume very grotesque forms; one, for example, on the bank of the Limpopo, being called "The Cardinal's Hat;" occasionally they contain also greenstone and ferruginous limestone. To the first spruit running into the Notuany above the Limpopo I gave the name of Purkyn's Spruit. Some of the mimosas here were ten feet in circumference; here and there I noticed some vultures' nests, and the trees were the habitat of many birds, amongst which we noticed *Bubo Verreauxii* and *maculosus*, *Coracias caudata* and *C. nuchalis* and parrots.

I left the Notuany a day sooner than I intended,

moving about four miles down the valley of the Limpopo, where the country seemed to promise me some desirable acquisitions. On the 14th, I secured the skins of two cercopithecus, one sciurus, two guinea fowl, and two francolins. An ape that I shot was disfigured and no doubt painfully distressed by two great swellings like abscesses. It was impossible to go a hundred yards along the bank of the river without seeing a crocodile lift its head above the water, to submerge it again just as quickly.

When we quitted the river-side, we proceeded to cross the wooded heights, sandy on one side, rocky on the other, that would bring us to the valley of the Sirorume. On our way, Niger enjoyed the excitement of chasing two spotted hyænas that crossed the path, but he did not succeed in overtaking either of them. By the middle of the day we reached the pond which I have already mentioned as lying on the top of these heights, and soon afterwards found ourselves descending towards the river. The name of Puff-adder valley, which I had given the place, seemed still as appropriate as ever, for we killed two of these snakes that were lying rolled up together just where we passed along. Following a Masarwa track that I remembered in search of water, I came upon a pool some ten feet deep; fastening my cap to my gun-strap, I was about to dip my extemporized bucket below the surface, when I caught sight of something glittering half in and half out of the water, which proved to be another puff-adder trying in vain to escape from a hole.

To judge from the tracks, I should be inclined to say that leopards are almost as abundant as snakes, the thorn-bushes and the crevices in the rocks

affording them precisely the kind of hiding-places that they delight in.

In the course of our next day's march we came to a Bamangwato station. Sekhomo had not had sufficient men at his disposal to keep a station there; the consequence was that Sechele at that time looked upon the locality as his hunting-ground. It appeared to abound not only with giraffes, koodoos, elands, and hartebeests, but likewise with gazelles and wild swine, and numbers of hyænas and jackals.

I reached Khame's Saltpan on the 17th, and had the bullocks taken to drink at the cisterns in the rocks. Some Bamangwato and Makalahari people were passing by, from whom I obtained several curiosities, amongst which was a remarkable battle-axe. I came across some of the venomous horned vipers, which fortunately give to the unwary notice of their presence by the loud hissing they make.

In the evening five gigantic Makalakas came to the waggon, hoping that I should engage them as servants, but I was too well acquainted with their general character to have anything to do with them.

We remained at the saltpan until the 19th, and reached Shoshong quite late at night. The town was much altered since my last visit. Khame, after his victory, had set it on fire, and had rebuilt it much more compactly nearer the end of the glen in the Francis Joseph valley. The European quarter was now quite isolated. I was delighted to meet Mr. Mackenzie again, and he kindly invited me to be his guest during the fortnight that I proposed spending in the place.



## CHAPTER III.

## FROM SHOSHONG TO THE GREAT SALT LAKES.

Khame and Sekhomo—Signs of erosion in the bed of the Luala—  
 The Maque plains—Frost—Wild ostriches—Eland-antelopes  
 The first palms—Assegai traps—The district of the Great  
 Salt Lakes—The Tsitane and Karri-Karri salt-pans—The  
 Shaneng—The Soa salt-pan—Troublesome visitors—Salt in  
 the Nataspruit—Chase of a Zulu hartebeest—Animal life on  
 the Nataspruit—Waiting for a lion.

It was quite obvious that since my previous visit a great change for the better had taken place in the social condition of the Bamangwatos. At that time Sekhomo had been at the head of affairs, and, indefatigable in promoting heathen orgies, had been the most determined opponent of every reform that had tended to introduce the benefits of civilization. Khame, his eldest son, who had now succeeded him, was the very opposite of his father; the larger number of the adherents who had followed him into his voluntary banishment had returned with him and placed themselves under his authority, so that the population of the town was increased three-fold. Khame's great measure was the prohibition of the sale of brandy; it was a proceeding on his part that not only removed the chief incentive to idleness, but conduced materially to the establishment of peace and order, and made it considerably easier





for him to suppress the heathen rites that had been so grievously pernicious.

In company with Mr. Mackenzie I paid several visits to Khame, and had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with his good qualities. My time was much occupied with excursions, in working out the survey of my route between Linokana and Shoshong, and in medical attendance upon sick negroes. Khame offered me one of his own servants to accompany me to the Zambesi, and upon whom I could rely to bring back my waggon to Shoshong, if I should determine to go further north. As remuneration for the man's services, I was to give him a musket.

Mr. Mackenzie pointed out to me the various places that had been of any importance in the recent contest between the kings. I have already mentioned how Khame, on leaving the town, had been followed by the greater number of the Baman-gwatos to the Zooga river, where the district was so marshy that the people were decimated by fever, and Khame was forced to abandon the settlement he had chosen. Resolved to return to Shoshong, he proceeded to assert his claim, not in any underhand or clandestine manner, but by a direct attack upon his father and brother. He openly appointed a day on which he intended to arrive; and advancing from the north-west, made his way across the heights to the rocks overhanging the glen, and commanding a strong position above the town. Sekhomo meanwhile had divided his troops into two parts, and leaving the smaller contingent to protect the town, posted the main body so as to intercept Khame's approach. Augmented as it was by the



people of the Makalaka villages, Sekhomo's army in point of numbers was quite equal to that of his son ; but, as on previous occasions, these Makalakas, fugitives from the Matabele country, proved utterly treacherous ; although they professed to be Sekhomo's allies, they had sent a message of friendship to Khame, assuring him that they should hold themselves in readiness to welcome him at the Shoshon pass. Khame's attack was so sudden that Sekhomo's troops were completely disorganized, and before they had time to recover themselves and commence a retreat, the conqueror took advantage of the condition of things to bring his men on to the plateau where the Makalakas had been posted. These unscrupulous rascals being under the impression that Khame's people had been worsted, and being only anxious to get what cattle they could find, opened a brisk fire, a proceeding which so exasperated the Bamangwatos that they hurried up their main contingent, and having discharged a single volley, set to and felled the faithless Makalakas with the butt ends of their muskets.

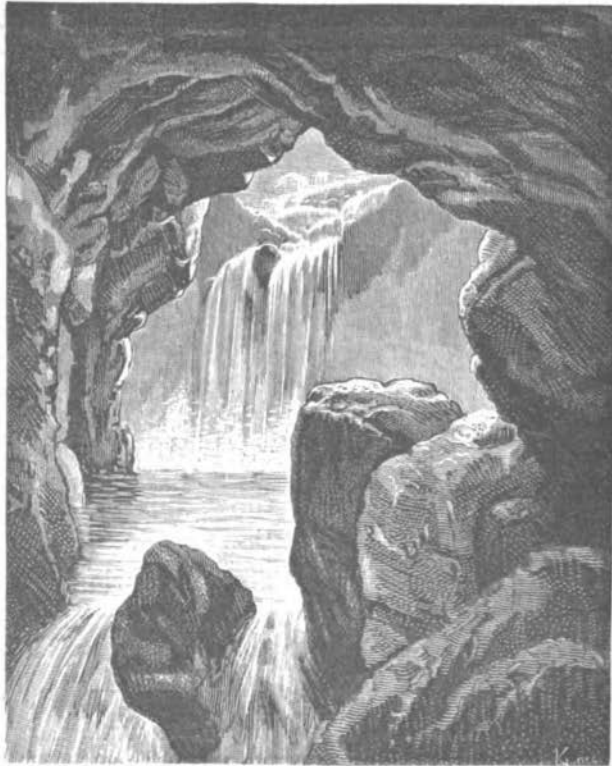
In contrast to the incessant rain which had marked my previous visit, the drought was now so protracted that my cattle began to get rather out of condition, but not enough to prevent my starting for the Zambesi on the 4th of June. We proceeded up the Francis Joseph valley, and turning northwards, reached the high plateau on the following day by the way of the Unicorn pass. The scenery was very pretty, the sides of the valley being ever and again formed of isolated rocks, adorned most picturesquely with thick clumps of arboreal euphorbiaceæ.

On the 6th our course led us across a plain, always sandy and occasionally wooded; and it was quite late in the evening when we reached the Let-losespruit, a stream which never precipitates itself over the granite boulders with much violence, except after heavy rain. The upper strata of the adjacent hills, where ground game is abundant, consist in considerable measure of red sandstone, interspersed with quartzite and black schist, the lower being entirely granite.

The limit of our next day's march was to be the pools at Kanne. Ranged in a semicircle to our right were more than thirty conical hills, connecting the Bamangwato with the Serotle heights. There was a kraal close to the pools, and the natives, as soon as they were aware of our approach, drove their cattle down to drink, so that by the time we arrived all the water was exhausted, and fresh holes had to be dug.

On the 8th we reached the valley of the Luaspruit, where the vegetation and surrounding scenery were charming. The formation of the rocks, and especially the signs of erosion in the river-bed were very interesting; in one place were numerous grottoes, and in another were basins or natural arches washed out by the water, which nevertheless only flowed during a short period of the year. The ford was deep and difficult. On crossing it I met with two ivory-traders, one of whom, Mr. Anderson, had been formerly known to me by name as a gold-digger; they had been waiting camped out here for several days, while their servants were ascertaining whether the district towards the Maque plain was really as devoid of water as it

had been reported. The Luala and its affluents were now quite dry, and water could only be obtained by persevering digging. Mr. Anderson's people brought word that the next watering-place could not be reached in less than forty-eight hours,



GROTTOES OF THE LUALA.

and I immediately gave orders for food enough for two days' consumption to be cooked while we had water for our use. We fell in with Mr. Anderson's suggestion that we should travel in his company as far as the salt-lakes.

After ascending the main valley of the little river, on the evening of the 10th we reached the sandy and wooded plateau thirty miles in length, that forms a part of the southern "Durstland." The scarcity of water in front of us made it indispensable that we should hurry on, and after marching till it was quite dark, we only allowed ourselves a few hours' rest before again starting on a stage which continued till midday, when the excessive heat compelled us once again to halt. No cattle could toil through the deep sandy roads in the hottest hours of the afternoon, so that rest was then compulsory. By the evening, however, we had reached the low Maque plains, remarkable for their growth of mapani-trees; in all directions were traces of striped gnus, zebras, and giraffes, and even lion-tracks in unusual numbers were to be distinctly recognized. We came across some Masarwas, who refused to direct us to a marsh which we had been told was only a few miles away to the right; they were fearful, they said, of being chastised by the Bamangwatos, if it should transpire that they had given the white men any information on such a matter.

The whole of the Maque plain, which is bounded on the west by table-hills, and slopes down northwards to the salt-lake district, consists entirely of mould, equally trying to travellers at all seasons of the year, being soft mire during the rains, and painfully dry throughout the winter season. In the hands of an European landowner, however, that which now serves for nothing better than a hunting-ground might soon be transformed into prolific corn-fields and remunerative cotton-plantations.

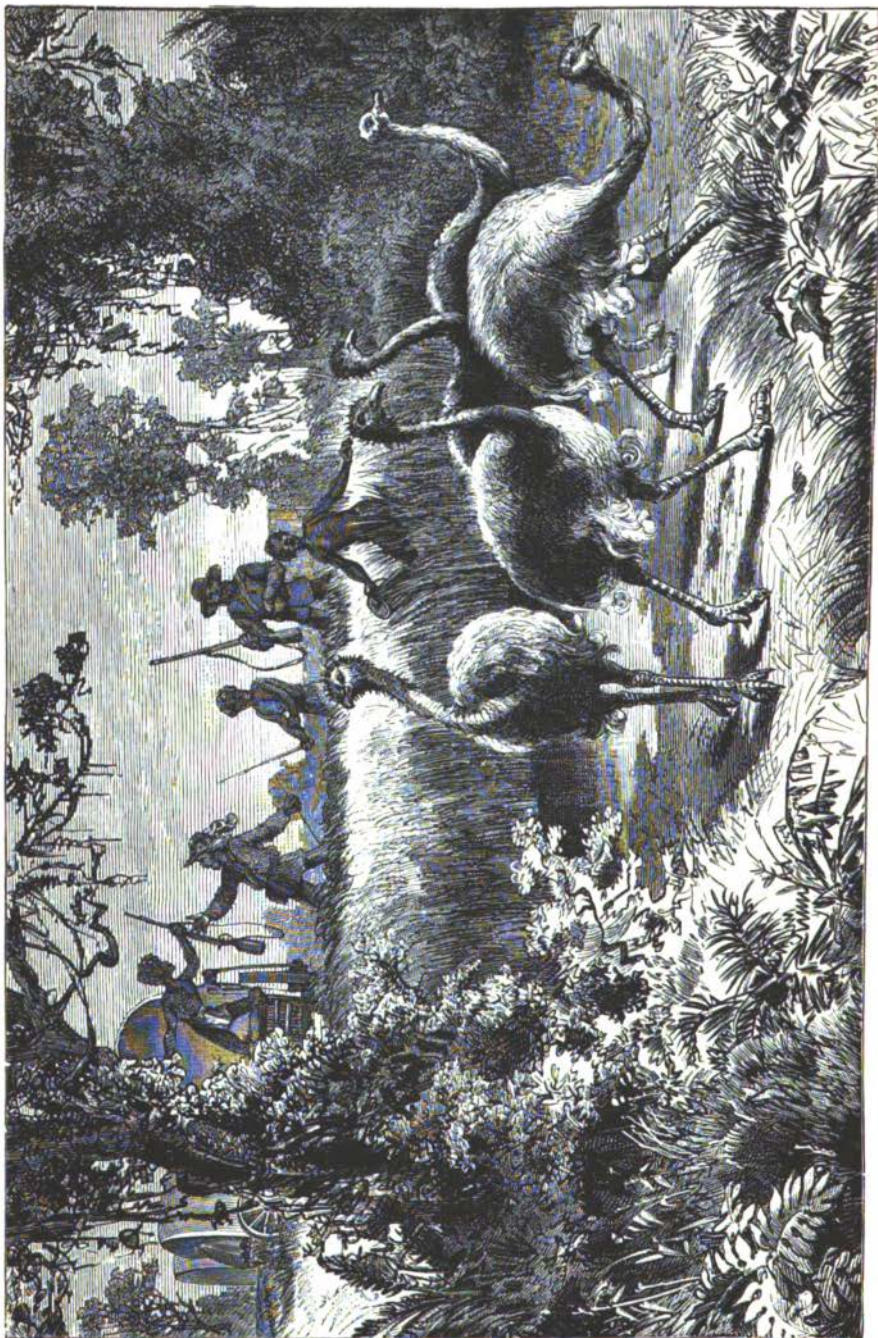


By the time we reached the pools our poor bullocks were quite done up. The ivory-traders had pushed on in front and reached the place before us.

We were here overtaken by a messenger from Khame, who had been despatched to visit all the Bamangwato farms, and to leave the king's instructions that no hunters should be allowed upon any pretext whatever to remain at any watering-place for more than three days. This prohibition had been brought about by the conduct of the Boers, who had been going everywhere killing the game in the most indiscriminate manner for the sake of their skins, and leaving their carcasses for the vultures. The order was probably reasonable enough, but it came at an unfortunate time for us, as the natives at once took us for hunters, and consequently were occasionally far from conciliatory in their behaviour. The very spot where we had encamped had been visited by the Boers only about two months before, and we found a number of the forked runners on which they had dragged the animals behind their waggons.

North of the Maque plain large serpents are often to be met with. Although they are by no means uncommon in Natal, they are rarely found on the hills of the southern Bechuana countries. Some plants of a semi-tropical form are here represented, not the least noticeable among them being the mapani-tree, with its oleaginous leaves and porous brittle wood. Nevertheless, the temperature in winter is often low, though perhaps not to the same extent as on the table-land on the Vaal and Orange rivers, which is 1200 feet higher.





One morning during our stay the pools had a coating of ice nearly half an inch thick.

Whilst hunting a large snake in a thicket on the afternoon of the day after our arrival, I was startled by a loud shout from the waggon. Hurrying back, I found Mr. Anderson all excited because a herd of wild ostriches had just rushed by him on their way to drink at the pool; the sight, however, of the waggon had somewhat alarmed them, and they had turned aside into the mimosa-wood, where they were being chased by the drivers. The pursuit was long and arduous, and the men at last had to return hot and tired, without having been able to get within gunshot of one of the birds.

Still keeping with Mr. Anderson, we started off again next morning, making our way northwards towards a spring seventy miles away, known to the Boers as Bergfontein. In these waterless districts glades of tall grass and rushes alternate with light mapani-woods, game being abundant everywhere. We were overtaken on our way by some Makalaharis and Masarwas proceeding to an eland-hunt, armed with assegais.

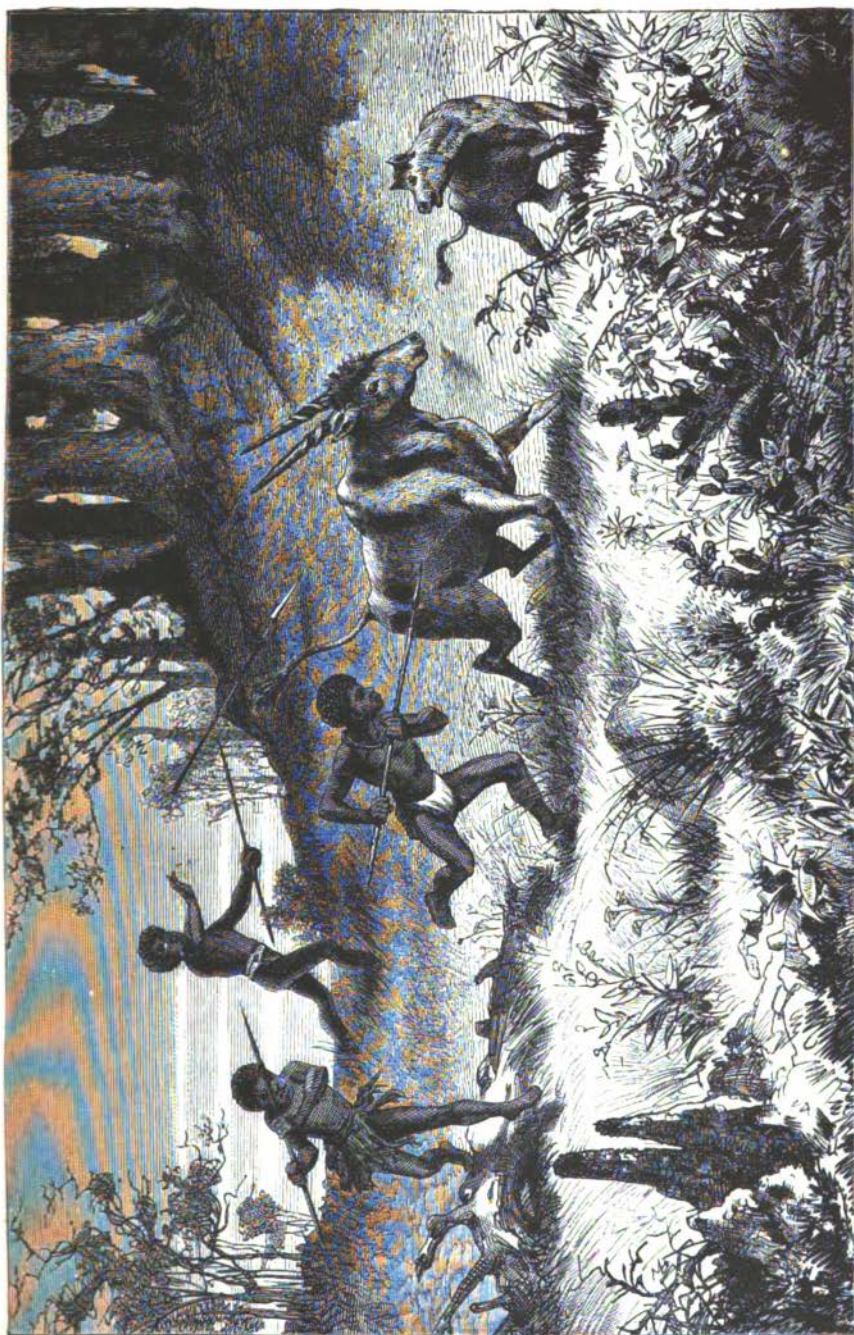
Of all the antelopes the eland, especially the male, is the most lusty and well-fed, its heart having been known to be imbedded in a mass of fat weighing twenty-five pounds; the animal is consequently generally so short-breathed that it can be readily overtaken and speared. The Masarwas are very fleet-footed and skilful in hurling their assegais so as mortally to wound the heart or lungs. Mounted Dutch and English hunters chase the elands in the same way as giraffes right up to their waggons, where they shoot them down, thus sparing them-



selves the trouble of having to transport the skins or carcasses from the hunting-ground. I have been told both by hunters and natives, and I think it quite credible, that without any great difficulty elands may be tamed and trained to draw or to carry light burdens.

Shortly afterwards we met two Bamangwatos armed with muskets, and driving a couple of oxen laden with meat. They were accompanied by five Masarwas, each of them also carrying a load of meat weighing over fifty pounds. The party was on its way to Shoshong to get instructions from Khame as to its future proceedings, as some of the Makalakas, banished for their treachery, were prowling about the northern confines of the kingdom, and preventing the Masarwas from rendering allegiance to their rightful master.

Bergfontein, at which we arrived early on the 17th, is a spring situated on a woody slope; it is regarded by the natives as the source of the Nokane stream, which flows northwards, but only in the rainy season. The slope, which is very rugged and clothed with luxuriant vegetation, is the declivity of the Maque plain down to the great salt-lakes. At a short distance from the bank of the Nokane spruit the traveller from the south is greeted by the sight of a cluster of fan-palms, a foretaste of the wonders of tropical vegetation; overtopping all the surrounding trees, they were probably the most southerly specimens of that queen of palm-trees in Central Africa. I shot down some examples of the fruit, and added them to my collection. Encircling the base of the slim stems that were crowned with the magnificent foliage was a wonderful undergrowth of





young plants that had germinated from the fallen fruit, the leaves of which had already assumed fine proportions, and were rapidly developing into their fan-like form.

In the broad but shallow bed of a spruit that lay on the side of a gentle slope, I found a shrub that reminded me of a baobab; it was between four and five feet in height, its lower part immensely thick and fleshy, and covered with a yellowish bark; but scarcely a foot from the ground it contracted into little branches only two or three inches thick, that proceeded direct from the great superficial root. Some of these stems weighed several hundredweight, and on some future occasion I shall hope to obtain a specimen for myself.

From the Makalaharis and Masarwas residing hereabouts I obtained a variety of ornaments and some domestic utensils made of wood and bone, but I was unfortunate enough afterwards to lose them all.

All around the hills for the most part were thickly wooded, having no paths except the game-tracks leading generally towards the Nokane. Over these tracks the natives are accustomed to set assegai-traps for catching the game at night; a pile of underwood is heaped up to bring the animals to a standstill; a grass rope with one end very loosely attached to a short stake is carried across the path about a foot above the ground, and supported horizontally by two uprights and a cross-pole placed on the opposite side; the rope is thence taken up to the nearest overhanging bough, and an assegai left suspended from the other end. The slightest jerk made by the movements of the game suffices to detach the loose



end of the rope, and the assegai immediately falls. The assegai used for this purpose is generally of very rude construction, being nothing but a rough pole with a rusty spear-head fixed at the end; but its efficiency is due to the point being dipped in a most



PURSUED BY MATABELE.

deadly poison. The wound inflicted by the descending weapon is generally slight in itself, and although only a scratch may be made in the neck, the victim is doomed, as the poison is sure to take quick effect. In the winter months snares of this kind are continually being set, and are always visited as frequently as possible, that the carcase may be dissected soon

after death; the flesh close round the wound is cut away, but all the rest is considered by the natives to be perfectly fit for food. Once, while in pursuit of some koodoos, one of Anderson's people narrowly escaped running into an assegai-trap, being only warned by his servant just in time, and I have myself in the course of my rambles come upon several tracks stopped up in this way.

I wandered during the afternoon with the two traders a considerable distance down the hill to the north, crossing the Nokane and two other dry spruits more than once. On the way I noticed some aloes of unusual size, and some tiger-snails in the long grass in the valleys.

Early on the morning of the 18th we came to the south-east shore of the smallest and most southerly of the three of the great salt-lakes that I was able to visit. Away to the west this lake extended as far as the eye could see, and it took me two hours to travel the length of the eastern coast. It had an uniform depth of barely two feet, and presented a light grey surface edged with stiff arrow-grass, and surrounded by dense bush-forest, whilst round about it, in the very thickest of the grass, were considerable numbers of miniature salt-pans. It is scarcely once a year that it is full of water, for although after violent rains torrents stream down from all directions, very few of these make their way into the lake itself, but stagnate in another and deeper bed close by; the overflow of this, however, escapes into the lake. The name of this salt-pan is Tsitane, the same as that of the most important of the rivers flowing from the heights upon our left, which were the projecting spurs of the slope from the table-land to the

lake basin. The greater part of the lake-bottom consists of rock, partly bare and partly covered with the deposit from the rain-torrents. While I was taking the measurement of the eastern shore, I came upon a herd of striped gnus, but without being able to shoot one of them. In the brackish waters of the river, and in the pools near its mouth, there were a good many spoonbills and ducks, and for the first time for a long while I noticed some grunters.

After finishing my sketch-chart of the Tsitane lake next morning, I went out and shot a great horned owl that I found in the trees on the bank.

Every depression in the soil round the smaller pans contains salt. However short a time the rain-water may stand in them, vegetation is sure to be checked; the evaporation is rapid, and so great that the ground is continually crusted with large patches of salt some five inches above the soil, which break in when trodden on. In high winds the salt and salt earth are swept along in great white clouds like dust. The edge of the lake was covered with little chalcedonies and milk-pebbles that had been washed down by the rain.

We quitted the shores of the Tsitane salt-pan on the 21st, but as I had understood from the natives that there would be much difficulty in getting water farther on, and I did not wish to impede the progress of the ivory-traders, we parted company, but only to meet again after a fortnight in the valley of the Panda ma Tenka, and yet again a year later at Shoshong.

It was at the salt-pan that I saw my first baobab, the most southerly specimen along my route, although Mauch had seen some further south in the western

Transvaal on the right bank of the Limpopo. The one I noticed was twenty-five feet in height, its circumference measuring nearly fifty-two feet.

On starting northwards we had first to cross the small outlying salt-pans on the Tsitane, then the river itself, and finally to take a course due north right over the basin. The trees of the dense under-wood were all more or less stunted, the bush-land alternating with meadow-land overgrown with rich sweet grass and studded with flowers. Near the pans and adjacent streams the soil was brackish, and the vegetation for the most part of a prickly character. Springbocks and duykerbocks, Zulu hartebeests, and striped gnus frequented the woods, which in some parts revealed clearly the vestiges of lions.

All the next day our journey took us past a series of large depressions in the soil, the middle of most of them being marked by small salt-pans, of which I counted no less than forty-two in the course of the day's progress. We halted for the night near one of them known as the little Shonni; we also crossed some fresh-water pools, at once to be distinguished from salt-pans by the fringe of reeds with which they were surrounded.

We now arrived at the eastern shore of a far larger and deeper lake than the Tsitane, called by the natives Karri-karri; its shores were circled by a number of baobabs, and its geological formation seemed very interesting. Like the Tsitane in shape it was almost an isosceles triangle with its apex far away out of sight in the west. On their western side both these lakes are connected with the north of the Soa salt-pan by means of the Zooga river.



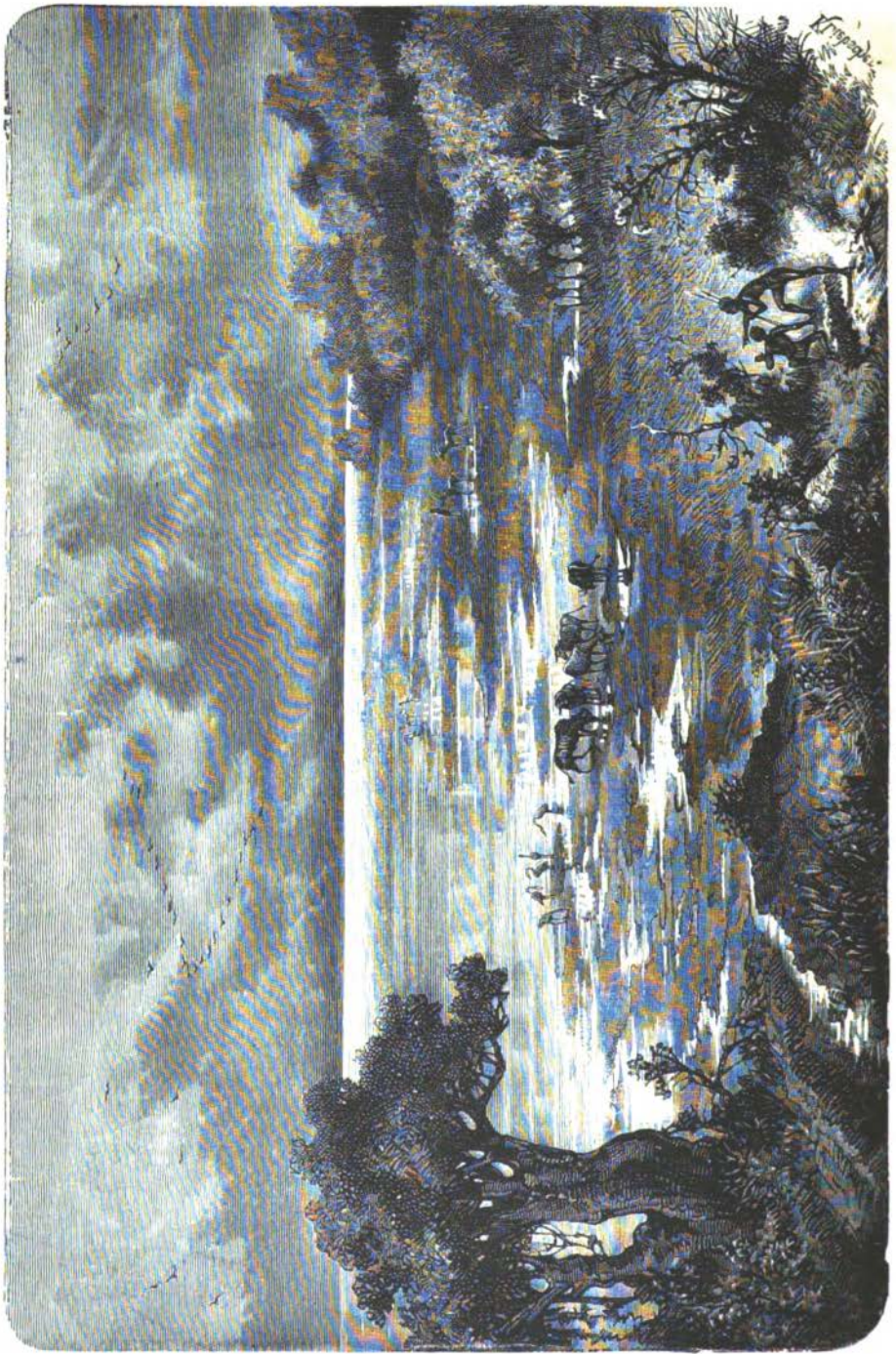
Some Masarwas bearing traces of the red salt-crust on their ankles came to us offering some baobab-fruit, and asking for maize and tobacco in exchange. We had not much time to spend either in bartering commodities or in exploring the shore of the lake, as the rain came on and compelled us to hurry forwards, otherwise I do not doubt I should have discovered a number of natural curiosities.

At the north-east end of the lake, at one of the principal creeks I crossed the Mokhotsi river, which flows northwards, and carries off the superfluous water of the shallow salt-pan.

Our way next led through a dense mapani-forest, after which we had to cross a dried-up stream sixty feet wide, and from ten to sixteen feet deep, having a decided fall towards the east, and on account of the fine trees that adorned its banks called by the Masarwas the Shaneng, or beautiful river. Parallel to this was a spruit, which the Dutch hunters called Mapanifontein; it is fed by a number of springs, and as it receives a portion of the water of the Shaneng whenever that stream is overfull, its deeper parts are hardly ever dry at any period of the year. I cannot resist the opinion that the Shaneng is an outlet either of the Zooga river or of the Soa salt-lake, and that it empties itself into the Matliutse or one of its affluents. In the course of the afternoon I killed a great bird that was chasing lizards, known amongst the colonists as the jackal-bird.

Towards the evening of the 23rd Anderson overtook us again, and travelling on together we traversed a wood called the Khori, and passing a deserted Masarwa village near the ford, we arrived in good





time next morning in sight of the Soa. This was the third of the Great Salt Lakes. Near it we met some Dutch hunters, on a chase for elephants and ostriches.

Thanks to the dry weather, we were able to cross several spruits that ran in and out the various creeks, a proceeding that after much rain would have been quite impracticable. Having chosen a good position for our camping out, we resolved to stay there until the 27th, as we ascertained that there was excellent drinking-water to be found by digging holes in the bed of the Momotsetlani, a river that flowed through the adjacent wood. According to my habit when halting for any longer time than usual, I made several excursions, in the course of which I shot five ducks, two guinea-fowl, that were in unusually large numbers, and a brown stork, the first example of the kind I had seen.

The Soa is the largest saltpan in the Great Lake basin, extending westward beyond Lake N'gami, and connected with the Limpopo system by the Shaneng; like the Karri-Karri and Tsitane, it is quite shallow, being only four feet deep; it is grey in colour, and is rarely completely full, indeed a great part of it is quite dry. In order to ascertain the exact relations between the basin and Lake N'gami and the Zooga, it would be necessary to take a series of observations for an entire year; during the rainy season, however, travelling is extremely difficult and the climate is very unhealthy, so that it is easy to account for the task not having been accomplished hitherto. The general uniformity of level of the great central South African basin causes the Zooga at some times to flow east and at others to flow west. When the



shallow bed of Lake N'gami is filled by its northern and western feeders it sheds its overflow eastwards down the Zooga to the saltpans, whence it is carried off by the Shaneng, their natural outlet; on the other hand, if the N'gami should be low, it receives itself the overflow of the Zooga, which in its deep bed, overgrown as it is with weeds, is able for a long period to retain the water received from its many affluents; nor is it impossible that it is likewise occasionally fed by waters running over from the western side of the saltpans.

It took our team more than three hours after our next start to cross the numerous creeks and smaller pans on the shore of the lake: we came to the end of them, however, in the course of the forenoon, and entered upon a plain stretching northwards as far as the eye could reach, and bounded on the east by a mapani-wood. Herds of game were frequent, but not large. We noticed a good many clumps of reeds, and were not disappointed in the expectation of finding fresh-water in proximity to them, inducing us to rest awhile in the place.

I was very busy arranging some of the curiosities that I had collected on my recent rambles, when I was startled by a loud cry of distress. On looking out of the waggon I saw Meriko, my Bamangwato servant, running with all his might through the long grass, and shrieking, in the Sechuana dialect, "They are killing me! they are killing me!" He cleared the bushes like an antelope; in his hurry he had lost both his grass hat and his caama mantle, and had scarcely breath to reach the waggon. Pointing to a number of natives at no great distance from him, with their spears brandished in the air, he

gasped out, "Zulus! Matabele! they want to kill me!"

For my part I could not comprehend how it happened that these Matabele should be on Khame's territory. I began to wonder whether it was possible that war had broken out between the tribes, and I confess that I was not without apprehension that we were going to be attacked. The savages advanced yelling and screeching, and looked like wolves in human form. Unwilling to risk the mischief that might ensue if I fired upon them, I resolved to remain steadily where I was until I had ascertained their real intentions. Meriko's opinion did not in the least coincide with mine; he could not bring himself to await their approach, but bounding over the pole of the waggon, he scampered off into the bush beyond, but without further outcry, evidently anxious to conceal himself in the long grass. I called out to him that he had more to fear from the lions in the grass than from the Zulus, and that he had better stay in the waggon; so terrified, however, was he at the prospect of falling into the hands of the Matabele, that he turned a deaf ear to my words, and rushed out of sight.

The savage band flocked round the waggon, still flourishing their kiris. Excepting the two ring-leaders they proved to be not true Zulus, but belonging to various plundered tribes, having been stolen away as boys by Moselikatze, and brought up as Zulu warriors. They had small leather aprons with fringes, or occasionally a gourd-shell or piece of basket-work on their bodies, otherwise they were quite naked; only some of them wore balloon-shaped head-dresses made of ostrich feathers or other

plumage. Their expression was exceedingly wild. The fierce rolling eye was a witness that they belonged to a warlike race, expecting that their commands should be obeyed; and probably there was not one amongst them who would have hesitated to perpetrate a murder if he considered that anything was to be gained by it.

One of the leaders swung himself on to the pole of the waggon, and speaking in broken Dutch gave me to understand that they were "Lo Bengulas," and that it was their wont to slaughter every captive they made, except he were bought off by a ransom; they were now ready to put their rule into force upon my servants; and as for my dog they should shoot him then and there, unless I paid them down at once a handsome sum to save him.

I put as bold a face as I could upon the matter. I told them that I was not going to be frightened into making them any payment whatever, but that if they would promise to go quietly away from the waggon, I would make them a present all round. I hoped by this device to anticipate their notorious thievish propensities; but although Pit and Theunissen were on the watch, they could not prevent one of the fellows stealing a knife that was lying close to my side, but I caught sight of him just in time, and insisted upon his giving it up again.

After a brief consultation, the two captains drew their followers apart, and made them acquainted with my determination; they all grinned cunningly, and hailed the proposal with shouts of satisfaction. Having had the whole body collected right in front of the waggon, where I could keep my eye upon them, I called the leaders forward and handed to

each of them a bowl of gunpowder and about two pounds of lead. One of them first pointed to my pocket-handkerchief, and then ran his finger round his own loins. "Lapiana!" he said, indicating the purpose to which it could be applied. Accordingly I brought out a few yards of calico, and tore it into strips, which were immediately used for girdles, except that a few of the men twisted the stuff round their heads. They requested me to give the captains an extra piece or two; to this I willingly consented, and they all expressed themselves perfectly satisfied. Upon this I turned my back upon the clamorous troop, and retreated calmly to my own people. Soon afterwards they all began slowly to depart, waving their presents over their heads. We were greatly relieved. The hour that had passed since Meriko had come and announced their approach had unquestionably been an anxious time. A few of them had bartered salt with Theunissen for tobacco.

When Meriko could be induced to quit his hiding-place, he informed us that we had now almost reached the bank of the principal feeder of the Soa, called the Nata, where salt may be most readily procured, and whither the Matabele are sent by their rulers every year to collect it. This was the ostensible employment of the gang that had just taken their departure. The Bamangwato king was quite aware of the marauding habits of these parties, but did nothing to control them, although they perpetually disarm any Bamangwatos they may meet, and delight in breaking the legs of the Masarwas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is well to bring this before the notice of any traveller in



To the great satisfaction of poor Meriko we decided to push on immediately to the Nata river. As we proceeded, the game became more and more plentiful. The herds of springbucks were much larger than I should have expected to see so far north, and we noticed a surprising number of gnus, hartebeests,



HUNTING THE ZULU HARTEBEEST.

zebras, and ostriches. Although Meriko had in some measure recovered his nervousness, and walked on contentedly with Niger at his side, he kept from the district who may have native servants with him. I would advise every one to make definite preliminary inquiries as to whether the shores of the Nata may be traversed without danger.

time to time jumping up from the ground to the waggon, to look all round and satisfy himself that no Matabele gang was in sight. While mounted up for this purpose he cried out that he could see a herd of "sesephi" (Zulu hartebeests). He described them as about 600 yards to our right. I could not see them myself, but both Pit and Theunissen affirmed that it was a good-sized herd. We all agreed that it would be best to allow the waggon to advance some 300 yards further, and I could then alight, and with my gun all ready for a shot, make my way to a hardekool-tree about 200 yards from the road, and from thence take my aim. Nothing could be simpler than the plan, and I was soon making my way through the long grass by myself on foot.

I had not reached the hardekool-tree before I heard a low whistle from Theunissen which I quite understood was to inform me that the hartebeests had been disturbed by the waggon, and were commencing a flight. Hurrying on, I made my way to the tree, when the two foremost of the herd came in sight at full speed. I aimed at the first, and fired. The whole of our people raised a shout, and leaving the oxen to take their chance started off in pursuit, followed by the dogs. My own impression was that I had seen the entire herd scamper off. I returned to the waggon to satisfy myself that the bullocks were grazing quietly, and then hastened after my friends. My surprise was considerable when I discovered that my shot had been successful, and that a magnificent sesephi was lying dead upon the ground.

All the bullocks were so tired that I had quite made up my mind to give them a good rest as soon

as we reached the Nataspruit, but there was the preliminary difficulty to be overcome of finding a proper drinking-place, nearly all the pools in the bed being salt. We had, however, been assured two days before by a Masarwa that there were several fresh-water ponds in the district, and accordingly Theunissen and I set out on an expedition of discovery. The river-bed varied in breadth from 100 to 150 feet; it was about twenty feet deep, and manifestly after rain was quite full up to the grass upon its edge. We wandered about for some time searching in vain, but at length Theunissen announced that he had come upon a pool of fresh water, a discovery that we considered especially fortunate, as all the pools beyond appeared again to be salt.

The game-tracks were absolutely countless. For the most part they seemed to belong to the same species that we had noticed on the banks of the Soa, but fresh lion-tracks were quite conspicuous among them. Pit suggested what looked like a suitable place for encamping; Theunissen and myself agreed, but Meriko protested that it was too near the quarters of the Matabele. His objection, however, was not allowed to prevail, and his nervousness was much moderated when he found he was to be entrusted with a breech-loader to keep guard over the bullocks. An extra strong fence was made, considerably higher than usual, and four great fires were lighted, which would keep burning till nearly two o'clock in the morning.

Poor Niger was in a state of great excitement all night. Lions were prowling around us, and the hyænas and jackals kept up such a noise that sound sleep was out of the question, and in my dreams I

saw nothing but stuffed lion-skins dancing before my eyes. Just before morning the concert seemed to rise to its full pitch; two jackals yelped hideously in two different keys, the hyænas howled angrily with all their might, while the lion with its deep and sonorous growl might be taken as chorægus to the whole performance.

In the rambles that Pit and I took, the following morning, the lion-traces were so many and so recent that we felt it prudent to keep a very sharp look-out. We crossed the river-bed several times, and observed that the tracks were particularly numerous in the high grounds that commanded a view of the place where the various antelopes, attracted by the salt, would be likely to descend. On our way we passed a tree, the bark of which was torn in a way which showed that it had been used by lions for sharpening their claws; the boughs of the tree were wide-spreading, branching out like a candelabrum, and forming what struck me as a convenient perch. Here I resolved to keep a long watch of some ten or twelve hours. I was determined if I could to see the lions for myself. Accordingly, just before sun-down, I took Niger, and accompanied by Pit I returned to the tree, and having made myself comfortable in my concealment, I sent Pit back to the waggon in time for him to arrive while it was still tolerably light.

The sensation of being alone in such a spot was sufficiently strange. I soon began to look about me, and noticed that the trees around were considerably higher than that in which I was perched; the ground was in some places elevated, but thinly grassed, so that the light sand could be dis-



tinguished which covers the flaky strata of the salt lakes. Just below me was a bare circular patch, which bore no footprints at all except our own and those of the lions that had passed by; on my left was a rain-channel some six feet deep and twenty feet wide, much overgrown, and opening into the Nataspruit about twenty yards away. The nights



IN THE TREE.

were now extremely cold, and appeared especially so in contrast to the high temperature of the day, and I took the precaution of tying myself to one of the strongest boughs, in case I should fall asleep; to tumble off might bring me into closer contact with the monarchs of the forest than might be agreeable; but having made myself secure, I soon

settled down in the middle of the triple-forked recess that I had chosen for my ambush.

The sun, meanwhile, had all but set; only a few golden streaks on the highest boughs remained, and these gradually faded away. My insight that night into scenes of animal life proved even far more diversified than I could venture to anticipate.

Amongst the first of the sounds to arrest my attention was the sonorous "quag-ga, quag-ga" of the male zebras; they were on the grass-plains, keeping watch over their herds; with this was soon mingled the melancholy howl of the harnessed jackal, awakening the frightful yell of its brother, the grey jackal; the beasts, I could not doubt, were all prowling round the enclosure of our camp. For some hours the various noises seemed to be jumbled together, but towards midnight they became more and more distinct, so that I could identify them separately, and fancied that I could count the beasts that made them. After a while a peculiar scraping commenced, caused by rhyzænas hunting in the sand for worms and larvæ; it went on all night except during the brief intervals when the busy little creatures were temporarily disturbed by some movement near them.

The gazelles and antelopes came down quite early to lick at the salt mud in the Nata-bed; they evidently were accustomed to get back to their haunts in the open lands before the beasts of prey quitted their lairs in the wood. Some of the little steinbocks (those most graceful of South African gazelles) came down so cautiously along the track that it was only through accidentally looking down that I was aware of their being near me. I think

there were three or four of them. They were followed by some other gazelle, of which the movements were so light and rapid that I failed to catch a glimpse of it. After a considerable time a single antelope passed beneath me, of another species larger than the others, making a succession of short leaps, then pausing and bounding on again, but I could not recognize what kind it really was.

The slow, steady tramp of a large herd on the other side of the bank proceeding towards the salt pools, and in the direction of the one freshwater pool, could not be mistaken ; moreover, the crashing of their horns against the wood in the thickets left no doubt of the approach of a number of koodoos. While I was listening to their movements I heard another tread on the game-path beside the river ; straining my eyes in that direction I saw a dark form stealthily making its way towards the descent : it was about the size of a young calf, and I could have little doubt that it was a brown hyæna ; it sniffed the air at every step, and after stopping a few seconds just beyond the channel started off at a brisk trot.

As the hours of the night waned away I was beginning to think that I should hear or see nothing of the monarch of the forest. I had not, however, to wait much longer before the unmistakable roar, apparently about half a mile away, caught my ear. I could only hope that the beast was on its way once more to sharpen its claws upon the accustomed tree. I had now no heed to give to any other sound ; neither the barking of our own dogs beside the waggon, nor the yelling of the jackals around our encampment could distract my attention, and I

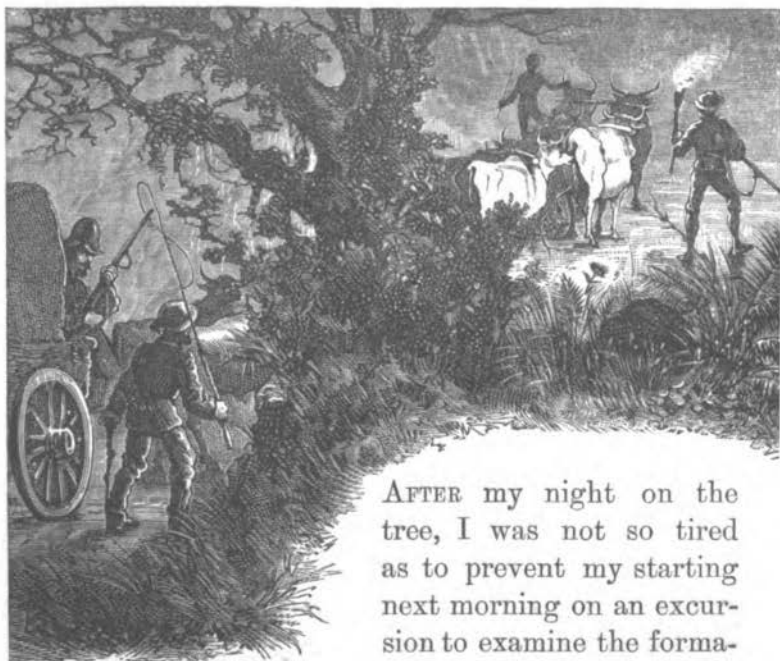
listened eagerly for at least half an hour before the roaring was repeated; it was now very much nearer; I listened on, and it must have been nearly twenty minutes more when I distinguished its footsteps almost within gunshot. The lion was not in the ordinary track, as I had expected, but right in the long grass in the rain-channel. Its strides were generally rapid, but it paused frequently. I could only hear its movements; it was too dark for me to see. I was sure that it could not be more than about fifteen yards from me, and could hardly restrain myself from firing. I feared, however, that a random shot would only be fired in vain, and with no other effect than that of driving the lion away. Accordingly I waited on. It came still nearer and crouched down somewhere for about another quarter of an hour without stirring an inch. At last I became convinced that it had caught sight of me; I saw the bushes shake, and the great brute looked out as if uncertain whether to make a spring towards me, or to effect its escape. It was a terrible mistake on my part not to fire then and there, but my moment of hesitation was fatal to my design; the lion made a sudden bound, and in an instant had disappeared for good. It was no use to me that Niger's frantic barking made me aware what direction it had taken. My chance was gone. I was much mortified; but there was no help for it. With the cold night air and my cramped position I was stiff all over, and much relieved when daylight dawned, and Pit appeared with Niger to accompany me back to the warmth and shelter of the waggon.



## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM THE NATASPRUIT TO TAMASETZE.

Saltbeds in the Nataspruit—Poisoning jackals—A good shot—An alarm—The sandy-pool plateau—Ostriches—Travelling by torchlight—Meeting with elephant-hunters—The Madenassanas—Madenassana manners and customs—The Yoruah pool and the Tamafopa springs—Animal-life in the forest by night—Pit's slumbers—An unsuccessful lion-hunt—Watch for elephants—Tamasetze.



AFTER my night on the tree, I was not so tired as to prevent my starting next morning on an excursion to examine the formation of the banks of the

Nata. We soon noticed two fine storks (*Mycteria*

*Senegalensis*) wheeling in circles over the stream, on the look-out for some of the fishes that hid themselves under the stones in the shallow salt-pools. I stooped down so as not to startle them, and had the good luck to secure both the birds for my collection.

In the afternoon I took a much longer walk, crossing the plain to the south, curious both to see the quarters of the Matabele people and to inspect the place where they obtained their salt. About three-quarters of a mile from the waggons, we startled a herd of zebras, of the dark species; so impetuous was their flight that I quite expected to see them all dash headlong over the steep bank, but they suddenly stayed their course and turned off short into a narrow rain-channel; they raised a great cloud of dust as they scampered down into the river-bed, whence they clambered up again on the other side where the bank was less steep. On account of the great size of their head and neck they look much larger at a distance than they really are; the peculiar noise they make, "ouag-ga, ouag-ga," the last syllable very much prolonged, has caused both the Masarwas and the Makalaharis to call them quaggas.

When we got near the quarters of the Matabele gang, I thought it needful to take care that we should be unobserved. In the open plain of course there was nothing to cover our approach, and I turned into the bed of a side-stream that I reckoned would take us in the right direction. I supposed this to be a branch of the Nata leading to the Soa, along which I proposed to go for a mile or so, and then turn off, but we had not proceeded very

far before we found the camp of which we had come in search right before us. It was now deserted.

Standing in the middle of the river-bed, I could see a considerable number of pools all full of a salt fluid, the colour of which was a deep red; the soil around was covered with a salt deposit, and fragments of salt beautifully crystallized and resting on a stratum of clay an inch or more thick, were scattered about. Close to these were lying the poles and stakes with which the salt had been broken out of the pools. The departure of the Matabele troop allowed us to examine everything without fear of molestation.

In winter, when the water is low, the pools vary from twelve to eighteen inches in depth; the breadth and length range very widely from thirty to 900 feet. The deposit is sometimes as much as three inches in thickness, extending from bank to bank about six or eight inches under the surface of the water like a stout layer of ice, which when broken discloses the real bottom of the pool nearly another foot below. To walk into the pools is like treading upon needle-crystals, and the feet are soon perceptibly covered with a deposit. Where they are very salt, they are never resorted to either by birds or quadrupeds. Anything thrown into them quickly becomes incrustated, but the beautiful red crystals unfortunately evaporate on being exposed to the air, and it was to little purpose that I carried a number of specimens away with me.

I sent Pit again next day to get a supply of salt for our use. This had first to be boiled to free it from the particles of lime, and afterwards to be

crumbled up. We wanted it to preserve the flesh of the game we killed.

The bed in which these pans are situated is really an arm of the Nata, having branched off from it to rejoin it again. As I followed it on my way back to the waggon, I came across the last herds of springbucks that we were to see so far to the north; I likewise saw several herds of striped gnus, that here took the place of black gnus, none of which had appeared this side of Shoshong.

A capital shot was made by Theunissen on the following day; he brought down a steinbock at the distance of nearly 300 yards. Being anxious to procure some jackals' skins, I laid out several bits of meat covered with strychnine over night, and in the morning, I found no less than four of the beasts lying poisoned beside them; the flesh of one of these was afterwards devoured by some of its own kind, and they too all died in consequence, and were discovered in the bush close by. Palm-bushes and baobabs, that flourish in salt soil just as well as in mould, grow very freely about the lower part of the Nata.

So large had my collection now become, that I made up my mind to send a good portion of it to Mr. Mackenzie at Shoshong by the first ivory-traders whom I should meet and could trust to take charge of it. We did not, however, just at this time fall in with any parties returning to the south.

Although we knew that our encampment was liable to attacks from lions, we found it in many other respects so agreeable that we quitted it with regret, and on the 3rd of July started up the left bank of the Nata, along a deep sandy road on the



edge of the eastern plain. On our way we saw a herd of zebras grazing about 500 yards off. Theunissen was again anxious to try his skill as a marksman, and creeping on some fifty yards or more, fired from the long grass ; he had taken a good aim and one of the zebras fell, but it sprang up and ran for a dozen yards further, when it fell for the second time. We hurried up, and Pit incautiously seized the animal by the head, and narrowly escaped being severely wounded, for the creature with its last gasp made a desperate plunge and tried to bite. As soon as it was dead, we set to work to skin it, carrying away with us all the flesh, except the neck and breast, to make into beltong. About two miles further on, we came to a good halting-place in the wood, where we could finish the process of preparing the skin. Meriko, with his gun, kept watch over our bullock-team, and whilst Pit helped Theunissen to cut up the meat ready for hanging up, I worked away at the skin, and afterwards at the skull.

The same afternoon I took a short stroll round about, and found that although the bushes were thick, the trees generally were scanty ; there were, however, some very fine baobabs here and there. Several beautifully wooded islands in the spruit had steep high banks, and there was a pool some hundred yards long that apparently abounded in tortoises and fish. Our time, however, did not allow us to make any complete examination of the spot ; it was desirable for us to hurry on with all speed, and to get across the Zambesi, if we could, before the middle of the month, so that we might stay until December in the more healthy highlands on the watershed.

We looked about for lion-tracks, but could see none; and being unaware that lions are accustomed very often to wander away from their usual haunts for a day or more, we thought it would be quite sufficient to put up a low fence; but as the night set in cold and dark with a piercing S.S.W. wind that made us all press closely round the fire, we could only regret our mistake and own that we ought to have made it higher. By eight o'clock the darkness was complete, and the wind, still howling, threatened a singularly uncomfortable night; but we consoled ourselves by recollecting that the zebra-skin would be sufficiently dry in the early morning, when we might move off.

Suddenly, so suddenly that we one and all started to our feet, the oxen began to bellow piteously, and to scamper about the enclosure, breaking down the slight fence that bounded it. Niger commenced barking furiously; the other dog whined in miserable fear underneath the waggon, and the bullocks that did not try to make off, crouched together in a corner and lowed feebly. We could not do otherwise than conclude that we were attacked by lions. It happened that Theunissen had only just left us to shorten the tether of the bullocks, and, jumping on to the box of the waggon, I tried to see where he was. I seized my breech-loader; Pit and Meriko in an instant each held up a firebrand, which threw a gleam of light some distance around. But I could not discover Theunissen. I called louder and louder, and hardly know whether I was more relieved or terrified, when, from amongst the struggling cattle, I heard his voice crying, "Help, help!" We hurried out, and quickly ascertained the cause

of his alarm. While he was tightening the bullocks' tethers, the roar of a lion, apparently close at hand, had put the animals into such a state of commotion, that two of them had got loose from the enclosure; and two others had so entangled Theu-nissen in the ropes, that he and they had all fallen



STARTLED BY LIONS.

together. It was undoubtedly due to Niger's vigilance that the lion had retreated.

Theu-nissen was fortunately unhurt; and, while we were releasing him from his critical position, the two bullocks that had escaped came back of their own accord. After seeing the whole of the oxen securely fastened to the waggon, I had five large fires lighted,

and, late as it was, felled several mapani-trees, with which to raise the height of the fence.

In spite of the heavy rain, we proceeded as soon as we could upon our journey. The downpour, however, had the effect of making the travelling less toilsome, by binding the sand together; though it was not without much difficulty that the bullocks pulled through the deep sand-drifts at the ford where we crossed the spruit. On the farther side we found a deserted encampment, containing the remnants of a broken-down Boer waggon. We saw comparatively little game—only two gnus, a few zebras, and an occasional guinea-fowl or two, of which I brought down one.

During the after-part of the day we were quite out of the woods, and upon a plain where the mapanis stood only singly or in detached clumps with the mimosas. Though reluctant to do so, we were obliged to unfasten the bullocks and allow them to graze awhile in the evening; but we took every precaution to make them safe, so that there should be no repetition of the lion panic. They had hardly been freed from the yokes, when they were startled by an animal dashing wildly at no great distance across the plain. It was a hyæna, which Pit and Theunissen, with my good Niger's aid, managed to knock over; but it was far from being a single specimen of its kind, as all night long our sleep was interrupted by the incessant music of a regular hyæna-chorus.

Throughout the next morning the journey was very similar to that of the previous day; but in the afternoon we passed along an extensive glade, surrounded with underwood and full of game. A heavy



shower provided us with the drinking-water which the soil failed to supply. We saw some ostriches, duykerbocks, and striped gnus on the plain, and, in the distance, some lions on the look-out for zebras. Coming to a wood that seemed a suitable resting-place, I determined to spend the night there.

Before the following evening we arrived at a great forest, stretching nearly 100 miles to the north, and forming a part of the sandy-pool plateau. With the exception of a few glades containing water, the soil is entirely of sand, and is the western portion of the district to which Mohr has given the name of "the land of a thousand pools." I only apply the term to the region without any appreciable slope, where the rain can have no downfall to the rivers. The pools are almost all fed solely by the rain, and are generally small and overgrown with grass; they retain their supply of water very differently, sometimes for eight months in the year, sometimes only for two. A comparatively small number are fed by springs, and such of them as are perennial have special names given to them by the Madenassanas who live in the underwood; whilst others, full only a part of the year, have been named on various occasions by Dutch or English hunters and ivory-traders. The boundaries of this pool plateau are the Nata and Soa salt-lake on the south, the Zambesi on the north, the Mababi veldt on the west, and the Nata and Uguay rivers on the east. It is the district of Central South Africa where the larger mammalia, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, and giraffes begin to be more abundant; thence extending eastwards and westwards, as well as northwards beyond the Zambesi. In the winter, owing to the

deficiency of water, it is always difficult to cross it, and even in the beginning of summer the transit is always a matter of some anxiety, as a poisonous plant which sprouts up amongst the grass from October to December is very injurious to cattle; the evil is so great as very often to induce the traders on their way to do business with the tribes on the Zambesi, to choose the eastern route through the Matabele and Makalaka district; but this proceeding has the disadvantage of exposing them to the dishonesty and untrustworthiness of the natives.

While we were crossing the last glade before entering the forest, Meriko, who was walking on in front with the bullocks, pointed suddenly to the left, and called out something that I did not understand; he was evidently rather excited, and both I and Theunissen, who was sitting with me on the box, were curious to know what had disturbed him. He soon managed to make us comprehend that he had caught sight of two ostriches about 250 yards from the road, and, on looking again, I saw one of them standing near a high bush. Although I was quite aware that, as matter of right, they really belonged to the king of the Bamangwatos, my sportsman's instinct was far too keen to permit me to go my way without having a chase; accordingly, a very few minutes elapsed before I was stalking them in the grass. Almost directly I discovered the second ostrich, which I had not seen before, squatting on the ground and peeping at me; it did not wait long before it took to running off, but an intervening bush prevented my getting a proper aim at it. I followed on to the more open plain, and just as the two birds

together were entering the underwood about 400 yards in front of me, I fired; but my bullet struck a tree, quite close to them, without touching them. Meriko had the laugh of me; he could not refrain from expressing his satisfaction that the property of his liege lord had been uninjured, and pledged himself to report the circumstance to the king on his return to Shoshong.

The bullocks had not a drop of water all day long. It was consequently of the most urgent importance that we should get on to the next spring, and we agreed that there was no alternative but to travel on all night, if need be, in defiance of the difficulties we might encounter. Niger, unbidden, took the lead, followed by Pit carrying a breech-loader; Meriko led the foremost oxen by the bridle, which he held in his left hand, whilst he held up a flaming torch in the other; Theunissen took the reins, and I sat on the box with one loaded gun in my hand, and another behind me ready to be used in any emergency. By eleven o'clock, however, we reached some springs; they proved to be the most southerly of those known to the neighbouring Madenassanas as the Klamaklenyana springs, and here we came across several elephant-hunters whom I had seen before, some of them a few weeks previously, and others at the Soa lake. They were all full of complaints at the bad luck they had experienced.

As implied by their name "four, one behind another," the Klamaklenyana springs consist of four separate marshy pieces of water, between which, on either hand, are numerous rain-pools, full at various periods of the year. Close to the spring by which we were halting there was a waggon-track, made by

the Dutch hunters, which branched off towards the Mababi-veldt.

At this place, too, I fell in with one of Anderson's servants, named Saul; he was travelling with a Makalahari who had four children, whom he had met at the Nataspruit and invited to join him; he told me he was sure that his master would not disapprove of what he had done, as the man would be very serviceable to him in helping to hunt ostriches.

"Hunt ostriches!" I exclaimed; "how can such a bad shot as you hunt ostriches?"

"Ah, sir," he answered, "I manage to get at them well enough."

"How so?" I inquired.

"Well, I always take a man with me, and we look about till we discover a nest, and then we dig a hole pretty close to it in which I hide myself. The birds come to sit, and it doesn't want a very good shot to knock over an ostrich when it is just at hand. Well, having made sure of one bird, we stick up its skin on a pole near the nest, and except we are seen, and so scare the birds away, a second ostrich is soon decoyed, and I get another chance. In this way I succeed very well; besides, I get lots of eggs."

Whilst at the springs I learnt the meaning of some of the Masarwa and Bamangwato appellations. I might give numerous examples, but one or two will suffice. I found, for instance, that Khori, the district on the side arm of the Shaneng, means "a bustard," and that Mokhotsi means "a strong current."

On leaving our encampment on the 10th we had



to travel for two hours through the sandy underwood to the next of the Klamaklenyana springs. Here I met an elephant-hunter named Mayer and a Dutchman, Mynheer Herbst, and only a little further on at another watering-place I fell in with a second Dutchman called Jakobs, and Mr. Kurtin, an ivory-trader. Mr. Kurtin told me that on previous expeditions into this neighbourhood he had lost no fewer than sixty-six oxen through the poisonous plant that I have mentioned. Jakobs entertained us with the accounts of his hunting-expeditions, and particularly with some adventures of the famous Pit Jacobs. Mayer and Herbst were in partnership, and had recently had the satisfaction of shooting a fine female elephant; they had just engaged the services of some Makalakas, who a few days previously had offered themselves to me, but so bad was my opinion of all that branch of the Bantus, and so evil was the appearance of the men themselves, that not only would I have nothing to do with them, but recommended their new employers to get rid of them at once. To their cost, however, they acted without regard to my advice. When I met Mayer some seven months later, he told me that they had robbed him freely and had then run away.

It was about this time that I made my first acquaintance with the Madenassanas, the serfs of the Bamangwatos. They are a fine race, tall and strongly built, especially the men, but with a repulsive cast of countenance, so that it was somewhat surprising to find from time to time some nice-looking faces among the women. Their skin is almost black, and they have stiff woolly hair which hangs down for more than an inch over their fore-

head and temples, whilst it is quite short all over the skull.

Whenever a Bamangwato makes his expedition to the pool plateau, his first proceeding is to look up some Madenassanas whom he may compel to go hunting with him and assist him in procuring ivory, whether for himself or for the king; but their residences are generally in such secluded and remote places, that it is often very difficult to find them, unless conducted by some of the Madenassanas themselves. The eldest inhabitant in each little settlement is regarded as a sort of inferior chief, so that it is best for any white man, in want of Madenassana help, to make direct application to him. If hired only for a short period, they are sufficiently paid by three or four pounds of beads, or by a few articles of woollen clothing; but if the engagement should extend to anything like six months the remuneration generally expected would be a musket.

Unlike many of the Bantu races, the Madenassanas respect the law of marriage, which is performed with very simple rites; conjugal fidelity is held in the highest esteem, but jealousy, I was told, which rarely shows itself very prominently amongst other tribes, often impels them to serious crimes. They were uniformly spoken of as a very contented people, and certainly they make far better servants than either the Masarwas or Makalaharis. Dwelling as they do, in the north-west corner of the kingdom, far away from Shoshong, their relations with the Bamangwatos are much less servile than those of the Masarwas, who are found all over the country. They have guns of their own, and are visited only once a year by officials sent by the king to collect their

tribute, and to appoint them their share of hunting-work.

The Makalakas (of whom I had so low an opinion) were moving about in large numbers between the Nata and Zambesi in 1875 and 1876; they were chiefly fugitives from Shoshong, having been expelled thence by the inhabitants, who were infuriated by their treachery.

When we reached the third spring we found that Jakobs and Kurtin had already settled there before us. Another trader, whom I may distinguish as X., arrived after us on the same day; he had visited Sepopo, the king of the Marutseland, whither I was directing my course, and he gave me an introduction to a friend of his, whom I should be sure to meet further north on the Panda ma Tenka. I asked him to convey two of my cases of curiosities to Shoshong, but although he promised to deliver them, I am sorry to record that I never heard any more about them. In exchange for 800 lbs. of ivory, Mr. Kurtin sold him two cream-coloured horses, one of which I had myself cured of an illness in Shoshong; the ivory that X. was conveying in two waggons did not weigh less than 7000 lbs., of which 5000 lbs. had been obtained from Sepopo, the rest having been procured by his own people during their excursions on the southern shore of the Zambesi, between the Victoria Falls and the mouth of the Chobe. He warned me that there was great risk of getting fever on the Zambesi, and that in the district ahead of us there was great scarcity of water. In return for some medicines with which I supplied him, he very courteously sent me a good portion of a cow that he had just killed.

After starting in the afternoon west by north towards the most northerly of the Klamaklenyana springs, we had to pass through a part of the forest, where we saw some fine camel-thorn acacias and mimosas ; also some trees like maples, some mochonos, and bushes of fan-palms. The scenery remained very much of the same character all through the next morning's march, until we reached the spring in time for our midday halt. Between the first and the last of the four springs, I counted twenty-five depressions in the ground that are all full of water after heavy rain.

As we came along, I made several little détours into the woods, and saw buffaloes, striped gnus, Zulu-hartebeests and zebras, and noticed that lion-tracks were by no means wanting. At a point near the spring, where a trader's road brings them out from the western Matabele, I met three hunters, named Barber, Frank, and Wilkinson. Barber's skill as a hunter was notorious ; he had a mother who was not only a keen observer of animal life, but was so gifted with artistic power of delineating what she saw, that she had published several little works on the subject. Barber likewise showed me his own sketch-book, in which he had made some very clever illustrations of his hunting-adventures.

We went a few miles further before we stopped for the night. Some of the trees that we passed next morning were of remarkably well-developed growth, several of the trunks being sixty feet in height ; they belonged to a species called wild syringa by the Dutch, and "motsha" by the Bamangwatos ; there is another sort quite as common, which they call "monati." Near the



groves I observed a great many orchids with red blossoms.

About noon we came to a slight hollow, containing a pond known as Yoruah, where we again fell in with our hunting acquaintances. X. had advised them to make it their headquarters for a time, because he had himself been extremely fortunate in killing elephants there during his own stay. There were traces from which it was clear that a herd had passed along quite recently, and it was hoped that they might soon return again. Not wishing that my dogs should cause the hunting-party any annoyance, I pushed on at once without stopping, and reached the Tamafopa, or Skeleton-springs, in good time next day.

Here I made up my mind to stay for a few days, and taking the waggon about half a mile into the forest, fixed upon a station close to some rain-pools that were generally more or less full of water throughout the year; one of my principal objects for this rest was that I might try and get a skin of the sword-antelope, the finest of all the South African species.

Taking a stroll westwards I saw some steinbocks, and observing countless tracks of animals of all sorts, I could not doubt but that the whole district was teeming with life, and accordingly I came to the conclusion that I would spend another night of observation in the open air; even if I failed to accomplish my end with regard to the skin of which I was in quest, I might at least reckon upon being entertained. Instead of going alone as I did before, I resolved this time to take Pit with me, and in reply to my question whether he thought he would

be able to keep awake, he told me he had not the least doubt on that point.

About an hour or two before sunset I saw that a thoroughly good enclosure was made round the waggon, and Theunissen undertook to keep a good look-out against lions. I and Pit then made our way towards the spot which I had already selected in a forest glade about 500 yards in circumference, partially overgrown with grass, and about ten feet above the level of the woods; in the centre was a small rain-pool that had been full of water some months back, but was now much covered with weeds, and nearly empty. Near the edge of the glade stood a fine hardekool-tree, and about fifteen yards from this was an *Acacia detinens* thirty feet high, of which the branches drooped nearly to the ground, and partly sheltered and partly supported a great ant-hill at its side. Altogether the place seemed well adapted for my purpose.

The first thing I made Pit do was to collect some of the branches of the trees, to make a sort of breastwork about two feet high; we reserved an open space of eight feet or more of bare plain between ourselves and the tall grass; and then we carefully examined our guns and put them in perfect readiness for use. The sun was now sinking, and all the birds had gone to roost except a few glossy starlings that kept twittering around the nests which they occupy all through the year. Pit offered a piece of advice which I thought it advisable to follow, and we left our retreat before it was absolutely dark to fetch some branches of acacia to throw over the enclosure as a light covering, and while we were doing this the howling of the jackals at no great

distance made us aware that the hour was at hand when the deer would be on the move to drink, and when the beasts of prey would set forth for their nightly prowl.

Taking his usual posture, Pit half lay down, while I, for my part, preferred a squatting position as being the least uncomfortable for a long period of watching. For a little while we kept up a conversation in an undertone, but soon afterwards I suggested that it might be better if we were quite quiet. Half an hour or more might have elapsed when I heard a peculiar sound that induced me to rise cautiously and listen; for a moment or two I was puzzled, but hardly knew whether to be more amused or disgusted to find that the noise had no other origin than the open countenance of my slumbering servant. The poke that I gave him was not particularly gentle. At first he seemed inclined to be aggrieved, but immediately recollected himself, and apologizing for falling asleep, promised now to keep wide awake. I knew his propensity too well to have much confidence in his vigilant intentions, but I really was surprised to find after how brief an interval he had begun to snore again as loud as ever.

Shortly before ten o'clock the moon had risen so high that the whole glade was illuminated by the beams. I was getting somewhat weary of Pit's music, when my ear caught a distant sound like the trotting of a number of horses. I could see to a considerable distance, and after about a quarter of an hour I found, as I conjectured might be the case, that the noise proceeded from a herd of zebras advancing towards the glade. Looking through the

opening between the mimosa and the ant-hill I could make out all their movements. They came on with the utmost caution. They pricked up their ears and stopped at almost every second step, standing awhile as motionless as if carved in stone. Two of the herd were in front; the rest followed at a little distance. I hardly knew whether to fire at once, or to wake up Pit to help me if necessary, but while I was debating in my mind the fellow gave such a tremendous snore that he woke himself; hearing me call, he started up so suddenly that he pulled down the whole of our canopy of acacia boughs, and made such a commotion that the whole of the zebras scampered off without my getting another fair chance of a shot.

My incorrigible man was not long in falling asleep for the third time. Midnight had now passed without any further signs of sport, and it was past one when I fancied that I could hear, although a long way off, the lowing of buffaloes. The sound appeared to come gradually nearer, but after coming almost close it receded again, making me suppose that the herd had got scent of us and had altered their course. It was hardly worth the trouble I took to tell Pit about their movements, as he only groaned in reply and rolled himself over on to his other side.

After this I confess I began to feel somewhat drowsy myself. Yielding to fatigue I fell into a doze, from which I was aroused by what struck me as the rustling of a coming storm. I listened for quite twenty minutes, making out nothing beyond the fact that the noise came from one of the neighbouring pools; after a while, however, I found out



that the shrill trumpet-like splash and roar proceeded from a herd of elephants that were enjoying themselves in the water. To rouse Pit was now indispensable. It was no easy matter to make him aware of his position; he muttered something about my wrapping myself up because the wind was blowing and it was cold. This time, however, I was not to be put off, and by giving him a good shaking I brought him to his feet.

My own desire was to leave our shelter and go and set light to two patches of dry grass that I recollected were close at hand. It was a proceeding that I imagined would have the effect of putting the brutes into a high state of alarm, and would bring about a romantic scene such as is rarely witnessed even in the heart of Africa. Pit, however, could not be induced to view the proposal with any favour; he insisted upon what indeed was quite true, that to accomplish what we intended, we should have to cross a great number of the lion-tracks that we knew were there, and that every step would leave us liable to attack before we could be aware of it. As no representations on my part could stir him, and as the moon had set, and it was very dark, I came to the conclusion that perhaps after all discretion was the better part of valour, and yielded my own wish to his. We both of us watched for a long time, but experiencing nothing to keep our interest alive, we at length, one after the other, began to doze again.

I am certain that I had been asleep for a very short time when I was brought to consciousness by a sound that ever makes one oblivious of any other; the roar of a lion was distinctly followed by the low growl of a lioness, both unquestionably

within thirty yards of where I was lounging. My hands were benumbed with cold; it was darker than it had been all night, but I rose and dropped upon my knee prepared to fire, having a most uncomfortable consciousness that in all likelihood the animals had been watching us for some time.



“PIT, ARE YOU ASLEEP?”

It did not now require much effort on my part to wake my servant. At the first recognition of the lion's roar Pit was on his feet in a second. Standing bolt upright, he laid his hands upon the drooping boughs of the mimosa; his hint was worth taking; to escape the spring of the beasts of prey which were

only too probably close upon us, we should not lose an instant in climbing up into the tree; the difficulty was how to get there. I had a flat Scotch cap on my head, a pair of long boots, and an overcoat that reached my knees. To pull off my coat and make it a protection for my face was the work of an instant. Pit pushed me up from behind; then he handed me my gun. In my turn I lent him a helping hand up, and as if by magic we found ourselves elevated in the tree, and at least temporarily safe. Our height from the ground was not more than ten feet, but the night continued so dark, and the grass was so high that it was impossible to make out where it would be of any avail to fire. Until it was nearly morning the lions continued to prowl round about, but when dawn appeared they had made off in the same direction as the buffaloes. We afterwards went to examine the pool; there were no longer any signs either of buffaloes or elephants, except the footprints that plainly showed that at least thirty elephants with their cubs had been there during the night. From Theunissen I learnt that a lion and lioness, no doubt the same, had been heard growling within a stone's throw of the waggon.

After breakfast next day I set out with Pit to follow up the elephants; finding, however, from the condition of the tracks, that they must have had several miles start, I considered that it would be of no use to persevere in the pursuit. The fact, however, of my having been so close to the elephants the previous night stirred up my eagerness, and although I had quite intended to leave Tamafopa that day, I made up my mind to lie in wait a night by myself as near as I could to the pool in

which I had heard them disporting themselves. After a good examination of the place I chose a fine hard-kool-tree, nearly fifty feet high, from which to keep my look-out, but the lowest branch of it was so much above the ground, that Pit and Meriko had to hoist me up with some strips of oxhide. Once mounted, I was quite satisfied with the position, as it commanded a complete view of the pond. The night was clear and bright, but decidedly wintry, and after a time I felt the cold very severely. It was verging towards midnight, when my hopes were raised by the sound of the tramp which made me sure that a herd of elephants was approaching; my best anticipations, however, had hardly been excited before they were doomed to disappointment, for the noise of the elephants was followed immediately by the crack of a huge African bullock-whip. The waggon of the hunters came nearer, but the herd had turned off into the bushes, and was before long quite out of hearing. I afterwards heard that it was Kurtin, on his way to meet his brother in the Panda ma Tenka valley, who had thus unwittingly spoiled my night's entertainment.

My sport on the 17th consisted chiefly in an attempt to dig out an ant-eater. On the night of the 18th we killed a couple of jackals. After passing laboriously over great tracts of sand we arrived at the pools at Tamasetze, where we stayed for a night; a very keen wind was blowing down the glade in which the pools were situated, but I fancied I might get the chance I wanted to secure a sword-antelope. I had the waggon removed to the most sheltered place we could find. We were awakened shortly after midnight by a loud cry from Meriko, who had



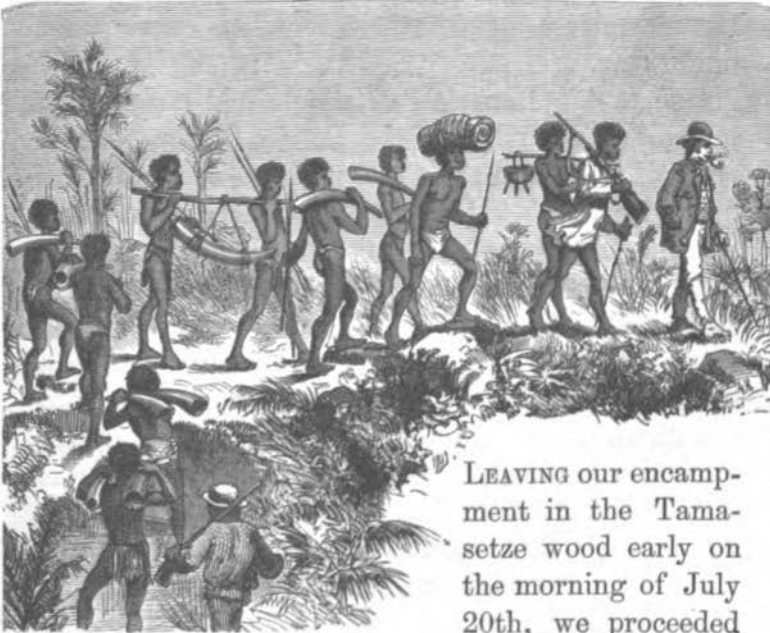
discovered a snake nestling against his legs; the reptile tried to escape, but he mutilated it so terribly that its skin was useless for my collection.

After my recent exertions and nights without sleep, I was not feeling at all well, and was very glad to get as close as I could to the fire. I was occupying myself with my diary when Theunissen, speaking very gently, told me to look behind me; on turning round, I found that I had been sitting with a puff-adder close to my feet, probably enjoying the warmth of the fire as much as myself. This time we were much more cautious in our proceedings, and I was very pleased to be able to enrich my collection with a singularly fine specimen.

## CHAPTER V.

## FROM TAMASETZE TO THE CHOBE.

Henry's Pan—Hardships of elephant-hunting—Elephants' holes—Arrival in the Panda ma Tenka valley—Mr. Westbeeck's depôt—South African lions—Their mode of attack—Blockley—Schneeman's Pan—Wild honey—The Leshumo valley—Trees damaged by elephants—On the bank of the Chobe.



LEAVING our encampment in the Tama-setze wood early on the morning of July 20th, we proceeded northwards across the grassy hollow. In the afternoon we were overtaken by a Dutch boy on horse-

back, very miserably clad. He was not more than fourteen years of age, and in reply to my question whither he was going, he told me that his father, who lived in a hut near the next pool, had sent him to take a waggon, and two negroes to attend to it, all the way to the Makalaka country, to barter beads and calico for kaffir-corn.

We arrived next day at the pool of which the lad had spoken. It was called Henry's Pan, after the name of a hunter's servant who had killed a giraffe there. I found three Boer families settled at the place, as well as three Dutch hunters, Schmitt and the two brothers Lotriet. For the last month Schmitt had been living in a grass-hut, and had killed a sword-antelope on the day before our arrival. His narratives of hunting-excursions were most interesting.

One of the Henry's Pan people had a cancer in his lower jaw, and both the Lotriet families—one a party of three, and the other of nine—were suffering from fever. Their huts, wretched structures of dry branches and grass, were quite inadequate to protect them either from sun or rain, and as they lay upon the ground, their condition seemed pitiable in the extreme. They attributed all their hardships to a trader who had unscrupulously enticed them into the district, and wiped his hands of them almost directly afterwards. The account they gave was entirely substantiated by six hunters of whom I subsequently made inquiries; and so convinced was I that the facts ought to be circulated as a warning to others, that I sent the story of the Lotriets to the *Diamond News*, in which it was inserted under the title of "Dark Deeds." I am in possession of

other narratives of a similar character, which I am reserving for future publication.

So violent had been the fever that one or two of the Lotriets were really dangerously ill, the condition of the whole family being seriously aggravated by the want of clothing and proper medicines. I supplied them with what covering I could, and prescribed for their malady, in return receiving from them a tusk weighing nearly eight pounds, about equivalent in value to the quinine which I had given. Three days previously they had had to part with quite as much ivory for about six ounces of castor-oil.

I made an excursion in which I had the opportunity of getting very near to some koodoo-antelopes, but unfortunately I lost my way in the forest, and did not get back until it was quite late.

In another ramble I came upon a number of holes that had been dug out by elephants, most of them being more than a foot deep, some as much as eighteen inches. Having scented out their favourite roots and tubers, they go down on their knees and use their tusks to make the excavations, and as the soil is often very stony, and the slopes full of rock, the tusks are apt to get very much worn. Sometimes the result of the attrition is so considerable that a difference of four pounds is caused in their weight.

We left Henry's Pan on the 26th. Water again failed us on our route, and we were obliged to resume a system of forced marches. For some days our road lay through a very monotonous sandy forest. The trees were not generally remarkable, but we noticed one giant baobab, that just above the ground had a circumference of twenty-eight



feet ten inches. The variety of birds was very great; birds of prey were represented by the buzzard and the dwarf owl; singing birds by pyrols of two kinds and fly-catchers, the males distinguished by their long tails; the smaller songsters being even more numerous than in places where the vegetation was more luxuriant and diversified. Shrikes were especially numerous, particularly a large kind with a red throat and breast, frequenting low thick bushes. Yellow-beaked hornbills were not uncommon, neither were small-tailed widow-birds, hoopoes, and bee-eaters. I likewise contrived to collect a good many plants, and some varieties of seeds, fruits, and funguses.

A wooded ascent brought us to a plain of tall grass, enclosed on two sides by the forest. Everything about us, animal and vegetable, seemed more and more to partake of a tropical character. I was much struck by the peculiar way in which some of the leguminous trees shed their seeds, the heat of the sun causing the pods to burst with a loud explosion, and to cast the seed to a considerable distance all about. The air was full of myriads of tiny bees, that crept into our clothes, hair, and ears, and made our noses tingle to our great discomfort.

Since leaving the Nata we had been making a continuous ascent, and it seemed that we had now reached the highest point of the plateau. Some of the low hills that we passed contained traces of melaphyr and quartzite; and the soil generally was so stony, that although the baobab thrive very fairly, all other trees and shrubs were of singularly stunted growth.

It was on the evening of the 30th that we had

the satisfaction of resting our eyes upon the first affluent of the Zambesi, the Deykah. It was nothing more than a little brook, rising close to the spot where we encamped; but it contained some pools of which the water was deep enough to invite us to a bath, had we not been deterred by a prudent consideration of the crocodiles that were said to lurk there. In the adjacent glades the grass had been burnt down; indeed, there were some places where bushes were still smouldering, the fire having unquestionably been kindled by the ostrich-hunters, according to their wont.

The best part of the next day was taken up in crossing a number of valleys the drainage of which flowed into the Deykah, and in going over the intervening hills, some of which were rocky, and others equally sandy; but before daylight failed us we reached the valley of the Panda ma Tenka, a small river, that after flowing first north and then north-west, and taking up various spruits on its way, finally joins the Zambesi below the Victoria Falls. Since the English traders have opened traffic with the natives the place has been a kind of rendezvous alike for them and for the elephant-hunters, and we found several waggons quartered on the left bank. A depôt, consisting of an enclosed courtyard containing a hut and a square magazine, has been built on the spot by Mr. Westbeeck, the Zambesi merchant, who resides there himself during a certain portion of the year, and during his absence leaves his business to be transacted by his agents Blockley and Bradshaw. After he has disposed of his ivory in the diamond-fields, he returns with fresh goods, and makes this his starting-point

for his expeditions to Sesheke and along the Zambesi.

I found Mr. Blockley at the depôt. I also learnt that one of the waggons belonged to Mr. Anderson, who was very pleased to see me again. Noticing at once the great height of the fences round the enclosures, I was informed that the precaution was indispensable, because "lions ran about like dogs," the roads everywhere being covered with their tracks.

I am inclined to divide the South African lions into three species; first, the common full-maned lion that is found in Barbary; secondly, the maneless lion; and thirdly, the kind called "krachtmanetye" by the Dutch, distinguished by its short light hair, and by a mane that never reaches below the shoulder. I do not consider the "bondpoot" of the Dutch to be a distinct species, inasmuch as its dark spots are a characteristic of the full-maned lion, and disappear as it advances in age.

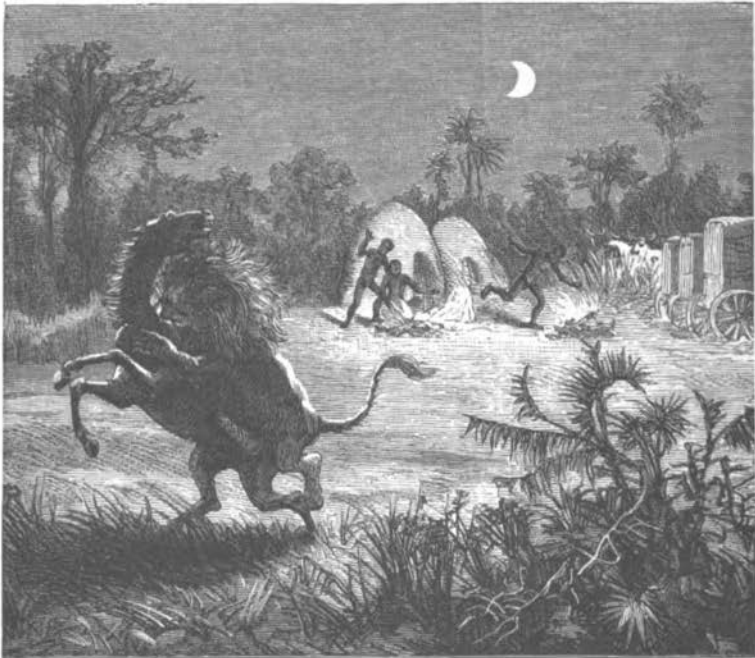
The full-maned lions of the northern part of the continent are very rarely to be seen in South Africa. The maneless lions used to be common on the Molapo, and are still to be found in the valley of the central Zambesi and on the lower Chobe, their colour being extremely light; but the most common are those of the short-maned species. They haunt the valley of the Limpopo from the mouth of the Notuany downwards, to the exclusion for the most part of every other kind. It is said that they are especially dangerous between the ages of two and four years.

Ordinarily the South African lion is a most cautious beast. It might almost be supposed that he calculates the chances of every conflict, very rarely

returning to any encounter in which he has once been worsted. His usual tactics are to try to intimidate before he attacks; he will either approach with a tremendous roar, or advance with head erect gnashing his teeth; or sometimes he will dash along in a succession of long bounds; or again he will trot up briskly, uttering savage growls. But whichever mode of aggression he may choose, he never fails to keep his eye steadily fixed upon his intended victim. A perfect immovability is the best defence. The least sign of quailing is fatal; and the smallest movement will often infuriate a lion, especially a young lion, and invite an immediate attack. Cases are not unknown, but are comparatively rare, and generally confined to old and experienced lions, when they make their assaults without any of the preliminary devices that I have mentioned. Perhaps most of the instances of this kind would be when the beasts are absolutely suffering from hunger, or when they are exasperated after a chase, or when a lioness is guarding her whelps. It is of great advantage to a hunter, particularly to a novice in the pursuit, to see a lion before the lion sees him, even though it be for ever so short an interval. The most experienced hunter is only too likely to lose his composure if one of the giants of the forest is found face to face with him before he has time to prepare his weapon. No more unfortunate plight can be imagined, than that of a naturalist or a botanist engrossed in his studies, and suddenly disturbed by the growl of a lion close beside him. Natives seated round their fire may perhaps hope to escape, but for the solitary individual in the depths of the wood, there can be no reprieve.



In districts where they are much hunted, and where they have consequently become familiar with the sound of fire-arms, as well as in parts where there is hardly any game of the kind for which they care, lions are much more dangerous than in places where their food is plentiful, and where human



NOCTURNAL ATTACK BY LION.

footsteps rarely penetrate. Most notorious for their audacity are those which haunt the banks of the Maressana and Setlagole rivers, and those that are found in the Matabele country. Except perhaps the fox, no animal surpasses them in the craftiness with which they set themselves to secure their prey. Sometimes a group of them institutes a sort of

*battue*. A few of them creep up and exhibit themselves to the victims they want to catch, thus scaring them back into the very clutch of the main body that lurks behind ready to receive them. Instinct prompts them to adopt this line of proceeding with animals whose speed is too rapid for them to overtake in open pursuit, and with such as are tall and can overlook their movements in the long grass. Horses, zebras, and giraffes, and any animals with solid hoofs form the favourite prey of all lions.

On the day after my arrival at Panda ma Tenka, Blockley invited Anderson and me to sup with him on buffalo-meat and pickled cod, prepared in London by Morton and Co. He told me that Mr. Westbeeche had heard of my arrival from Mr. Mackenzie nine months ago, and that he had reported it to King Sepopo, who had willingly granted me permission to pay him a visit, adding that he was pleased to understand that I did not intend injuring his elephants. He said, moreover, that I should be in every way as welcome as Monari—that being the name by which Dr. Livingstone was known in the Marutse district. Blockley had himself spent several months at the royal residence, and had also, at the king's invitation, once gone out to the relief of Westbeeche, having taken a waggon with the greatest difficulty as far as the Barotse valley. I subsequently travelled with him, and much enjoyed his genial company.

During our stay here, I fell in with a number of Bakuenas, under the conduct of one of their princes, on their way to take Sepopo an old mare as a present from Sechele. They recognized me immediately, but I had not retained any recollection of them.

It happened that Blockley was on the point of starting to visit Sepopo, and I proposed to accompany him. I made arrangements for Theunissen to stay behind in charge of the waggon, gave stringent directions to Meriko to look after the bullocks, and decided to take Pit with me. At this time bullocks were fetching a good price; and I disposed of three of mine, because I found it requisite to get some ivory to replace my stock of ready money, that was all but exhausted. I likewise sold one of my breechloaders to Mr. Blockley, and spent the proceeds in replenishing our supply of tea, sugar, coffee, and other articles of regular consumption. Mr. Westbeech had commenced doing business with Sepopo four years back, and it was through his influence with the king that the Marutse domains had been thrown open to other merchants. He had the advantage of being able to speak with perfect fluency the three native languages—the Sesuto, the Setebele, and the Sechuana.

We started on the 3rd of August. Blockley took a whole waggonful of wares, which he hoped the king would purchase. The vehicle would be left about nine miles from the mouth of the Chobe, and the goods carried by bearers to the Zambesi, along which they would be conveyed in boats to the new residence of the Marutse-Mabunda sovereign.

For the first few miles our road lay along some interesting hill country, intersected by a number of spruits flowing east and north-east into the Panda ma Tenka; the higher parts were rocky, and generally covered with trees. Overhanging one of the streams was an immense baobab, close to which was said to be the resort of a lion, a dark-maned brute, which

had sorely harassed the neighbourhood by its depredations.

In the evening we halted facing a wooded ridge, which would have to be crossed at night, on account of the tsetse-fly with which it was infested. We here met a half-caste, named "Africa," who had been hunting ostriches twenty miles further on, and who was on his way to Panda ma Tenka, for the purpose of making some purchases of Blockley. Blockley accordingly had to return with him, but he gave his people instructions to proceed on their way for about thirty miles more, and then to wait for him to overtake them again. Africa had seen some of Sepopo's people on the Chobe, and they had informed him that the king had been very much annoyed by the bad behaviour in his house of the Bakuena prince who had been sent with Sechele's present.

Several times we heard the roaring of a lion, and so near to us did it seem at the time of our halting, that we not only made up unusually large fires, but took care to keep our guns ready for immediate service. The night was dark, and we could scarcely see ten yards in front of us, but shortly after two o'clock we ventured to start, and got safely through the wood without any inconvenience from the tsetse-fly, finding ourselves at dawn on the plain called the Gashuma Flat. It contained a good many pools, most of them moderately deep, frequented by water-birds. Altogether I have now crossed this plain three times, and never without noticing an abundance of game, but this time I saw zebras, Zulu-hartebeests, and harrisbocks, and, what I had never seen before, an orbeki gazelle. Continuing our journey, we came



after a while to another plain, of which, like the last, the soil is so rich as to be quite impassable in the rainy season. Our next halt was near a wood, at a rain-pool called Saddler's Pan.

After altering our course from north to north-west we came in the course of the following day to a dried up rain-pool, with a number of fan-palms adorning its banks. Westbeech subsequently told me that many most elegant trees of this kind had been felled by hunters and traders on the Gashuma Flat out of pure wantonness.

That evening we reached Schneeman's Pan, a rain-pool at which Blockley had appointed that we should wait for him. I amused myself by making some inquiries about the Manansas who were in the place, ascertaining some particulars about their manners and customs, and picking up a few fragments of their language. Most of my information was obtained from one of them who had been taken south by a trader, and who had now hired himself to a farmer here, where he had taken the opportunity of learning Dutch, and by his help I made a list of 305 words and phrases in the dialect of the Manansas or Manandshas. The hunters nickname them Mashapatan.

One day after partaking of some round red-shelled beans I had some very decided symptoms of colic, and discovered that the colouring matter in the shells was injurious, and that the first water in which they were boiled ought to be thrown away; it was always quite violet. The natives, as I afterwards learnt, are particular to observe this precaution.

During our stay some of the Manansas brought us a lot of suet, which they wanted us to buy. When-





ever a well-fed eland is killed the suet is all melted down in a clay vessel, and preserved in small bags made of the platoides of the animal. Others brought a quantity of greenish-brown honey with an acid flavour, a mild aperient, having quite a stupifying effect when eaten freely. The bees from which it is procured are very small, and are without stings; and from the description which was given of them, I should imagine that they are identical in species with those that I saw in the north of the sandy forest.

Blockley, with two servants, returned in good time on the 8th, and we lost no time in proceeding on our way, in order to get through another district of the tsetse-wood during the night. In due time we reached the upper Leshumo valley, a narrow strip of land bordered by sandy heights, in which the waggon was to be left behind; the oxen were taken out, and were driven back to Schneeman's Pan as quickly as possible, so as to be clear of the troublesome insects before daybreak.

A messenger was hence despatched to Impalera, a village on the other side of the Chobe, requesting Makumba, the chief of the Masupias, a subject tribe to the Marutse, to send a sufficient number of bearers to carry the merchandise to the Zambesi. Meanwhile we went a little way down the valley, which we found both marshy and rocky, with a number of springbocks continually darting out of the grass in one spot, to take refuge in another lower down.

On a slope which we reached in the course of the next hour, we noticed an immense number of elephant tracks, showing beyond a doubt that an enormous herd had passed that way during the previous night.

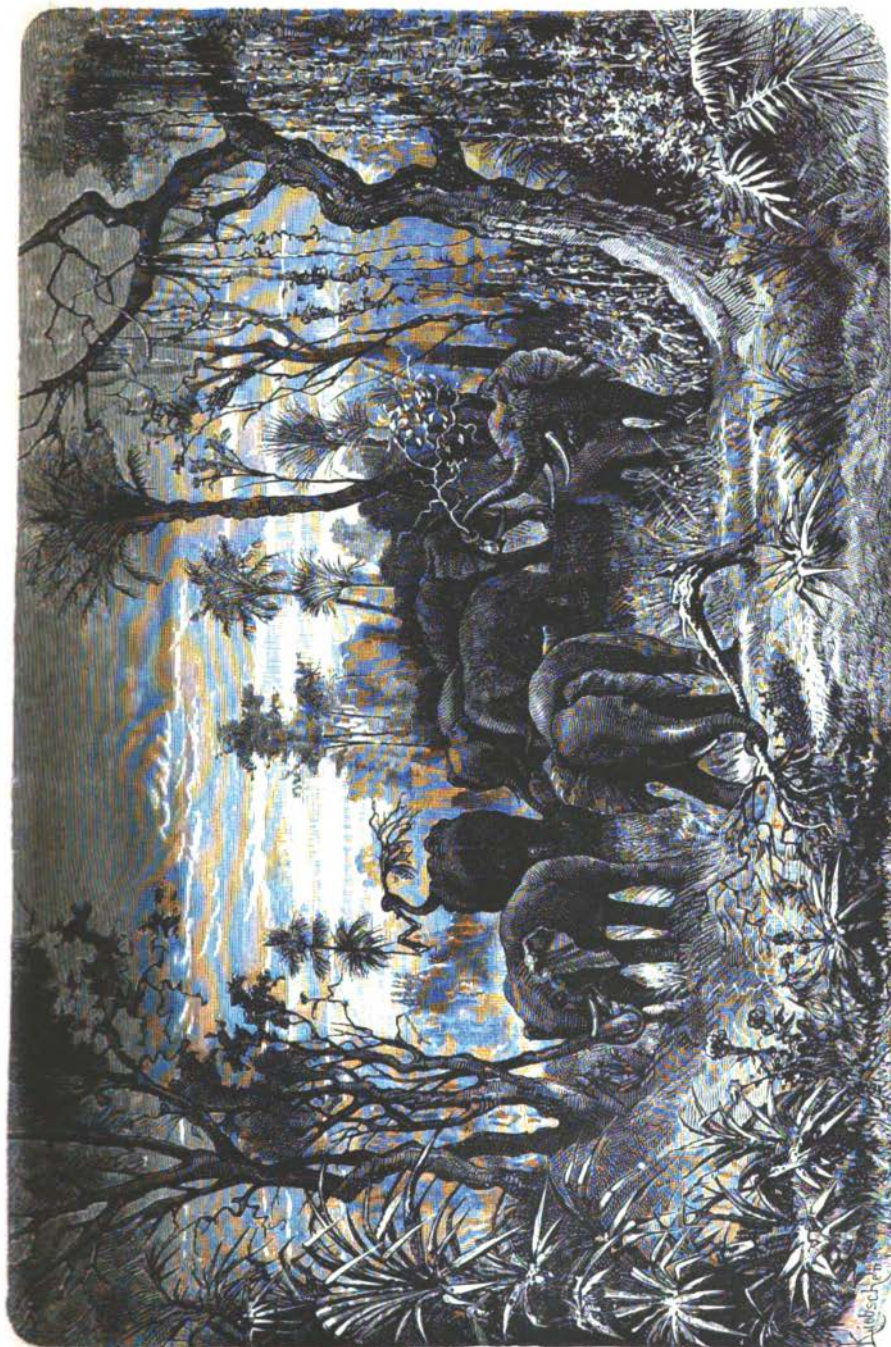
The separate footprints were not more than an inch deep in the sand, but they extended over an area twenty yards or more wide. From the profusion of stems, boughs, and bushes with which the ground was littered, it was evident that they had rushed along with furious impetuosity; the stems in some instances were as thick as my arm, and trees of double the size had been snapped off, except as far as they were kept from falling by a strip of bark; several of the larger trunks had been broken off with such violence, that the remaining stump was left cleft open to the very root; many of the branches, too, had been torn away with tremendous force, and long shreds of the ragged bark hung waving in the air.

Some fine mimosas afforded a delicious shade, their crowns being too leafy for the sunshine to penetrate; and as we left the depression in which they were growing, we found that the soil became more and more level, till all at once it suddenly sloped down again into the valleys of the Chobe and the Zambesi.

Here was the realization of the vision of my youth! Here I was actually gazing on the stream that had mingled itself with my boyish dreams! Never shall I forget the panorama that then broke upon my view, nor the emotion with which I gazed on the valley beneath me.

It took me a few minutes to collect my thoughts. The valley in front stretched away three miles to the right, being bounded on the left by a plain that seemed absolutely unlimited. On the side on which I stood it was overhung by wooded rocks. In the middle of it were two islands, formed by the imperfect





ELEPHANTS ON THE MARCH.



junction of the two rivers, parting again to meet finally further on. The eastern, or "Prager" island, was flat and small, being only a few hundred yards in breadth, and still less in length; the other was nearly six miles long, varying from two to three miles wide; it had several wooded hills, one peak of which rose conspicuously by itself upon the east, considerably above any of the contiguous heights. Just below this was Impalera, the town of Makumba, and, as it were, the southern "watch-tower" of the Marutse kingdom.

In front of Impalera, and about four miles from me, the Chobe was gleaming beautifully. It was there about 300 yards wide, and bordered with reeds.

The hills on the island are detached portions of the long ridge that makes the rocks and rapids of the Chobe, and which runs along further north so as again to form the rocks and rapids of the Zambesi on a larger scale, whence it is continued till finally it joins the rocky declivity of the plateau beyond the river at the Victoria Falls.

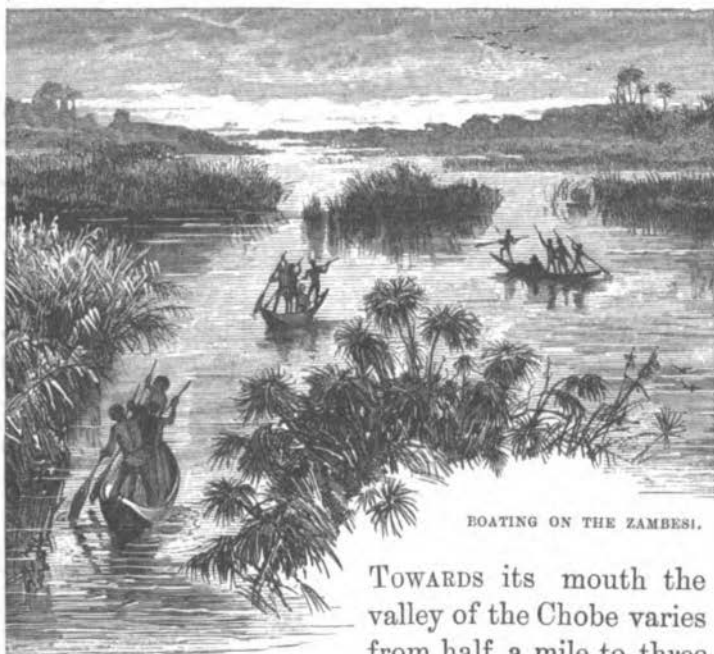
Towards the west the valley was bounded only by the blue line of the horizon.

I gazed long with the intensest interest. There—yes, there, only just beyond that single expanse of reed-thickets—there, lighted up by the rich and gorgeous red of the setting sun—*there* was the land which from my early childhood it had been my ambition to explore!

## CHAPTER VI.

## IN THE VALLEYS OF THE CHOBE AND THE ZAMBESI.

Vegetation in the valley of the Chobe—Notification of my arrival—Scenery by the rapids—A party of Masupias—My mulekow—Matabele raids upon Sekeletu's territory—Gourdshells—Masupia graves—Animal life on the Chobe—Masupia huts—Englishmen in Impalera—Makumba—My first boat-journey on the Zambesi—Animal life in the reed-thickets—Blockley's kraal—Hippopotamuses—Old Sesheke.



BOATING ON THE ZAMBESI.

TOWARDS its mouth the valley of the Chobe varies from half a mile to three miles in breadth, and the valley of the Zambesi under







the hills above the Victoria Falls has very much the same character. Except in places where the rocky spurs abut directly on to the stream, the shores of both rivers are sandy, corresponding with those of the Zooga and most of the feeders of the highland basin of central South Africa; the rocks which I have described above the confluence of the stream, being chiefly the declivities of a sandy plateau. Down the Chobe, and throughout the district in that direction, we found the vegetation luxuriant and quite tropical in its character, but upstream, so far as I went, this feature seemed to be less marked. Upon entering the valley a stranger can hardly fail to be struck by the number of strange trees and bushes, nearly all of them producing fruit that may either be eaten or used for some domestic purpose. A notable exception to the general rule is afforded by the moshungulu, a tree of which the fruit, about two feet long and several inches thick, something like a sausage, is poisonous. The difference between the vegetation of the Zambesi valley with its adjacent plateau, and that of the more southern districts, is manifest from the single circumstance, that throughout the entire course of the river the natives can subsist all the year round on the produce of their own trees, as each month brings fruits or its edible seeds to maturity. Animal life is everywhere abundant; birds, fishes, snakes, insects, and especially butterflies, being too numerous to be reckoned. The human race itself may be said to be in a higher state of development.

Nearly opposite Impalera was a little creek overhung by a fine moshungulu. Understanding that this was the usual landing-place for natives coming across

the river, I gave orders for a little grass-hut to be put up there for my use. The Chobe was here between 200 and 300 yards across, and so deep that its water was of quite a dark blue colour. As I strolled along beside it I saw considerable numbers of a small water-lily floating on its surface; the species seemed to produce a very limited quantity of petals. The masses of reeds were beyond a question the lurking-places of many crocodiles.

Blockley's people had been at the place several times before, and at their suggestion I fired off several shots to give the residents of Impalera notice of my arrival. Before long two men put off in a canoe and landed on our shore. The canoe was only the stem of a tree hollowed out with an axe; it was about ten feet long, fourteen inches wide, and ten inches deep. The men were tall and strongly built, and wore the primitive vesture of the Bantu family in the most graceful way I had ever seen, their dark brown skins being set off by their leather waistbands, to which one of them had attached three small and handsome skins, and the other some yards of calico, skilfully arranged before and behind, with the ends gathered round his loins.

On their undertaking to report my arrival to their chief, Makumba, I gave them each a knife. At the same time one of our party made them understand that Georosiana Maniniani (i.e. little George), the name given to Blockley to distinguish him from Westbeech (who, on account of his size, was known as Georosiana Umutunya, or great George), was waiting in the Leshumo valley, expecting a number of bearers to convey the king's goods to Impalera; also that they were to take down some corn with

them, for which Georosiana Maniniani would give them sipaga, talama, and sisipa (small beads, large beads, and strips of calico). All the time we were talking the two men were squatting down on the ground; but as soon as the Manansa servant had made them comprehend his instructions they rose, and saying "Autile intate" (we understand you, friend), proceeded to take leave of me, with the further remark "Camaya koshi" (we go, sir).

Next morning, in an early walk up the valley, I found a surprising variety of traces of animals; there were tracks of buffaloes, koodoos, waterbucks, duykerbucks, orbeki gazelles, jackals, leopards, and lions. I likewise observed a good many hyæna-tracks, and kept continually hearing baboons barking on the hills, being induced several times to send a stray shot among the bushes. Amongst the birds I noticed two kinds of francolins, the guinea-fowl, the scopus, three kinds of plovers, saddle-storks (*Mycteria Senegalensis*, Shaw), several varieties of ducks, a kind of plectropterus, some spurred geese, a darter, and a kind of cormorant (*Phalacrocorax*).

To me the scenery that was most attractive was just above the rapids, three miles from our encampment, and about six miles from the mouth of the river. Here it was quite possible to trace the connexion of the Chobe with the Zambesi. Natural channels, full of calm flowing water, opened into the vast expanse of reeds, and the stream spread itself out over the wide marshy region. The rapids themselves rushed through a multitude of rocks, of which some were bare, some covered with sand, some overgrown with sedge, some clothed with trees and

brushwood. In one place where the water had worn itself a way between two of the rocky islands, I noticed some well-constructed fish-weels very similar to those we use in Europe. Birds, especially swamp-birds, were very numerous, having taken up their quarters both on the rocks and on the shore. I was confirmed in my conviction that the river was very full of crocodiles; and at the rapids (which, by the way, I named the Blockley rapids) I noticed some water-lizards.

Our camp in the evening of the same day was visited by a party of seventeen Masupias. They were fine-looking men, with their hair tied up at the top of their heads in little tufts, and adorned with ornaments of great variety, bunches of the hair of gazelles or other small animals, pieces of coral, and strings of beads. They also wore bracelets, mostly of leather, occasionally of ivory. I bought everything that they had brought with them in the way of assegais, knives, kaffir-corn and beans, paying them in beads and calico. One of the men to whom I had given a knife on the previous day brought me a clay pitcher made by their women and full of butshuala (kaffir-corn beer); it was an offering on his part, I was given to understand, that established between us the relationship of "mulekow," that is to say, I had henceforth the right to claim anything I liked in his house; it is a custom of the nation that sometimes results in much that is evil, as even the women of the household are included in the licence; and when a few days later I was in Impalera it seemed to excite a good deal of astonishment that I made no further use of my mulekow privilege than



to ask for fish, beer, corn, and a few insignificant curiosities.

Through "August," the Manansa servant who acted as interpreter, the visitors informed me that Makumba, the chief, was now on the farther side of the Zambesi elephant hunting; and, moreover, that he was not at liberty to receive me until an answer had been received from Sepopo authorizing my admission. They even declined on this account to take any present from myself to Makumba, and when I afterwards saw the chief, he entered fully into the particulars of the relations of his people with the monarch of the Marutse.

It was soon very evident that our guests had very little regard for the law of "meum and tuum," and we had to keep a very sharp look-out upon their proceedings throughout their visit.

Next day I received more visits from the Masupias. They were continually asking the servants, who understood their Makololo dialect, whether Georosi Maniniani had any Matabele people with him in the Leshumo valley, as they were forbidden to permit them to enter the kingdom, even although they might declare that they had the king's pass, and had I myself insisted upon taking any Matabele attendants, it is quite certain that, like Stanley, I should have had to make my way by force.

By the Marutse and Mashonas the Matabele are held in just as much detestation as are the Mohammedan slave-dealers from the east coast by the natives of Central Africa. Although it is quite possible that with a party of Matabele servants I might have traversed the whole continent from south to north, any white man coming after me

would have had to suffer for my exploit. Twice during the reign of Sekeletu on the central Zambesi the Matabele attempted to carry their incursions north of the river, but each time they failed. On the first occasion they crossed the rapids above the Victoria Falls, and got on to an island planted with manza by the Batokas, a people subject to Sekeletu, but the water rose and cut off their retreat, leaving them no means of subsistence except the roots of the manza; the result was that the whole of them died, for the roots, although wholesome enough when dried, are poisonous if they are eaten fresh. The second of the failures occurred to a party of Matabele that was conveyed down the river by a Masupia, who, having conducted them to an island, declared he was so weary that he must go away and fetch some of his people to help him. The Matabele, with a credulity quite unusual to them, allowed the man to depart, and soon found themselves in a trap. The man did not turn up any more. They had a hard time of it; they were quite unskilled in the art of spear-fishing; they were afraid on account of the crocodiles to attempt to swim across the river; they could find nothing whatever to eat except the fruit of a few fan-palms, and in a short time their hunger became intense; they were reduced to the emergency of trying to sustain life by eating their leather sandals, which they cut up into pieces with their spears, and soaked; but most of them died, and the rest were easily overpowered by Sekeletu, who sent a few well-manned canoes from Linyanti and carried them off to the Barotse valley, the mother-country of the Marutse, who at that time were his subjects.

During my second visit to the Marutse royal quarters I had the opportunity of seeing some of these Matabele, who had come to Sesheke to pay tribute. They still wore the well-known headdress of feathers, but seemed to have lost all the warlike spirit of the Zulus, and Sepopo told me that they had become first-rate husbandmen.

Amongst other visitors on the 12th was a Masupia, a grey-headed little man, who prided himself upon having served under the late king Sekeletu, during whose reign the Makololo empire had been annihilated.

Various commodities were brought over to me from Impalera with the hope that I might purchase them, and I bought a goat for about four yards of calico; the creature was wretchedly thin, having suffered from the stings of the tsetse-fly. It was no sooner slaughtered than I found my mulekow acquaintance sidling up to me; he evidently expected a portion of it as a present, and considered that he had an unquestionable right to visit me as often as he chose at meal-times.

During this day and the following about forty of the Masupias started off in detachments to the Leshumo valley to fetch Blockley's goods, and to take him the corn he had ordered. The corn was packed in gourd-vessels containing about half a peck each, slung upon poles, the gourd-shells being covered with bast, and tied on with the same material.

Utilized by all the South African tribes, gourd-shells are nowhere put to more various uses than in the Marutse district. By the Mabunda tribe they are branded with ornamental devices

of men and animals, and nearly everywhere they are employed for carrying water, being frequently covered with a network of leather; but the vassal tribes of the Bechuanas, the Makalaharis, Barwas, Masarwas, and Madenassanas, not practising agriculture, use ostrich eggs instead. Most of the Bantu tribes preserve fatty substances in the medium-sized gourd-shells, and south of the Zambesi the very small shells are made into snuff-boxes, and some of a flattened cylindrical form are converted into musical instruments.

On the 13th I was joined by a Basuto named April, who had been travelling with Blockley, and was now on his way to get permission from Sepopo to hunt elephants on his territory. He had come in company with eighteen of the Masupias who were returning with Blockley's merchandise, each man carrying a load of about 60 lbs. They brought word that probably Blockley himself would arrive in the evening, but he did not appear.

That night, for the first time, I heard the deep grunt of the hippopotamus.

In the course of a walk down the riverside next morning I came to some deserted farms of the Masupias, who had fled to the opposite shore after the destruction of the Manansa kingdom, and in several places along the valley I saw the graves of some Masupia chiefs. These graves were mere oval mounds, covered with antelope-skulls and elephant-tusks, so arranged that the points protruded and bent downwards; some were bleached and cracked by exposure, but the smaller ones, weighing about 20 lbs., near the centre of the graves, were generally in a better state of pre-

servation; those which had been deposited most recently were only milk-teeth, and consequently worthless; in all probability they had been placed there since the Marutse had become better acquainted with the value of ivory, so that the deeds of reverence for the departed had not defrauded the rulers of any portion of their revenue. As I returned I passed several sycamores growing on the bank, their stems as well as their branches thickly covered with figs, none of which, however, were yet ripe.

Blockley arrived in the afternoon. He gave each of his bearers a quarter of a pound of beads as payment for their services, but the Masupias rejected all the red beads, refusing to take any but the dark blue. They wanted them, they said, to purchase assegais, and the tribe from which they bought them insisted on having blue beads and no other.

The embarkation of the bearers on their return was an interesting scene. Their canoes, about twenty in number, had been waiting for them in the creek, and late in the afternoon they all pushed off to the opposite shore. They were very slim, varying in length from seven to sixteen feet, and manned by one, two, three, or four men, according to their size. A few of them had to carry back the empty shells that had contained the corn, several were full of firewood, and some conveyed various pieces of the carcass of a great buffalo-cow that had just been killed. The last to leave were my mulekōw friend and four others. They were in a large canoe, while he, anxious to display his skill in paddling, had his canoe to himself. He made a great effort to outstrip



the others, who did not feel inclined to be left in the rear. He had succeeded in getting a good start, but just as he reached the middle of the stream, the wind caught the folds of his kubu (mantle), and getting entangled by it his movements were obstructed, and he was easily beaten. It was his vanity that had brought about his defeat. He had sold me a couple of hatchets for seven yards of calico, and had made Pit cut him out a garment, which he insisted should use up the whole of it.

Without loss of time Blockley crossed on the 15th, but I was obliged to remain where I was until I heard from the king. I roved about in all directions, and discovered some warm salt springs, and I likewise added to my collection some fish that the Masupias had speared in the creek. Just as I had done on the Limpopo, I stood and watched the crocodiles raise their heads above the water, and snap at the kingfishers and water-birds on the bushes and reeds.

In order to watch the nocturnal movements of the animals I spent the whole of the next night by the river. I chose a sandy spot, shut off on the side towards the water by a thicket of reeds, and waited for the moonlight to enable me to see all that went on in the lagoon. About eleven o'clock a herd of pallahs made their appearance, the leader growling with a low note by way of assuring the rest that all was safe. But nothing interested me so much as the manoeuvres of a pair of large otters that emerged from the reeds opposite, and began hunting all round the margin of the creek, their success in catching their prey being far greater than that of the crocodiles. They stood for a few seconds about

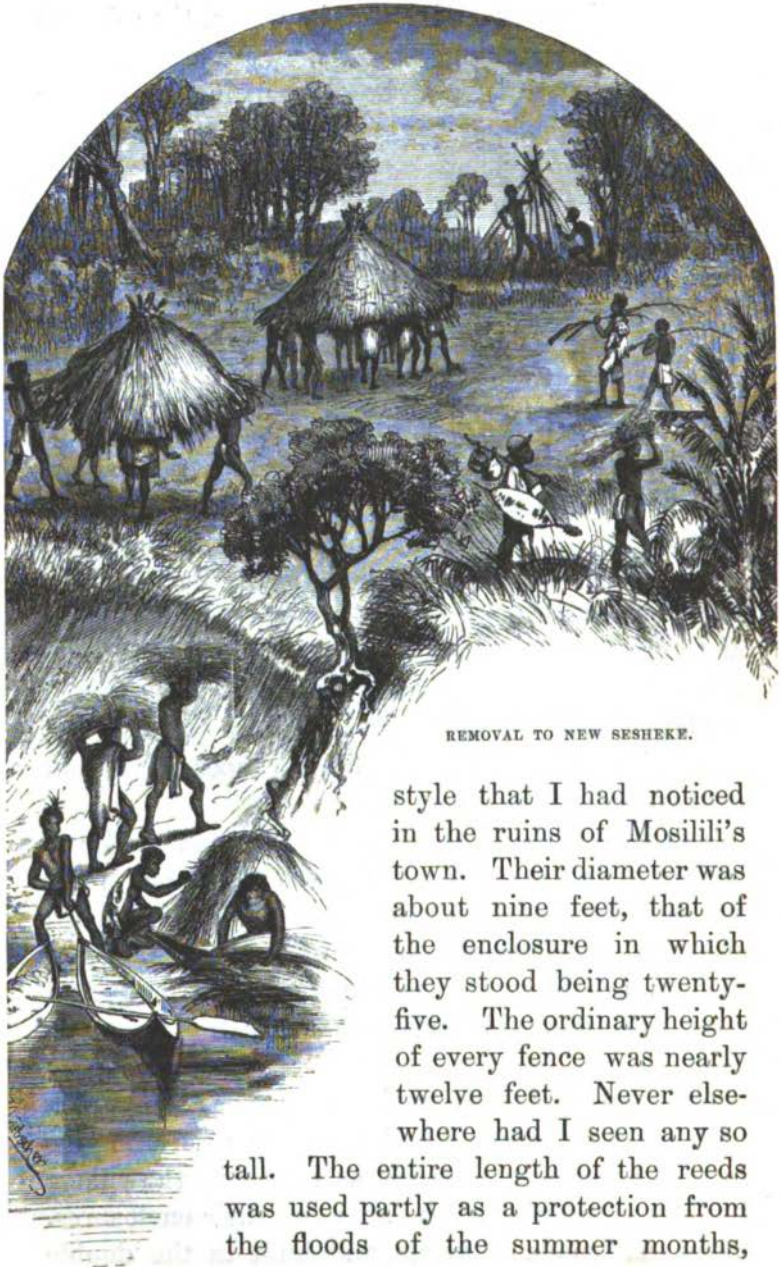
two feet from the edge of the water, then darted into the nearest clump of reeds, where they foraged with their snouts, and kept returning to devour their prey, which, as far as I could see, consisted entirely of small fish.

Having time on my hands, I next made a longer excursion; but though I much enjoyed my ramble, I was disappointed in not being able to secure either a pallah or a baboon. However I saw some very fine kingfishers (*Ceryle maxima*), as well as bee-catchers and cuckoos.

In due time the "rumela," or salute, was fired from the opposite shore by Makumba, as a signal that the messengers had arrived from Sesheke, bringing a favourable answer from the king. It was my duty to acknowledge the salute by returning it, and I took the opportunity of having a few shots at the fruit of the moshungulu-tree; and by knocking down some, and splitting others, I received great applause from the Masupias who were present. A short time afterwards two little canoes were sent over to carry me across.

I estimated both the lower Chobe and the Zambesi as having a depth of between thirty and forty feet, and consequently being quite large enough for ships of considerable burden, but the different reaches are separated so frequently by ridges of rock, that the rapids make all navigation impracticable.

On landing I was again greeted by Makumba with a salute, which I had again to return in due form. I was much struck as I entered the village by the construction of the huts and their enclosures. They were made of reeds, and built in the double



REMOVAL TO NEW SESHEKE.

style that I had noticed in the ruins of Mosilili's town. Their diameter was about nine feet, that of the enclosure in which they stood being twenty-five. The ordinary height of every fence was nearly twelve feet. Never elsewhere had I seen any so tall. The entire length of the reeds was used partly as a protection from the floods of the summer months,

but principally as a shelter from the wind. Some of the huts were made of grass as well as reeds. They were shaped like an oven, and consisted of two rooms and a verandah.

On a grass-plot near the middle of the settlement stood the council-hut, a conical roof of straw supported on a few not very substantial piles. Under it I noticed one of the morupas, or drums, that, as I afterwards learnt, are to be found in most Marutse and Masupia villages. The skin of the drum is pierced, and a short stick inserted into the opening, with another stick fixed transversely at its end, the whole instrument being a cylinder of about a foot to a foot and a half long. Their sound, which cannot be compared to anything much better than the creaking of new boots, is made by rubbing the stick with a piece of wet baobab-bast twisted round the hand of the performer. They are rarely brought into use except on occasions when the inhabitants are celebrating the return from a successful lion or leopard hunt with music and dancing.

Makumba himself, a dark skinned Masupia about forty years of age, received me very kindly. He was entertaining three other visitors, two English officers, Captain McLeod and Captain Fairly, and a Mr. Cowley, who had all come from Natal for the sake of some hunting. They had already obtained permission from Sepopo to enter his territory. They had sent him their presents, and were now on the point of returning to their waggon at Panda ma Tenka to complete all their preparations for their expedition. It subsequently transpired that they were greatly disappointed, and received anything but honourable treatment at the hands of the

Marutse king. Captain McLeod informed me that he had killed an elephant with tusks weighing 100 lbs., and that Sepopo had taken them, under a promise to give him two others instead on his return to Sesheke.

We were entertained at one of Makumba's residences with butshuala (kaffir-corn beer), which was brought in wooden bowls, and served out in gourd-shell cups. He was a staunch supporter of the king, and ultimately lost his life in his service. While I was with him, he took the opportunity of enlightening me as to some of Sepopo's peculiarities, that I might regulate my proceedings accordingly.

Before leaving Impalera I took several walks about the village, and found that it was divided into three groups of homesteads; that nearest the river contained 135 huts; another, where the natives took refuge during floods, contained twenty-five huts; the third, made up of thirty-two huts, lay farther to the west. The women did not wear aprons like the Bechuanas, but had little petticoats reaching to the knee. On the whole, the people were decidedly superior in looks to the Bechuana tribes.

Makumba left the village on the same day that we arrived. His proper home was on the left bank of the Zambesi, the residence at Impalera being occupied by one of his wives and some maids who attended to the fields, and kept the place prepared for him whenever he might choose to pay it a visit. The only reason for his being here now was that he might welcome me in the king's name; I thanked him for his courtesy, and offered him a present, which he



declined, saying that it was as much as his head was worth to accept a gift from either a black man or a white before the king had received one.

Late in the afternoon of the 17th we made our way to a great baobab close to the landing-place on the Zambesi known as "Makumba's haven." The boatmen put up a temporary shelter for Blockley and myself, and there I spent my first night on the bank of that great river that for years it had been my chief ambition to behold.

The landing-place was close to the rapids of which I have spoken, and about four miles above the mouth of the Chobe. Before us in the stream were numbers of small islands, some wooded and others overgrown with weeds. Darters were perching on the overhanging branches, and cormorants had taken up their quarters on the ledges of the dark brown rocks. Carefully avoiding the deeper places frequented by crocodiles, the birds kept on diving for fish and returning to their old positions, where they spread out their wings to dry. We shot several of them, but only managed to secure two, as the rest, like a bald buzzard (*Haliaëtus vocifer*) that I also killed, were carried down the stream and devoured by crocodiles. Hippopotamuses could be heard every ten minutes throughout the night, but the large fire that we made deterred them from coming close to us.

Soon after sunrise I took my first boat-journey on the Zambesi. I found myself in a fragile canoe made of a hollowed tree-stem scarcely eighteen inches wide, its sides being scarcely three inches above the surface of the deep blue stream, that made a dark belt around the diversified verdure of the islets.

On the right, like a strong wall six feet in height, rose masses of reeds, extending very often miles away, and occasionally broken into regular arcades by the passage of the hippopotamuses between the river and their pasturage. Rose-coloured convolvuluses, countless in number, twined themselves up the reedstalks, and gave brightness and colour to the rustling forest. On the other hand was a reedy island, encircled with a hedge of the bristly papyrus, the feathery heads of the outer clumps trembling with the motion of the current; in well-nigh every gap of the fantastic foliage glimpses were caught of gaily-feathered birds, crimson, or grey, or white; ever and again a silver or a purple heron would dart out for a moment, whilst aquatic birds, in strange variety, were watching for fish behind the sedge.

Whenever the boatmen turned into one of the less frequented side-channels, there were always to be seen flocks of wild geese and ducks, with spoon-bills, sandpipers, and three kinds of mews swarming on the sand-banks; nor could my attention fail to be attracted by the long-drawn cry of the bald buzzards, sitting in pairs upon the trees and hillocks. Every instant seemed to bring to light some fresh specimen of animal life, contributing new interest to the mighty stream.

The very mode of travelling gave an additional charm to the scene, as nothing can be imagined much more picturesque than the canoes, always fleet, however heavily laden, and manned with their dark-skinned crews, deftly plying their paddles, while their leather aprons, bound with coloured calico, fluttered in the wind. The steersman was always at the bow, next to him would sit the passenger,

behind whom the oarsmen, varying in number from three to ten or eleven, would row in perfect time, often regulating their movements to a song. Some canoes that I saw were not less than twenty-two feet in length.

Taking into account the dimensions of the islands, I should estimate that the stream, in some parts only 300 yards across, occasionally attained a width



MASUPIA GRAVE.

of 1000 yards. In many places the shores had been washed away, so that there were no shelving banks. In sedgy spots, about eight feet from the shore, the water was six feet deep, and where the reeds were thick, it got no deeper for twenty feet away from land.

After paddling along for close upon three hours, I found that the reeds and bushes on the right gave

way to a wide grass-plain, to which the Marutse and Masupias had given the name of Blockley's kraal. It seemed to be full of game, and we left our canoes for a time and went ashore. Herds of buffaloes were visible on the outskirts; here, too, for the first time I saw some letshwe and puku antelopes; they were cropping the pasturage by hundreds; the letshwes were larger and the pukus smaller than blessbocks, and both, like all waterbocks, had shaggy, light-brown hair, and horns bent forward. I likewise saw some groups of rietbocks in the long grass, and in the direction of the woods were herds of zebras, as well as striped gnus, sometimes as many as twenty together.

After re-embarking, we kept close to the shore, with the object of avoiding the hippopotamuses that in the day-time frequent the middle of the stream, only rising from time to time to breathe. Whenever the current made it necessary for us to change to the opposite side of the river, I could see that the boatmen were all on the *qui-vive* to get across as rapidly as possible, and I soon afterwards learnt by experience what good reason they had to be cautious. We had occasion to steer outwards so as to clear a papyrus island, when all at once the men began to back water, and the one nearest me whispered the word "kubu." He was pointing to a spot hardly 200 yards ahead, and on looking I saw first one hippopotamus's head, and then a second, raised above the surface of the stream, both puffing out little fountains from the nostrils. They quickly disappeared, and the men paddled on gently, till they were tolerably close to the place where the brutes had been seen. Both Blockley and I cocked

our guns, and had not long to wait before the heads of two young hippopotamuses emerged from beneath the water, followed first by the head of a male and then by that of a female. We fired eight shots, of which there was no doubt that two struck the old male behind the ear. The men all maintained that it was mortally wounded, and probably such was the case; but although we waited about for nearly



ON THE BANKS OF THE CHOBE.

an hour, we never saw more than the heads of the three others again. It was only with reluctance that the men were induced to be stationary so long; except they are in very small boats and properly armed with assegais they are always anxious to give the hippopotamus as wide a berth as they can.

Of all the larger mammalia of South Africa I am



disposed to believe that to an unarmed man the hippopotamus is the most dangerous. In its normal state it can never endure the sight of anything to which it is unaccustomed or which takes it by surprise. Let it come upon a horse, an ox, a porcupine, a log of wood, or even a fluttering garment suddenly crossing its path, and it will fly upon any of them with relentless fury; but let such object be withdrawn betimes from view, and the brute in an instant will forget all about it and go on its way entirely undisturbed.<sup>1</sup> Although in some cases it may happen that an unprotected man may elude the attacks of a lion, a buffalo, or a leopard except they have been provoked, he cannot indulge the hope of escaping the violence of a hippopotamus that has once got him within reach of its power.

When out of several hippopotamuses in a river one has been wounded, the rest are far more wary in coming to the surface; and should the wound have been fatal, the carcass does not rise for an hour, but drifts down the stream. The Marutse have a very simple but effectual way of landing their dead bodies; a grass rope with a stone attached is thrown across it, and by this means it is easily guided to the shore. The whole river-side population is most enthusiastic in its love of hippopotamus-hunting, and it is owing to the skill of the Marutse natives in this pursuit that they have been brought from their homes in the Upper Zambesi, and established in villages down here, where they may help to keep the court well supplied

<sup>1</sup> This peculiarity may perhaps be physiologically accounted for by the small weight of the brain as contrasted with the ponderous size of the body.

not only with fresh and dried fish, but particularly with hippopotamus-flesh.

The boats that are used as "mokoro tshi kubu" (hippopotamus-canoes) are of the smallest size, only just large enough for one; they are difficult to manage, but are very swift; the weapons employed are long barbed assegais, of which the shafts are so light that they are not heavier than the ordinary short javelins for military use.

While I was in Sesheke I heard of a sad casualty that had occurred near the town in the previous year. A Masupia on his way down the river saw a hippopotamus asleep on a sandy bank, and believing that he might make it an easy prey, approached it very gently and thrust his spear right under the shoulder. The barb, however, glinted off its side, inflicting only a trifling wound. In a second, before the man had time to get away, the infuriated brute was up, and after him. In vain he rolled himself over to conceal himself in the grass; the beast seemed resolved to trample him to pieces; he held up his right hand as a protection, and it was crushed by the monster's fangs; he stretched out his left, and it was amputated by a single bite. He was afterwards found by some fishermen in a most mutilated state, barely able to recount his misfortune before he died.

Although I have often tasted hippopotamus-meat, I cannot say that I like it. The gelatinous skin when roasted is considered a delicacy; in its raw state it makes excellent handles for knives and workmen's tools, as it shrinks as it dries, and takes firm hold upon the metal.

If a hippopotamus is killed within fifty miles of

Sesheke half of it is always sent to the king, and the breast reserved for the royal table. It is at night-time that the hippopotamus generally goes to its pasturage, in the choice of which it is very particular, sometimes making its way eight or nine miles along the river-bank, and returning at daybreak to its resort in the river or lagoons, where its presence is revealed by its splashes and snorts. Occasionally it is found asleep in the forests ten miles or more away from the water. In eastern and southern Matabeleland, and in the Mashona country, where they are found in the affluents of the Limpopo and the Zambesi it is a much less difficult matter to capture them, and Matabele traders have told me that they have seen Mashonas attack them in the water with broad-bladed daggers, and soon overpower them.

In time past hippopotamuses were common throughout South Africa, and the carvings of the bushmen would go to prove that they not only frequented the rivers, but found their way to the salt rain-pans; they are still to be found in the rivers of Natal, and I was told in Cape Colony that they are in existence in Kaffraria; but in Central South Africa they are not seen south of the Limpopo.

The Zambesi abounds with crocodiles, but we did not see one that day.

The shores of the river here consisted of alternate strata of clay and earth, varying from two to eighteen inches in thickness, the mould made up of alluvial soil and decayed vegetable matter. In some places where the outflow from some hollow in the plain had made itself a channel to the river, the natives had dammed it up by an embankment of rushes ten feet high. We travelled at the rate of



Fig. 11.

HIPPOPOTAMUS HUNTING.







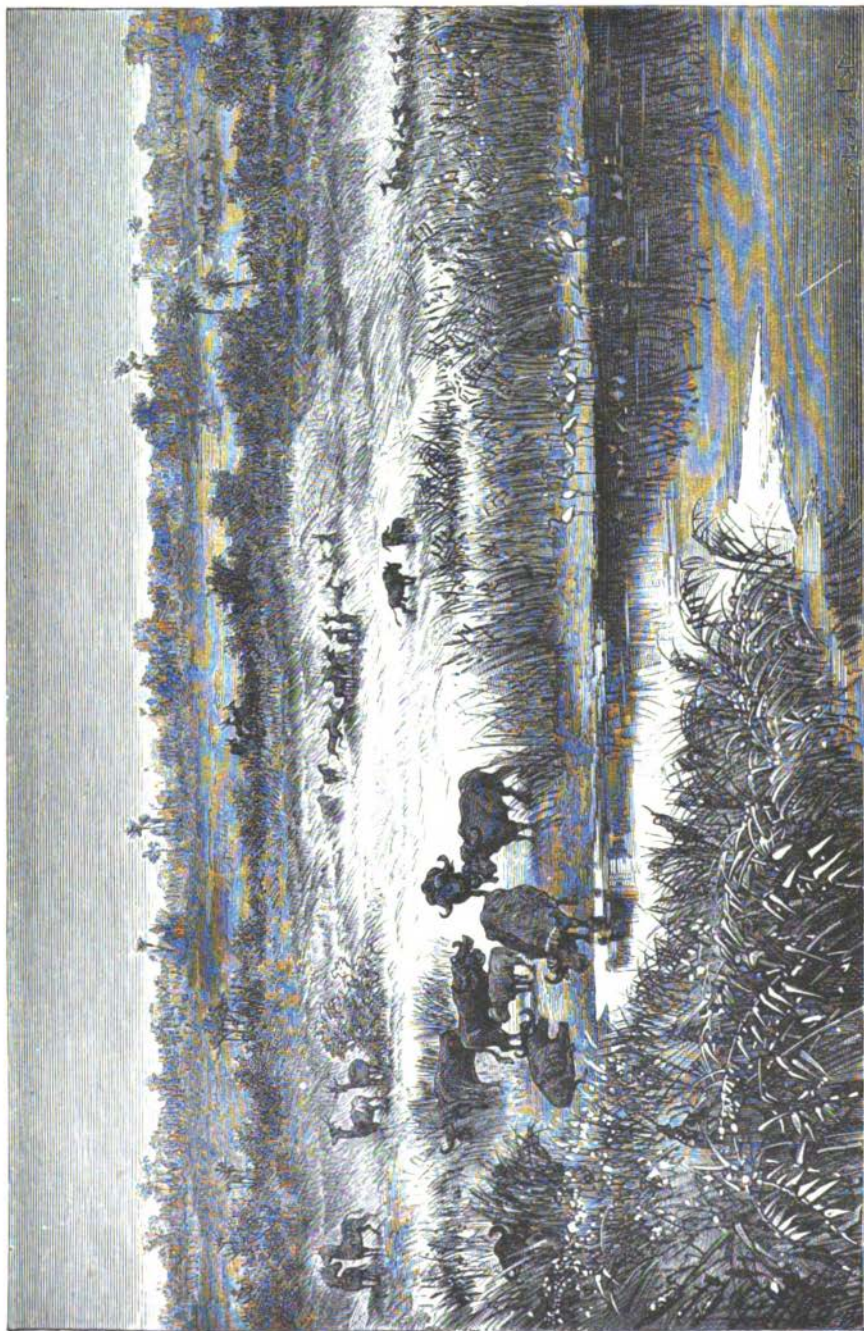


Fig. 11.

GAME COUNTRY NEAR BLOCKLEY'S KRAAL.

three to three-and-a-half miles an hour ; and in the course of the day crossed the river ten times, either to cut off a bend in the stream or to avoid the full current. Towards the right we had an extensive view of Blockley's kraal, full of life with its innumerable heads of game and cattle, but towards the south and west we were quite shut in by towering banks of reeds grown up into thickets, which, together with the lagoons they form, are the resort of elephants as well as of hippopotamuses. Finding a deserted hut upon a sandy bank, we resolved to spend the night beneath its shelter.

Several of the men set to work immediately with their knives and assegais to cut down a number of reeds, which they tied together into bundles ; others with the same implements dug a series of holes into which the reeds were put upright as props ; meanwhile three canoes had been sent across the stream to fetch dry grass which was spread over the top of the supports, and thus in marvellously quick time some huts were erected from four to six feet in height.

Next morning on the left-hand shore we passed the mouth of the Kasha or Kashteja, the river called by Livingstone the Majeela, the name by which it is known amongst the Makololos. A few hundred yards above its mouth the stream was in some places hardly more than fifteen yards wide, but although it was only three feet deep, it was quite unsafe to try to wade across it, on account of the crocodiles with which its seething waters abounded. We met several canoes full of people from Makumba's town, who had been to Sesheke with ivory for Sepopo, and were now returning, having received a pre-

sent of some ammunition and two woollen shirts apiece.

We paused on our way to refresh ourselves with a bath in a shallow place which we ascertained was safe, and then hurried on with all speed, that we might reach the royal quarters before evening. Some small herds of cattle grazing along the riverside, under the close *surveillance* of their keepers, apprised us of our approach to the new settlement, which enjoys the advantage of being free from the tsetse fly.

Old Sesheke lay on a lagoon about a mile and a half west of the place where the river makes a sudden bend to the east, and the original Marutse royal residence was in the fertile mother-country of the Barotse, which was eminently fitted for cattle-breeding. Sepopo, however, the present king, had made himself unpopular amongst the Barotse, and had moved away into the Masupia country, although it was a district which, except in a few detached places, was much infested with the tsetse. He had, however, another reason for the change he made; he was dissatisfied with the dealings of the Portuguese traders, whose goods he found to be of very inferior quality as compared with those brought by Westbeeck, and accordingly he was anxious to make a move that would bring him into nearer connexion with the traders from the south.

As we approached the royal residence, Blockley proposed that we should announce our arrival by a rumela. The echoes of our shots had hardly died away before some groups of men gathered under the trees, and our salute was answered by another; manifestly the king was amongst the people, super-

intending the organization of the new settlement. Our boatmen joined in the shouting that was commenced upon the beach, where the clamour lasted for a quarter of an hour, until we reached the landing-place, where several canoes were drawn up under the trees.

In order to have audience of the ruler of the Central Zambesi, I felt that it was becoming on my part to dress myself in my very best, but it was rather aggravating at the last moment to find that my hat had been mislaid. Blockley would scarcely allow me time to overhaul my baggage to get at the missing article, but dragged me off, telling me that the sound of the myrimba was already begun.

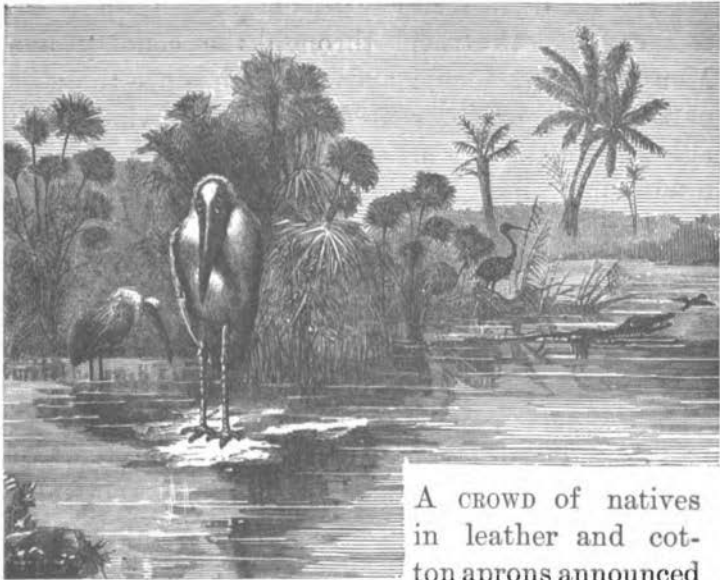
I have already mentioned that Sepopo had been expecting me for some months; he had often inquired of Westbeech and Blockley when the nyaka was coming, to travel through the country like Monari (Livingstone); and although since the visit of the great explorer he had had interviews with at least fifteen white men, he was desirous to give me a more imposing reception than any of them.



## CHAPTER VII.

## FIRST VISIT TO THE MARUTSE KINGDOM.

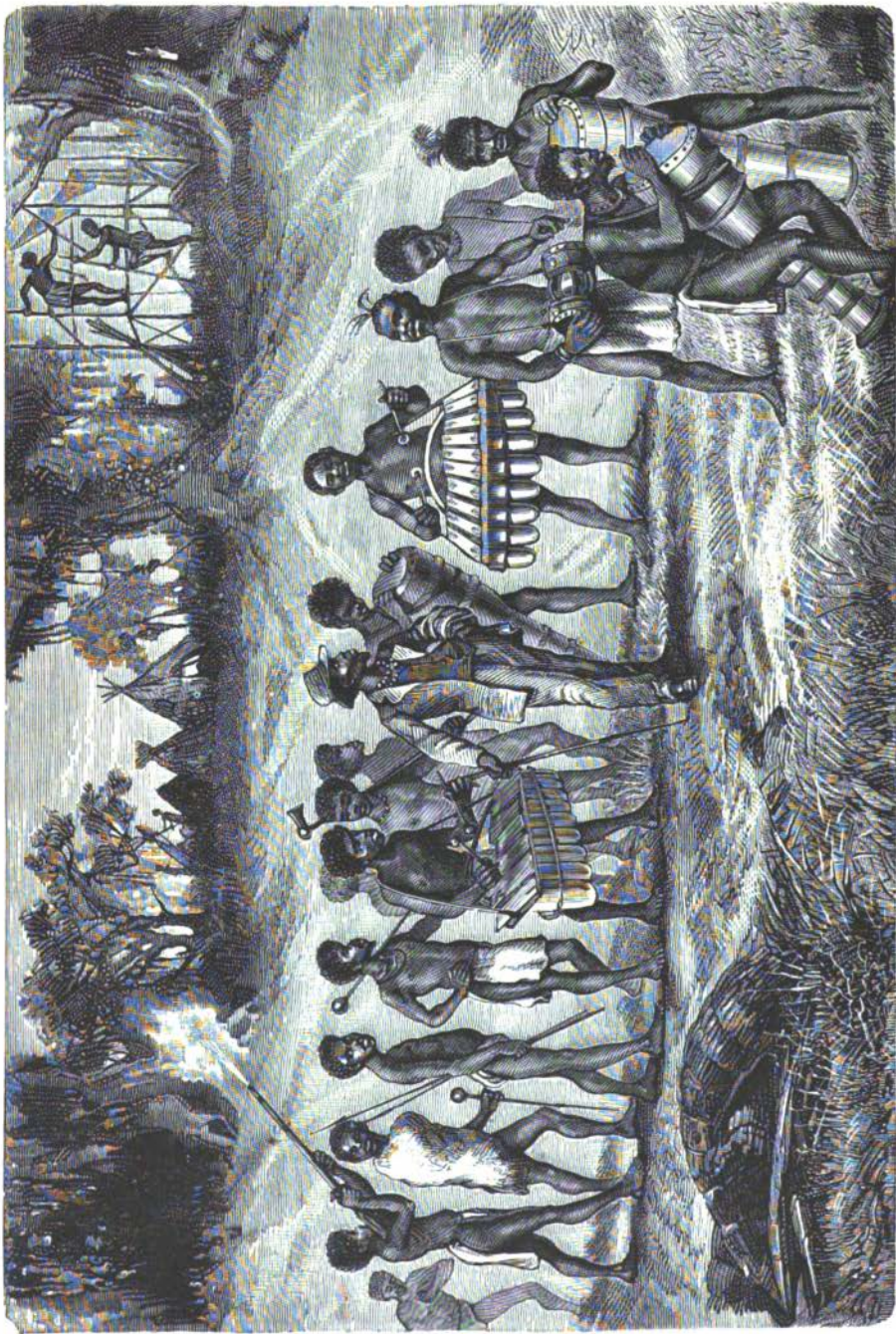
My reception by Sepopo—The libeko—Sepopo's pilfering propensities—The royal residence—History of the Marutse-Mabunda empire—The various tribes and their districts—Position of the vassal tribes—The Sesuto language—Discovery of a culprit—Portuguese traders at Sepopo's court—Arrangements for exploring the country—Construction of New Sesheke—Fire in Old Sesheke—Culture of the tribes of the Marutse-Mabunda kingdom—Their superstition—Rule of succession—Resources of the sovereign—Style of building—The royal courtyard—Musical instruments—War-drums—The kishi dance—Return to Impalera and Panda ma Tenka—A lion adventure.



IN THE PAPYRUS THICKETS.

A CROWD of natives in leather and cotton aprons announced that the king was waiting to receive me, and after proceeding another





200 yards I stood face to face with his majesty. He was a man of about five-and-thirty, dressed in European style, with an English hat upon his head, decorated with a fine white ostrich feather. He had a broad, open countenance, large eyes, and a good-humoured expression that betrayed nothing of the tyrant that he really was. Advancing to meet me with a light and easy tread, he smiled pleasantly as he held out his hand, and after greeting Blockley in a similar fashion, he bestowed a nod of recognition on our servant April. He was accompanied by some of the principal court-officials, only one of whom wore trousers; two others had woollen garments fastened across their backs, whilst the rest were only to be distinguished from the general mob by the number of bracelets on their arms. The most noticeable part of the procession was the royal band; on either side of the king were myrimba-players bringing out the most excruciating sounds with a pair of short drumsticks from a keyboard of calabashes suspended from their shoulders by a strap; these were preceded by men with huge tubular drums, upon which they played with their fingers, accompanying the strains with their voices. Followed by this motley throng, we were conducted to a tall mimosa, where we were met by a man in European costume, whom Sepopo introduced to me as Jan Mahura, a Bechuana, who had resided three years with him, as interpreter.

Blockley was able to dispense with the services of this corpulent, sly-looking individual, but to me he proceeded formally to introduce his Majesty as "Sepopo, Morena of the Zambesi." The king then

seated himself upon a little wooden stool that a servant had been carrying for him, and made signs to us to be seated on the ground; but seeing that I hesitated about taking such a position in my best suit of black, he sent for two trusses of dry grass upon which Blockley and I had to sit down without more ado.

Sepopo began to besiege Blockley with question after question, and as I was not sufficiently versed in the Sesuto-Serotse dialect to follow their conversation, I entertained myself by criticizing the company. Presently the crowd opened to admit a young man, preceded by a herald, and carrying a great wooden dish which, after making an obeisance, he placed on the open space between us and the king. The odour was quite sufficient to make us aware that the dish contained broiled fish. Sepopo picked out a fish at random and handed it to the chiefs Kapella and Mashoku, who had to eat a portion of it; and having thus satisfied himself that the food was not poisoned, he handed one each to Blockley and me, and took another himself. Our fingers had to do duty in the absence of forks, the mighty sovereign of many and many a thousand miles setting us the example in a very dexterous fashion. We had eaten nothing since breakfast, and were consequently by no means disinclined to make a good meal now; but the etiquette of the country did not permit us to eat more than half a fish, and we were expected to pass over the rest to the chiefs who were sitting next us, they in their turn taking a bit and handing the remnant to their neighbours. Ten fish constituted the whole repast, and the servants were permitted to pick the heads.

The Marutse excel in their methods of dressing



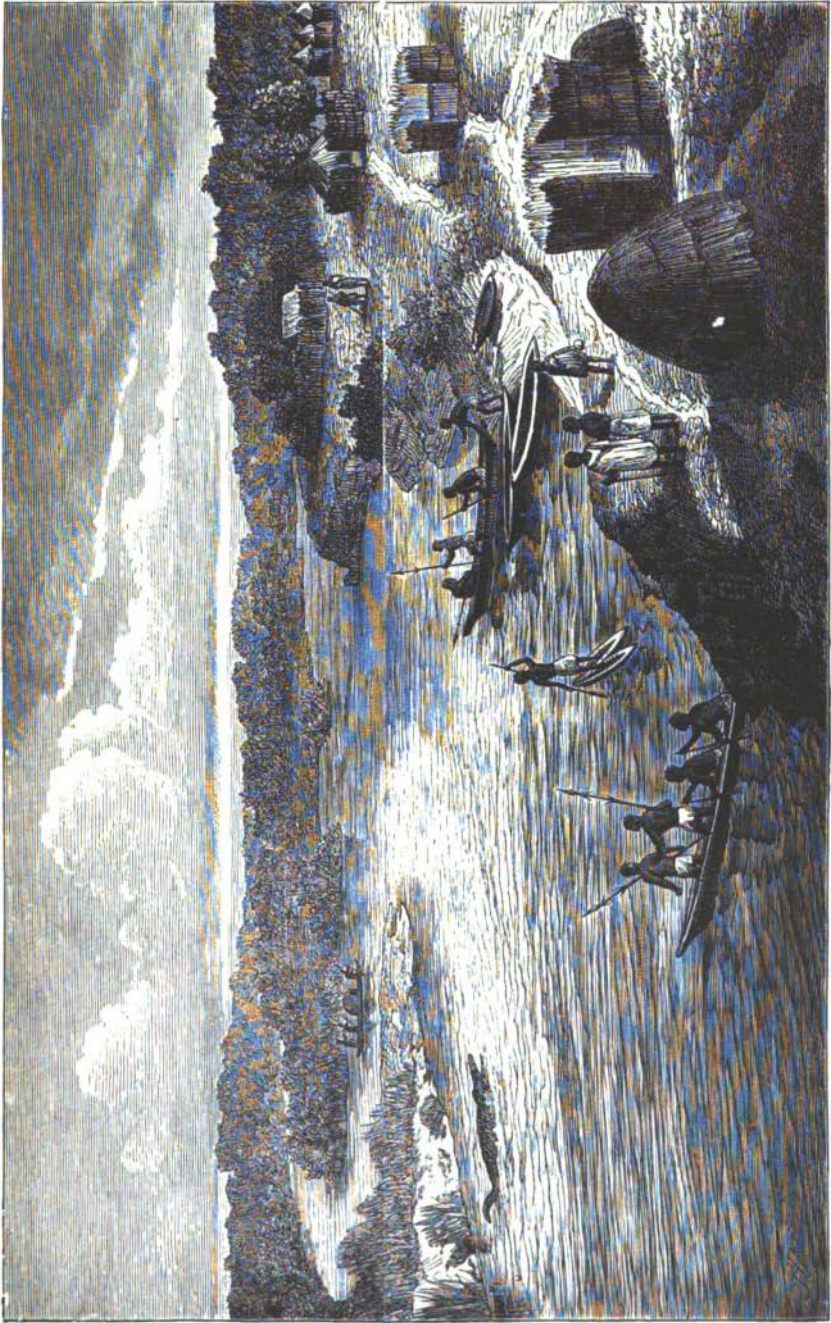
fish, some being stewed in their own oil, and others, after they have been dried in the sun, being broiled on ashes. The kinds that are stewed are those known among the Zambesi tribes as tshi-mo, tshigatshimshi, and tshi-mashona, all rapacious fish, except the hard-lipped inquisi, being disliked by them. I rarely saw them eat the common flat-headed sheat-fish; they avoid it chiefly because its flesh is so often perforated by a parasite, a sort of spiral worm about an inch long, not unlike a trichina. A great many fish, after being sun-dried, are kept for months, and then packed in baskets and sent to the north for sale.

When we had finished our repast, several servants brought bowls of water, with which the inner circle were expected to moisten their lips. After our primitive method of feeding, it was quite necessary that we should get rid of the grease from our fingers; and to assist us in this, one of the servants brought a platter containing about twenty dirty little green balls of the size of a walnut. The king and the courtiers each took one and rubbed it over their hands, which they afterwards washed. When it came to my turn to help myself to one of the balls, my curiosity to know of what it consisted provoked very general amusement. By the king's direction Jan Mahura, the interpreter, called out to me, "Smell them, sir," and I was at once aware that they were of the nature of soap. After washing, Blockley and I dried our hands upon our pocket-handkerchiefs, but Sepopo and his officers scraped the moisture off their fingers with their "libekos." The outer ranks of the assembly merely rubbed their hands on the dry sand.

The libeko used by the Bantu tribes in the place of our pocket-handkerchief is a miniature shovel made of very different sizes, being from half an inch to an inch wide, but varying from two inches to ten inches in length. It is usually attached to a small strap or a chain of grass or beads, and its effect is not only to widen the nostrils, but to disfigure the countenance generally.

As the afternoon was advancing, the king rose, and attended by his vocal and instrumental performers, led the way to the landing-place, where we all embarked in three canoes for an airing on the water. We were not long upon the main stream before we turned into a lagoon, whence, after about a quarter of an hour, we entered another side lagoon, which brought us to the landing-place of Old Sesheke. This town, which the king was now leaving for his new settlement, was on the border of a sandy wood, and scarcely twenty-five feet above the valley. Close to it, built of wood or reeds, were the storehouses in which Westbeech put his goods until Sepopo was ready to pay for them in ivory. The courtyard contained three huts, one occupied by Westbeech's cook, one by his other servants, and a third used as his kitchen. Behind his own little house, and between it and the hedge, stood a fourth hut, about five feet high and seven feet in diameter, similar in shape to a Koranna hut, with a doorway that could only be entered on all fours. This was assigned to me during my residence in the king's domains.

Before I took possession of my mansion, I was invited, Blockley with me, to join the king at supper. He was in a little cemented courtyard sitting on a





mat; we were accommodated in a similar way, and conducted to our seats upon his left hand, the queen and some officials being placed upon his right. The meal consisted of boiled eland flesh served upon plates, and this time we found ourselves provided with knives and forks, which had been introduced by the traders from the west coast. As sauce to the meat we were offered manza, a transparent sort of meal-pap, that upon analyzing, I afterwards ascertained was very nutritious. After supper some impote (honey-beer) was brought in a round-bodied gourd-shell with a twisted neck, and poured out into large tin mugs that had been a present from West-beech. The butler, after clapping his hands, sat down in the open space in front of the king and drank off the first goblet; the king took the next, and, after sipping it, passed it to the queen on his left, and then received it back from her and offered it to us; although several of the chiefs that were present were allowed to partake of the beverage, no one but ourselves was permitted to put his lips to the royal cup. When the drinking was over, the king rose from his seat, took off his boots, and gave them to the waiting-maid who had brought in the meat, and retired to his house, though not until he had invited me to breakfast with him in the morning.

I had been asleep in my new quarters for about two hours, when I was roused by a noise in the small front room of the storehouse, and looking out I saw a glimmer of light, by which I could distinctly make out that Sepopo and some of his people were rummaging amongst the goods that Blockley had just deposited there; after waiting a little longer, I saw Sepopo come out and walk off with a waggon-



lantern that Blockley had refused to give him during the day. It was a transaction that opened my eyes to the way which the Marutse king had of getting possession of any articles that might take his fancy.

Before concluding my account of my first day at Sesheke, I may mention a little incident that occurred while we were sitting drinking the impote. Four men arrived laden with ivory, and after depositing the load of tusks in the middle of the enclosure, they clapped their hands and prostrated themselves five times with their foreheads to the ground, crying out, "Shangwe! Shangwe!" They then retired quite into the rear of all the rest, to remain till the meal was over. When the king summoned them, they crept forward, and kept clapping their hands very gently all the time the king was speaking to them, and when he ceased they proceeded with great volubility to recount all the particulars of the hunting-excursion from which they had returned. They were much commended, and told to come in the morning to receive some ammunition and their proper reward. The ivory was crown property, and the guns used by the hunters were only lent to them, and were liable to be recalled at any moment at the royal pleasure.

It was quite customary for all white men, before entering Impalera, to send the king a present by way of securing a pass from the banks of the Chobe to his territory. No such impost, however, was demanded from me. It was entirely a voluntary act on my part, that I made an offering of a Snider breech-loader and 200 cartridges.

Unlike supper, breakfast was not served in the open air, but inside the house. The long grass-hut,

similar to a gabled roof some eight feet high, was divided by a partition into two compartments, the walls of the front one, in which we took our meal, being decorated with guns, Marutse weapons, elephants' tusks, and various articles of apparel, amongst which I noticed the uniform of a Portuguese dragoon. I took advantage of the good humour and communicative mood of the king, to gain from him some information about Marutse history and the growth of the kingdom; and as various points were afterwards confirmed by several of the chiefs, it may not be inopportune to introduce them here.

Under the leadership of their chief Sebituani, a branch of the Basutos between the upper courses of the Orange and Vaal rivers emigrated northwards. After forcing their way through the Bechuana countries, and subduing various tribes on the lower Chobe and central Zambesi (amongst whom were the eastern Bamashi and Barutse, who occupied an area of 2000 square miles), they not only succeeded in exacting tribute from other tribes as far eastward as the river Kafue, but they consolidated themselves into the Makololo Empire. Their next king was Sekeletu. The discords that sprung up amongst the people during his reign opened the way for the vanquished Marutse tribe to resume arms against them, and that with such success that after several battles the Makololos residing between the Chobe and the Zambesi, already decimated by disease, were reduced to two men and some boys, while their male population south of the Chobe, who had numbered more than 2000, were in like manner brought down to a mere handful. Had they remained on the right bank of the Chobe, the Makololos

would probably have existed to this day; but fearing that the Marutse would be reinforced by the Mabundas and other subject tribes, they made their way towards Lake N'gami in the territory of the western Bamangwatos. There they were sadly deceived; they were received with apparent cordiality, but were ultimately the victims of a cruel stratagem; messengers from King Letshuatabele greeted them with the salutation, "If you come as friends and not as foes, leave your spears and battle-axes and come into the city;" in full confidence they accepted the invitation, but no sooner had they entered the kotla than the citizens barred the entrance with poles and boughs, and massacred them to a man. The women were divided amongst the conquerors, the king having his first choice of the most attractive; the chiefs took the next pick, leaving the rest to be distributed amongst their subjects. From that time women of brown complexion have been found amongst the Bathowanas and people north of the Zambesi, though the dark-skinned tribes always regard it as a sign of degeneration of race. Sepopo subsequently took possession of the whole of the Makololo country, with the exception of the eastern Bamashi territory and their land south of the Chobe, where he did not enter from fear of the Matabele.

To the north of the Marutse was the Mabunda kingdom, which was governed by members of the Marutse royal family. The queen on her death-bed some years before had designated Sepopo's eldest daughter Moquai as her successor, but Moquai, alarmed at the prospect of persecution from her father, handed over the government to him; and

thus it happened that now I found a conjoint Marutse-Mabunda rule, under the sovereignty of Sepopo, a direct descendant of the original royal family of the Marutse.

During breakfast Sepopo sent for the chief representatives of eighteen of the larger tribes and introduced them to me. These tribes are subdivided into eighty-three smaller ones, and their chiefs are all more or less in communication with Sesheke. In addition to those that have been settled for some time within the kingdom, there are the Matabele, Menon's Malalakas, and the Masarwas scattered in various districts; of these the two latter are fugitive tribes from the south, the Matabele having been tributary to the Bamangwatos, and Menon's Malalakas to the Matabele.

The Marutse occupy the fertile valleys of the Barotse country on both sides the Zambesi, from Sekhose to about 150 miles south of the confluence of the Kabompo and the Liba. I believe the Barotse valley to be the most productive portion of the kingdom, and as well adapted for agriculture as for cattle-breeding; it abounds in game, but is likewise prolific in wild vegetable products, of which india-rubber is not the least important. The country, formerly the residence of various members of the royal family, contains several towns; the districts east and north-east of it are occupied by the Mabundas, so that it follows that the bulk of the population that lies outside the Barotse is, for the most part, to be found near the rivers Nyoko, Lombe, and Loi.

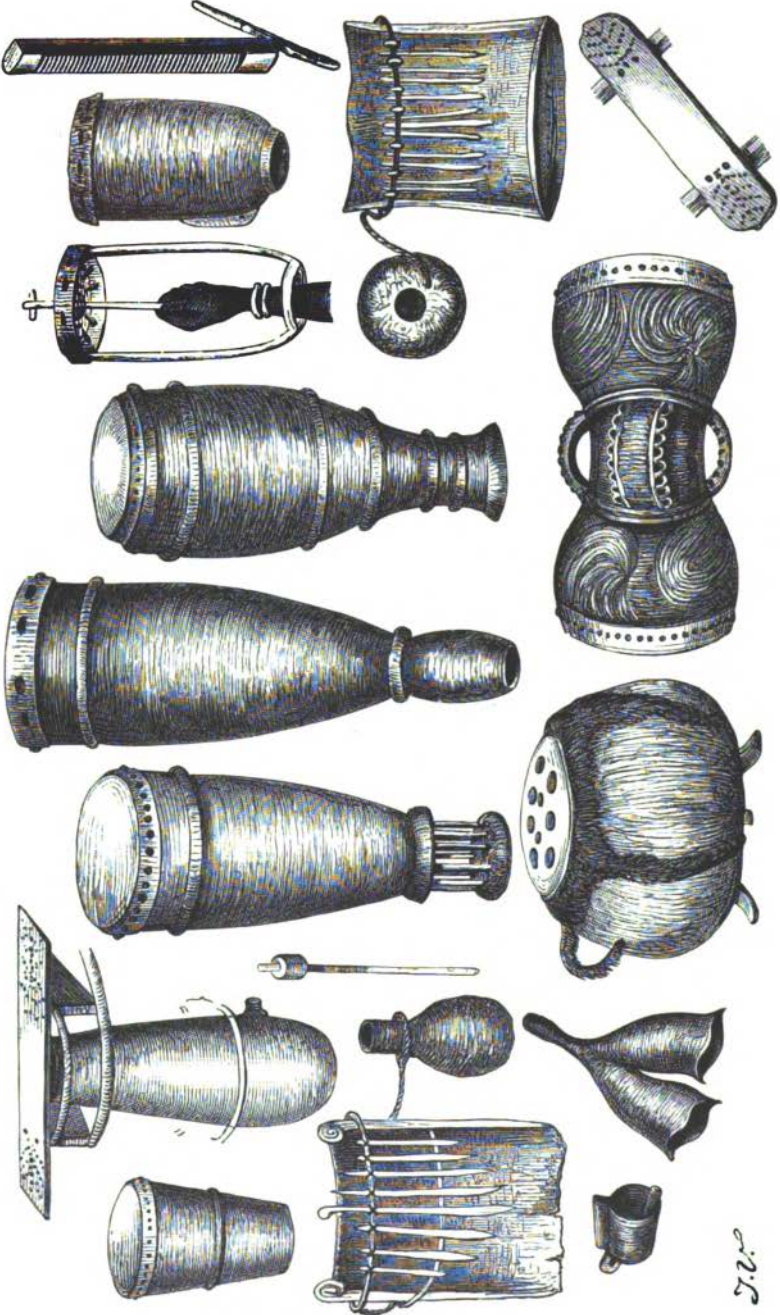
The district joining the Mabundas on the north is in the occupation of the Mankoë, but it does not

extend beyond the west bank of the Zambesi ; again to the north of this is the settlement of the Mamboë, on the lower Kabompo and Liba. Around the town of Kavagola, on the upper Zambesi, are the Bamomba and Manengo tribes, while the Masupia region lies for fifty miles up the river from a point about thirty miles below its junction with the Chobe. East of this the Batoka people range for thirty miles below the Victoria Falls, where their frontier is joined by the Matongas, who reside near the middle of the Kashteja, Livingstone's Majeela. On the lower course of the Kashteja, between the Matongas and Masupias, are the western Makalakas, the eastern Makalakas being farther down the Zambesi, with Wankie's kraal as their principal property. The Luyana tribe is settled south of the Zambesi to the west of the Masupias, and the other tribes either extend in small districts thence towards the Barotse valley, north of the Matongas, and east of the Mamboë, or have scattered themselves about in little detached settlements here and there over the kingdom.

Nearly the whole of these which I have thus briefly enumerated are, with the marked distinction of the Marutse, held as vassals, the people being treated to a certain degree as slaves. However it is not more than a quarter of them who actually pay any tribute, these being chiefly the eastern tribes, such as the Batokas, eastern Makalakas and Mabimbis. As a consequence of Sepopo's oppression, many of the natives have withdrawn from the kingdom, generally going south, and the difficulty of collecting tribute anywhere has very greatly increased. The imposts levied upon such as can be induced to pay them







MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE MARUTSE.

J.V.

Fol. II.

consist chiefly of cereals, either wheat, kaffir-corn, and maize, or of consignments of dried fruits, gourds, india-rubber, mats, canoes, weapons of any kind, wooden utensils, and musical instruments. Ivory, honey, and manza are crown-property, and it is a capital offence for any one to carry on any transactions with regard to them on his own account. Without exception, all the tribes are bound to supply the Marutse sovereign with a stated number of tusks, both of male and female elephants, and with a stipulated quantity of the skins of a large dark brown species of lemur.

The prevailing language of the kingdom, and the principal medium of correspondence between the different tribes, is that of the extirpated Makololos. Overtaken as they have been by the arm of fate, and swept away from existence as a recognized community, they have yet bequeathed to their conquerors the heritage of their dialect. The enlargement of the kingdom by the annexation of the Mabunda territory, and the ever-increasing traffic with the population south of the Zambesi, have resulted in the Sesuto of the Makololos being adopted as the common tongue. It is of immense advantage to an explorer to be familiar with it, as although it may not be found in its purity, having been corrupted more or less by the admixture of the Serotse, it will rarely fail to enable him to make himself understood in any quarter of the kingdom.

When I asked the king the extent of his dominions, he told me that it took his people fifteen or twenty days to reach the northern frontier; and after making strict inquiries, first of the native chiefs, then of the envoys from the Mashukulumbe,

and lastly from the Portuguese traders, and reducing the days' journeys to miles, I think that I am quite borne out in assigning the boundaries as they are marked in my map; that is to say, with the Mashukulumbe on the north and east, the Bamashis on the west, and the Bamangwatos and Matabele country on the south.

Sepopo's name in the Serotse dialect means "a dream," and his mother was called Mangala. After introducing me to the principal chiefs and officials that were then in Sesheke, amongst whom was Kapella the commander-in-chief, he presented Mashoku the executioner, a repulsive Mabunda, and his two fathers-in-law, who were about to become his sons-in-law as well, as, having married their daughters, he was going to give them two of his own young daughters as wives in return.

During the time that these introductions were going on, honey-beer was being drunk, and it occurred to me that Lunga, the handsomest of the ladies, took an uncommonly large share. Very shortly afterwards three Marutse came into the tent uttering a loud cry of "Shangwe," and each carrying a buffalo's tail; they had been sent by the king to procure some meat for Blockley and myself. Before I left, Sepopo pointed out to me his two doctors who provided him with charms when he went hunting.

I spent the remainder of the day in making an investigation of the town, returning in the evening to the royal residence, where I found that Makumba had just come in from Impalera, bringing the melancholy intelligence that Y., the trader that I had met at Schneemann's Pan, and had urged to

go on as quickly as possible to my waggon at Panda ma Tenka, had died before reaching there.

On the night of the 20th an event occurred that rather tended to disturb the harmonious relations between Sepopo and myself. By Blockley's hospitality a very lively evening had been spent in his courtyard, and it was getting on for midnight before his black guests of both sexes had emptied the three great pitchers of beer with which he had entertained them, and had set out on their way home. For a long time afterwards the uproar they made, and the harsh notes of their calabash keyboards, made sleep quite out of the question, but at length I dropped into a doze, from which I was almost immediately aroused by the barking of a dog. I opened my eyes, and at once observed that my hut was peculiarly light, although I had blocked up the entrance with a chest. In another instant I made out that there was a dark figure in the aperture, and that a native was in the very act of taking my clothes, which I had thrown on the top of the chest. The only weapon that was at hand was an assegai which I had bought on the previous day, but it was hanging out of my reach; and before I could get at it, the thief and a partner he had with him had run away towards the huts. I followed as quickly as I could, but too late to see them. On my way I found that they had left a stick and a fish behind. It was not likely that I could get much more sleep that night, and the first thing I did in the morning was to go and tell the king what had happened. He made a very evasive reply, and I could feel evidently enough that my company that day gave him anything but pleasure. Nevertheless I determined to do what



I could to sift the matter to the bottom. In spite of the absurdity of expecting to get an applicant, I sent one of Blockley's servants to the town to circulate the report that I had found a stick, which I should be happy to return to its proper owner. Late in the afternoon a middle-aged man appeared and claimed the stick, and as he said that the fish was also his property, I took him off forthwith to the king. Meanwhile the stolen articles had been concealed, and when the man's hut was searched by the king's messenger nothing could be found, and accordingly the man was declared not guilty. I expressed my dissatisfaction with the judgment, whereupon the king said that if I wished it the man should be punished, but as I quite understood that this punishment meant death, I acquiesced in his being released; nevertheless I made it thoroughly well known that I should shoot the very next burglar that I found trying to get into my hut. Sepopo assented to all I said, and repeated my words aloud to the crowd that had been drawn together by the affair.

Later in the evening some Barotse men arrived with their subsidies of corn, one of them being a Matabele who had been captured by Sekeletu. Sepopo took them in and showed them over his hut, of which he was not a little proud.

As it had been intimated to me by Masangu, an official who might be described as the controller of the arsenal, that the king was willing to grant me some favour by way of compensation for my annoyance at the robbery, I considered it a good opportunity to prefer my formal request for permission to explore his dominions. For this purpose I was conducted into the little courtyard, where I found

Sepopo sitting with about thirty men squatting around him in perfect silence; my eye, as I entered, at once lighted upon one of these men who was bent down in a peculiarly demure attitude. It struck me immediately that he was not a Marutse native, and on looking again I saw that he was a half-caste.

Having asked the king whether he had heard of my wishes from Westbeech, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, I proceeded to explain to him, as definitely as I could, the object of my journey. He listened to me very attentively, and was silent for some moments, after which he said,—

“Can the white doctor speak Serotse or Sesuto?”

I replied that I knew neither.

“Can he then speak the language of these men?” and he pointed to two of the attendants squatting on the ground beside him, one of which was the sly-looking half-caste that I had already noticed.

On my asking who they were, the man servilely raised his hat, and in a fawning voice informed me that he and the companion at his side were Portuguese traders and good Christians. I further ascertained that they belong to the so-called Mambari, of whom I had heard all kinds of unpleasant stories. Sepopo introduced the man who had spoken to me by the name of Sykendu, adding that he was “a great man” and “a doctor,” but the hypocritical look which the fellow put on only confirmed me in the unfavourable impression I had formed of his character. Finding that I was not acquainted with their language, the king said that he considered it was quite necessary I should learn something of it before leaving Sesheke, as then these men might act

as my guides and interpreters, and would be able to render me invaluable assistance.

On further conversation I learnt that the Portuguese traders from Loanda, Mossamedes, and Benguela are thoroughly acquainted with the district between the west coast and Lake Bangweolo, and with all the country eastwards as far as the mouth of the Kafue, the whole of which we are accustomed to consider as "*terra incognita*;" they not only are acquainted with the rulers of the native states, but are intimate with all the sub-chieftains, knowing their individual peculiarities; they are familiar with the winding of every hill, and the passage of every river; but meanwhile they are most careful, in conjunction with their white colleagues, to keep all their knowledge to themselves, always fearful that the traders of other nations may be attracted to what they are wont to consider their own proper fields for ivory and caoutchouc.

Overhearing that Sepopo was speaking to me about my having the services of two guides, Sykendu came up and put in his word again. He raised his hat, bowed almost to the ground, crossed himself, and swore by the Holy Virgin that he and his brother were two of the best Christians in the interior, and as such would be the most suitable guides I could find. Probably this attestation on his part was made in answer to the suspicious look with which I regarded him and his associate.

Sepopo waited a moment or two to see whether I had more to say, and then remarked that he was satisfied it would be a good thing for me to learn either the Serotse or the Makololo dialect, as it might enable me to avoid what had happened to

Monari (Livingstone), who, in consequence of not being able to make himself understood by the chiefs, had been taken for a magician who had come down from heaven with the rain, an impression which he only removed by making them a present of some muskets.

Again Sykendu interrupted the conversation between the king and myself, by saying he supposed that I was aware that the guides always expected a good remuneration for their services, and although Sepopo told him that that would be settled all right, he went on to say that they would require four tusks weighing eighty pounds apiece. I told him that I should give four tusks weighing forty pounds apiece, and that only on condition that I should deposit them with Sepopo, to be handed over to them on their return from Matimbundu, whither they were to conduct me.

However, after all these arrangements had been made, when I really went on my tour from Sesheke, it was not with the two Mambari for my guides. I had meantime learnt that they were slave-dealers, and having various other reasons for distrusting them, I declined their services altogether.

After I had made what I then supposed would be my final contract with the guides, Sepopo promised to provide me with canoes and boatmen to convey me to the Barotse valley, beyond which I should have to procure a change of crews in every fresh district as far as the Mamboë country. The Mamboë, who would ultimately accompany me to the great water, i. e. the sea, would have to be recompensed for their services by a musket apiece; but the boatmen who took me only for the short stages I should

find would be satisfied with shirts or pieces of calico. The king moreover undertook to order all the tribes along the river to supply my party with whatever provisions should be requisite. He strongly advised me to wend my way northwards towards Lake Bangweolo, a route, he said, by which I should be able to dispense with canoes and to travel with bearers, and which would be at once more convenient to him and less dangerous to myself.

I have since very much repented that I did not follow this advice, but at that time I was under the conviction that I should be doing much more for the advancement of science by following the Zambesi to its source; I likewise thought that I should find the canoe-voyage less fatiguing to myself, so that my strength might be reserved for the prolonged land-journey that would come after.

My next proceeding might have been at once to return to Panda ma Tenka to conclude my necessary preparations, but I did not leave Sesheke for another day or two, and amused myself on one occasion by going to inspect the site selected for the new town. I came upon a very animated and interesting scene; the building-operations were in full swing, and the river was alive with canoes laden with grass, stakes, and reeds, some going straight along the stream, and some crossing from bank to bank. On the shore, men and women in single file were carrying loads of grass in bundles that almost swept the ground behind them; others were conveying long poles, from which were suspended the great clay vessels, in which the store of corn was being removed from the old granary to the new. Every here and there was what might be called a peripatetic roof,



being a thatch in the course of removal, nothing of its means of locomotion being visible but the thirty or forty feet of the bearers, the foremost of whom had some holes pierced in the roof by which they could see their way; many of the people were singing at their work, and some of them carrying heavy burdens passed me at a good smart trot. The very queens found work to do, and I noticed them, assisted by their maids, moving large bundles of the grass. Hearing the words "moro, nyaka makoa," (good morning, white doctor), I turned and found that the greeting came from Makumba the chief, who was passing by with a number of his people.

Nearly all the residents in the old town were taking down their huts and preparing to migrate, none more busy than Blockley, who was packing up all his goods in readiness to transfer them from his present enclosure to a grass hut that the king had directed should be built for him in the new settlement.

While I was sitting in my hut writing my journal on the following day, I was startled by the cry of "molemo, molemo!" (fire, fire!) and immediately I rushed outside; a single hut was in flames, but as it was standing in the midst of some hundreds more, the reed-thatch roofs of which were all extra dry from the heat of the weather, there was every reason to fear that others would catch fire, and that the brisk east wind that was blowing would fan the flames into a general conflagration. Crowds of women and children came shrieking and holloaing down the pathway from the river, and to increase the commotion, as the fire spread there were the constant reports of the guns that had been left in the huts,

the bullets flying about in all directions, and imperilling the lives of all the bystanders. I had hardly managed to get my own little property into a safe place outside the hut, when Blockley came running up to fetch some shovels. All Westbeech's gunpowder, as well as what he had sold to Sepopo, had been stored in a hut at the edge of the forest, and as nothing was more likely than that the forest itself would catch fire, he was anxious to get the powder away, and to have it buried underground as quickly as possible.

To the west of our quarters and about thirty yards away stood the king's stable, a building composed of stakes, and on the west was a group of huts, likewise at a considerable distance, so that from these there was no particular danger to be apprehended; but on the north, which was the direction of the fire, there were two huts so close to us, that should they catch light our safety must be seriously compromised; luckily they remained intact, but the crackling flames were getting nearer and nearer to them, lighting up the figures of the men who were doing their utmost to arrest their progress. I had only Pit and one of Blockley's servants with me; they did what they could to carry up our gourds and clay pitchers full of water from the river, though they smashed a good many of them in their excitement; but I called them off, and made them help me tear down the fence of our enclosure, thus putting a very effectual check upon the spread of any flames towards us. Others of the natives took the hint and did the same, but in spite of all efforts, more than half of Old Sesheke was destroyed.

Sepopo's mode of showing his annoyance at what had occurred was somewhat extraordinary. He was in New Sesheke at the time, and when he heard what had happened, and saw the flames rising above the old town, he set to work and vigorously belaboured all his attendants with a thick stick, only giving up from sheer fatigue.

In course of time Blockley came back with the satisfactory intelligence that he had succeeded in saving the gunpowder, and on receiving my congratulations, returned the compliment by expressing his gratification at my having prevented the destruction of the warehouses. I little thought to what a risk I had been exposed, for I was not aware until afterwards that Blockley had a chest containing 700 lbs. of gunpowder in the courtyard itself.

On the following day several canoes arrived from the Barotse, and were placed at my disposal by Sepopo, who urged upon me to lose no time in returning to Panda ma Tenka, completing my preparations, and getting back to Sesheke ready to start. However I did not set out until the 30th, being resolved first to see Blockley settled in his new quarters; my time was fully occupied in making additions to my ethnographical collection, in studying the habits of the native tribes, as exhibited by the representatives who were staying in the place, and especially in learning the Sesuto language. Relying upon the king's promise that the way to the west coast should be open to me, I now arranged with Blockley for him to take my waggon and various collections back to Shoshong, and to deposit them there until my arrival, and as he was in want of bullocks, I let him have my team in exchange for ivory

and articles that I should be likely to find serviceable, such as calico and beads.

Before continuing my personal narrative, and concluding my account of my first visit to the residence of king Sepopo, I think it desirable to give some outline of the characteristics of the various tribes dwelling in his dominions.

With the exception of the Mashonas, on the east of the Matabele, there are none of the South African tribes that exhibit so much energy, as these in the Marutse-Mabunda kingdom. The various products of their handicraft to be found throughout the country mark them out to a student of comparative ethnology as people of a relatively high state of culture, an inference which is further illustrated and confirmed by their skill in boating, fishing, and other similar pursuits. Their aptitude in manipulating metal, horn, bone, wood, or leather, augurs well for their mental capacity, and they are very quick in receiving instruction. Compared with the tribes south of the Zambesi it must be confessed that their moral standard is low, but this proceeds so much from their primitive ignorance, and from their long seclusion from the outer world, and not, as is the case with the Hottentots, from wilful and degraded corruption, that I do not hesitate to express my belief that in this respect they will gradually show many signs of improvement.

Perhaps the evil which is most deeply rooted among them is their superstition. In this they are far worse than most other South African tribes, the Zulus and Matabele being hardly their match in this respect. The effect of the vice is both demonstrated and aggravated by the multitude of human lives that

are sacrificed to its demands. The royal house on the Zambesi is the very hot-bed of superstition; magic is the pretext under which the worst of barbarities are perpetrated, and the people, associating the enormities with the sovereigns who sanction them, learn at once to dread and hate their rulers. To deliver the people of the district from their superstitious credulity, would be to remove the greatest hindrance that exists to their future civilization.

Among the Marutse the king has a despotic power extending to the land as well as to the population; until the time however of the present ruler, whose rule is that of a tyrant, it has very rarely happened that any king has stretched his right to interfere with private property. During their own lifetime the reigning sovereigns appoint their successors; these may be of either sex, provided they are born of a Marutse mother—and women are especially welcome as sovereigns among the northern tribes, on the presumption that they are less cruel than men. Amongst the Bechuanas, who are more conservative in their instincts, the eldest son of the principal wife is always recognized as the rightful heir, and so strictly is this rule enforced, that even if the king should die before the heir is born, the eldest son of the widowed queen by another husband would still be held to be the legitimate successor to the throne. In 1875 Sepopo appointed his little daughter of six years of age to be queen at his own demise; by right his eldest daughter Moquai should have been nominated, but as she had been formally designated as the proper sovereign of the Mabundas, he feared that she already had too many friends and supporters in that district, to make it



advisable for him to name her as successor to the joint kingdom. The king's principal wife is always called "the mother of the country."

The king holds the offices of chief doctor and chief magician, and under the cloke of these two arts, he works upon the credulity of the people by the most hideous crimes, being himself quite aware of the hollowness of his pretences.

Large sources of revenue are open to the king of the Marutse people. Besides his own extensive territories, which are cultivated partly by colonies of subjects, and partly by the royal wives with their staff of labourers, the direct taxes, which include contributions of every article which a prince can require, yield an immense revenue. As a consequence, moreover, of ivory and india-rubber, the staple commodities of the country, being crown property, the king is the chief merchant, and from time to time he makes large purchases of goods to the amount of 3000*l.* to 5000*l.*, which he gives away to the people who reside near him, or to the chiefs or subjects who may happen to visit him, always stipulating that any guns that may be distributed shall be considered not given, but lent. Notwithstanding his wealth, it will often happen that the king looks with a covetous eye upon some property, perhaps a fine herd of cattle, belonging to one of his more well-to-do subjects, and although he considers he has a perfect right to it, he hardly likes to carry it off by force, but proceeds to get the owner convicted of treason or witchcraft, and put to death, after which he appropriates to himself the property he wants.

Quite undisputed is the king's power to put to death, or to make a slave of any one of his subjects

in any way he chooses; he may take a man's wife simply by providing him with another wife as a substitute, and he is quite at liberty to demand any children he may wish to devote to the purposes of his magic. Reigning queens may choose any husband they like, perfectly regardless of the consideration whether he is married or not. It is high treason for any subject to retain possession of an article that is either more handsome or more valuable than what belongs to the king, and anything of exceptional quality, whether it has been purchased from neighbouring tribes or from white men, or even manufactured in the country, belongs to the king, or at least is free for him to claim as a matter of course. I could not offer anybody a present of anything the least unusual without finding it invariably refused, the excuse being that no one dared to take for himself what he was not quite sure that Sepopo already possessed.

In their style of building, as in other respects, the Marutse-Mabunda people surpass most of the tribes south of the Zambesi. This remark, however, applies only to the stationary tribes, and does not include the temporary erections put up by those who come for hunting and fishing, either on their own sites or in places marked out for them by the chief or king; such structures are generally found on the river-banks, or on wooded slopes, or in glades where game is likely to resort; but the permanent settlements are scattered over the kingdom, the larger towns being mainly in the Barotse country. The houses in these established towns are as a general rule equally strong and comfortable, and they have the advantage of being very quickly constructed. It may be said

that the material required is very abundant, and most conveniently close at hand, but so it is in the case of the tribes much farther south. The northern people are much more adroit in turning their natural advantages to good account. No better example is needed than that of New Sesheke to prove the rapidity of their building-operations; nor can it be objected that their huts are more liable to be burnt down than those of the Bechuana, Zulu, and Hottentot races; the truth is that when any of these are destroyed, they are so easily replaced that the damage is quite inappreciable.

The river-system of the Marutse district is just of the character, on account of its extensive marshlands, to provide the inhabitants with most admirable and productive sites for their settlements; all around is an abundance of reeds for building purposes, wood for framework and for laths, besides bast, palm-leaves for making ropes and twine, metal for nails and bolts, and sand and clay for cement. Even if it should happen that in any particular spot there should be a deficiency of any one of these materials, the light canoes are so available, and the natives so ready to assist one another, that the want is soon supplied. The towns are built as close to the rivers as the annual inundations will permit, and are generally surrounded by villages that are for the most part tenanted by the vassal people, who till the fields and tend the cattle of the masters who reside within the town itself. That cleanliness is comparatively great, both in the settlements and amongst the population, is probably to be attributed to the abundance of water always at their command.

I observed that the Marutse themselves were

always to be credited with a more masterly style of workmanship than any of the servile tribes around them and in their employ. They had three distinct classes of buildings, one of a double concentric form, another cylindrical, and a third long and low. That which I designate the concentric hut consists of two compartments, the inner being the loftier and in shape like the inferior half of a cone, the outside one considerably lower and cylindrical in its form. The inner hut is covered by a low vaulted roof of its own, over which is placed another roof, conical in its design, and projecting five or six feet beyond the top of the outer compartment, supported at its extremity by a series of upright posts that form a shady verandah running round the whole. After the owner, with the help of his vassals, has procured the materials, and prepared the foundation by making a layer of level cement, the construction of the edifice is left to the women. A royal residence is always built by the royal wives. The circular sites upon which the structures are reared vary from twenty to forty feet in circumference; round their edge a trench is dug some ten or twelve inches deep and about five inches wide, into which are planted loose bundles of strong reeds, when the trench is filled up with soil again. To bind the loose reeds together several palm-leaf cords are woven amongst them, and as these are drawn tighter and tighter they have the effect of giving the structure a conical form, arising from the tapering character of the reeds themselves; these are then trimmed off evenly at a height of about twelve feet from the ground, after which the outside, and not unfrequently the inside also, is plastered over with

cement. Meanwhile a low conical roof has been woven by the men, which is placed in position, and left to be cemented on by the women. The doorway, which generally faces the entrance to the enclosure, is a semi-oval aperture cut in the reeds, and finished off all round with a cement moulding. This completes the inner compartment.

For the outer building the foundation is made in precisely the same way; the trench is dug, but the reeds inserted are some two feet at least shorter than before; in consequence however of this being the wall which has to maintain the great burden of the roof, it is always strengthened by a number of peeled stakes driven in firmly against it at intervals of only a few inches apart, and when the whole has been thoroughly cemented over on both sides, the material of which it has been formed is quite undistinguishable. The doorway is cut so as to correspond exactly with that of the inner compartment, and is generally about six feet high and three feet wide. While the outer wall, ordinarily from forty to sixty feet in circumference, is being finished by the women, the men drive in the verandah-poles about a yard or a yard and a half away, and then proceed to put together the upper or principal roof, the lifting of which into position is the greatest difficulty of the whole; the operation is effected by about fifty men raising it from the ground by long levers and gradually getting it supported all round on a number of short stakes; these stakes are then replaced by longer ones, which in their turn are exchanged for others yet longer, until the roof has been elevated by degrees to such a height that its edge can be laid above the top of the inner roof; it is then driven



carefully onwards by main force until it properly covers the two enclosures. The ends of the reeds have then to be clipped off even all round the top of the verandah, after which the entire roof is covered with a layer of last year's grass five or six inches thick, and bound over with a perfect network of palm-cord to make it firm against the wind. Great pains are bestowed upon getting a smooth surface to the cement, particularly where it is laid over the cornice of the inner doorway, which not unfrequently is very delicately moulded. I was told that the former royal residence in the Barotse valley had been very prettily built.

Of the kind of houses that I have been describing the king has three for his own use; they are surrounded by an oval fence, and form the centre of several circles of homesteads, the nearest circle containing eight residences for the queens, built in the Masupia style like ovens, and accommodating two or three ladies apiece; beyond these are placed the storehouse, the culinary offices, and the huts for the royal musicians; the fourth and outer circle consisting of the huts for all the servants of both sexes, and containing likewise the council-hall, which is fitted up very much in European fashion. Ordinarily the chiefs would have their abodes in a wide circle outside the court, but here in New Sesheke, where the royal buildings are bounded on one side by the river, the dwellings are arranged in a semi-circle, the ground assigned to each being very accurately marked out. For protection against wild beasts the entrance to the king's courtyard is closed every night by a strong palisade of reeds.

The second kind of huts, which I have specified

as the cylindrical, are chiefly used by a branch tribe of the Marutse. If the walls of these are cemented at all, it is only on the inside, and they are rarely more than about eleven feet in diameter; their tops, however, are occasionally decorated with ornaments made of wood, grass, or straw.

The other description of huts, the gabled, have a low doorway generally in the middle, opposite the entrance to the courtyard, and their reed-roof projects, so as to form an eave that serves to throw off the rain. In the larger erections of this kind, the gable is supported by stakes, and the interior is divided by matting into two apartments, the larger being used for sleeping in, and the other as a reception-room. Any enclosure larger than usual would often be found to contain two of these huts. The more wealthy inhabitants sometimes have a detached granary as well, and chiefs not unfrequently provide themselves with an additional erection which serves as a consultation hall. As a general rule the courtyards are oval, and the principal building exactly faces the entrance.

I should say that two-thirds of the Marutse in Sesheke live in houses such as I have here described, under their chief Maranzian. The huts of the Mabunda people are in many respects not unlike them, but they are shorter and broader, with flatter roofs, and the courtyards in which they stand are quadrilateral instead of oval, composed of stakes about six feet high, driven into the ground five feet or less apart, and connected by a fence of reeds braced on to strong cross-poles.

Besides the three principal houses of the king's residences, I noticed within the enclosure three

small huts, one of which served the double purpose of bath-room and laboratory. It had a straw roof about two feet in diameter, supported on thin stakes, and in the centre was a post five feet high, covered all over with a most promiscuous collection of articles; there were antelopes' horns, bones, strings of coral, calabash baskets of herbs, bags of poison used for executions, magical instruments in great variety made of wood or ivory, scales of pangolins and crocodiles, a number of snakes' skins, and a lot of rags. The floor was strewn with miscellaneous things of a similar character, and up in the roof was a small medicine-chest, which had been a present from a Portuguese trader. Several musical instruments were hanging against the sides of the hut. An immense wooden tub was brought in every evening, in which Sepopo took his bath.

In front of the laboratory-hut stood another, with a roof in the form of a prism; this was devoted to the reception of any deformed elephants' tusks, and to the storing of the many vessels containing the different charms employed by the king when he went out hunting.

Beyond this again was another hut, also with a prism-shaped roof supported by the stem of a tree, where was deposited a collection of elephants' tails, trophies of the number of animals that had been killed in the neighbourhood; it was also the place of security for a large number of assegais, the finest and best made in the country.

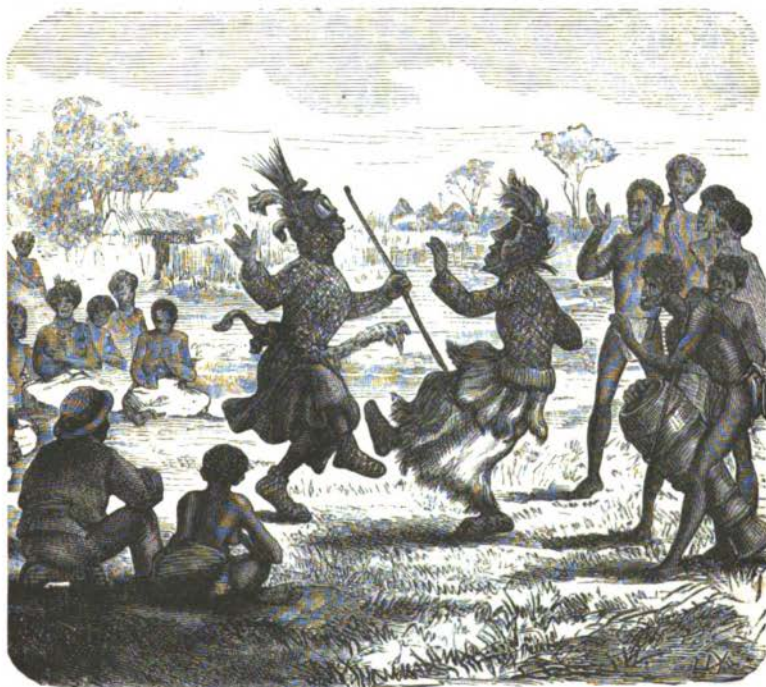
Between the huts and the high reed fence there were several wooden stands holding the clay vessels, and gourds containing the ordinary hunting-charms; and whatever court I entered I never

failed to notice a branch of a tree or small dry stem planted in the ground, where the master of the house hung the skulls of antelopes or the upper vertebræ of the larger mammalia as trophies of his prowess. After a hunter's death these are always placed upon his grave.

While walking along the river side on the 26th, I saw a crocodile rise from the river and snap at a man in a canoe. Fortunately he observed his danger in time, and managed to save himself by leaping on to the sandy bank.

During this day the king gave a Mabunda dance in my honour—a performance of so objectionable a character that the negroes themselves are quite conscious of its impropriety, and refuse to dance it except in masks. In their ideas of music the Marutse-Mabundas seem to be comparatively well advanced. It is quite true, indeed, that in the skilful handling of their instruments they are surpassed by some of the tribes on the east coast, who have more constant intercourse with the Portuguese, and in singing they are not a match for the Matabele Zulus; but here was the first instance that I found of a king with a private band composed entirely of native *artistes*. Altogether the band consisted of twenty men, but it was very rarely that more than eight or ten of them performed at the same time, the rest being kept in reserve for the night. There were several drummers among them, who played with the palms of their hands or with their fingers upon long conical or cylindrical kettle-drums, over which they walked astride, or upon double drums in the shape of an hour-glass, which were suspended from their necks by a strap. The

principal instruments were the myrimbas, or calabash pianos, which were carried in the same way as the double-drums. The two royal zither-players very seldom performed together. All the musicians were obliged to be singers as well, having to screech out the king's praises between the intervals in the



KISHI-DANCE.

music, or to the muffled accompaniment of their instruments.

The band was never allowed to perform without express orders from the king, but was required to hold itself in constant readiness; its services were always brought into requisition on his entry into the town, and whenever he honoured any public



dances, weddings, or other festivities with his presence. Besides the three kinds of drums, the myrimbas, and the zither-like sylimbos, I noticed that the orchestra included some stringed instruments made of the ribs of fan-palms, as well as some iron bells, one sort being double and without clappers, some rattles made of fruit shells, and various pipes



MASK OF A KISHI-DANCER.

formed of ivory, wood, or reeds. The stringed instruments are used at the elephant-dance, the bells at the kishi-dance, and the rattles at weddings. On the occasion of the Masupia prophetic dance, the king lends a number of hollow bottle-shaped gourdshells filled with dry seeds, which, when they are rattled, are exceedingly noisy. Rattles, bells, and

pipes, as well as guitars of a simple make, were to be found amongst the ordinary population, but all the larger and more elaborate instruments were confined to the royal band, consequently I was unable to get hold of any proper specimen of this class of native handicraft for my collection. In nearly all settlements small drums are kept in the council-hut, and are beaten on the occasion of any successful hunting-excursion, and at funerals.

The Marutse-Mabunda melodies are somewhat monotonous, but they are very numerous, and are of a character that make it evident that a little cultivation would soon effect a decided improvement in them. Of course the ordinary manipulation of the different instruments is purely mechanical; but amongst the king's zither-players I observed two grey-headed old men, who really displayed some amount of taste. As they hummed I could hear that their voices were precisely in time with their instruments, gradually sinking to a whisper in the *pianissimo* part, and as gradually rising to a *forte* when the tune required it. Their performance was a pleasant contrast to the discordant shouts of the head drummer, who strove to compete with the noise of his own huge instrument.

There is one more instrument which I much regret to have met with in the Marutse country at all, but which must not be omitted from the enumeration. I allude to the war-drum. In the council-hall there were four of these ghastly-looking objects. The skins were painted all over with red, to represent blood, and they were filled with fragments of dry flesh and bones, these bones being principally the toes and fingers of the live children of

distinguished parents, and supposed to be amulets to protect the rising town of Sesheke from fire and sword, and to guard the kingdom generally from assault and rapine.

Singing amongst the Marutse-Mabunda people is better than amongst the Bechuanas, and may be said in many respects to equal that of the Matabele Zulus, though still inferior in the great songs of war and death.

The dance to which I have said the king invited me on the 26th was called the kishi-dance, and is never performed except by the king's order. Its main object seems to be to inflame animal passion, and it is danced by two men, one of whom is supposed to represent a woman, or occasionally by two couples. The performers step forward from a group of young people, who are all singing most vigorously, and clapping their hands in time to the great tubular drums that are being sounded. Having turned their faces towards the king, they commence a series of gestures indicating, with many contortions, the advances of one party coquettishly rejected by the other. The costumes being royal property I failed to get possession of any of them. They consist of a mask with a network attached to it, and a peculiar covering for the loins. The masks, which are a *specialité* in Mabunda handicraft, are modelled by boys from clay and cow-dung, and painted with chalk and red ochre. They are considerably larger than the head, completely covering the neck. Altogether they bear a sort of resemblance to a helmet with a vizor; small openings are left for the eyes and mouth, and sometimes for the nose; upon the top are knobs adorned in the middle

with an ornament made from the tail of a striped gnu, and at the sides with bunches of feathers; the *tout ensemble* is not unlike that of a gurgyle. Attached to the head-piece, and covering the shoulders, is a long, tight jacket of netted bast, with close-fitting sleeves. Gloves and stockings of the same material are likewise worn. The performer personating a woman wears a woollen skirt, reaching from the waist to the ankles, over which is the skin of an animal hanging down before and behind. The only distinction between the male and female mask is that the ornament on the male is more elaborate, and that a wisp of straw is twisted round the neck of the female. A steel girdle is worn round the waist, to the back of which a number of small bells is attached, keeping up a tinkling upon the slightest movement. The dance is repeated in public almost every fortnight. It attracts a large number of spectators at every performance, but children are not allowed to be present.

On the 27th I saw some people of the Alumba tribe, who had their hair dressed in a very peculiar fashion. Over the scalp it was divided into four rows of tufts, nearly two and a half inches long, which were so thickly plastered over with a mixture of grease and manganese that the mass of the hair was completely embedded, and nothing left to appear but the ends of the tufts. Some of the Marutse wore pangolin scales round their necks, or pieces of a kind of tortoiseshell, with which they are skilful in stanching blood. I was also shown a piece of wood, which is a remedy for whooping-cough, being sucked by children with good effect.

Sepopo made repeated visits to us, always accom-

panied by a number of servants bringing great quantities of ivory, which he bartered with Blockley for guns and ammunition. Whenever he was going to send his hunters on an excursion, he always had the men into his residence over-night, and gave them about a quart of gunpowder each, taking an account of what he had done. Blockley made great complaints because the king always required a present after every transaction. It was a custom that West-beech had introduced when he was the sole trader who did business on the Zambesi, and could demand what terms he liked for his goods; but now that other dealers had found their way to Sesheke they were all completely in the king's power; and the result of the competition was to make them bid such high prices for the ivory that they had good cause to grumble at the bad state of trade.

When I went to the king next day to consult him again about my journey, I found that he had just had an altercation with Blockley, and was consequently rather cross; but by interesting him in some of my travelling experiences, I managed to put him into a good temper again, and he began to show me my proper route, by drawing a map of the Upper Zambesi and its affluents with his stick on the sand. He was much pleased with the interest I took in his communications, and calling to him two Manengos from the Upper Zambesi, who were passing through the place, and who had several times traversed the country, he made them also describe the localities; and to my satisfaction I found that their delineations corresponded precisely with his.

Whatever I had that was new to Sepopo, he not only inquired of what use it was, but almost invari-



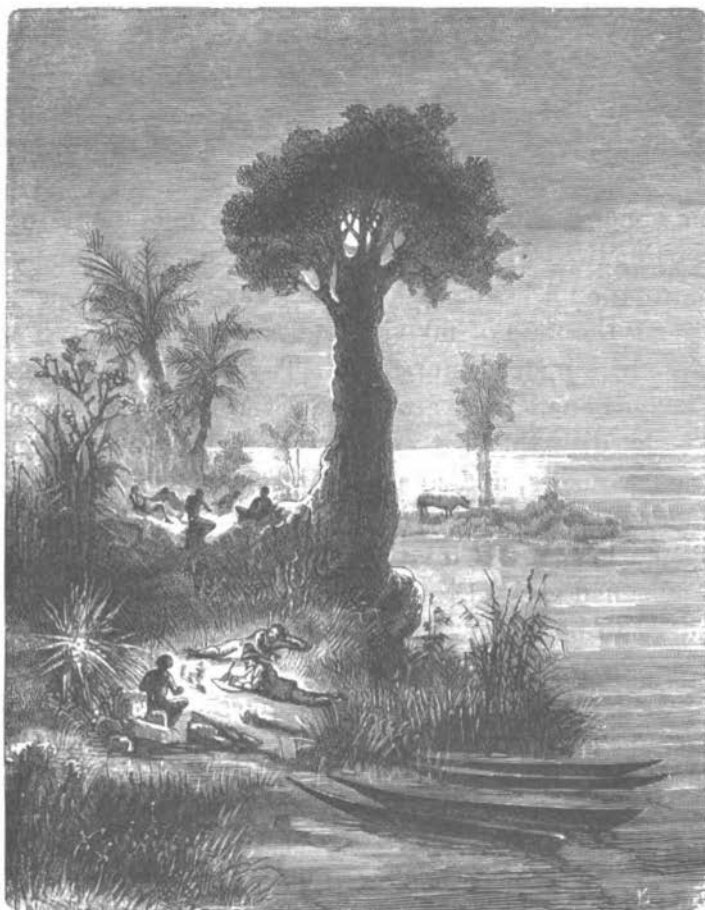
ably wanted to have it. He made a great many inquiries about my compass. In order to explain its object I drew a plan of the eastern hemisphere; and then pointing out Africa, showed him the direction I took through the Bechuana countries.

I was invited to pay a visit to the royal kitchen, a department that was under the superintendence of a woman, who had several assistants. Everything was very clean, and the huge corn-bins were placed on wooden stands in little separate huts made of matting and reeds. A fire was kept continually burning on a low hearth in the courtyard, at which, during the time of my visit, a servant was boiling a piece of hippopotamus-flesh. The meat, which was nearly done, was afterwards served on a large wooden dish, then cut up into fragments, placed upon smaller dishes, and so sent in to the queen.

A messenger that evening arriving from Panda ma Tenka brought word that Westbeeck and another trader had arrived there from Shoshong, and as I hoped to be off next morning, I sat up nearly all night to work at my drawings. It was quite early when I was summoned to the canoes which were to take me to Makumba's landing-place, and then wait for Westbeeck. The passage down the river was just as pleasant as it had been on the way up. I gave my chief attention to the different varieties of birds, finding some interesting subjects for study in the speckled black-and-white skimmers (*Rhynchopinæ*), with their lower mandible much elongated, in the huge marabouts, and in the fine kingfishers. The reeds were covered with snails, and the banks literally perforated by crabs. Pools lay close together all along the shore, the stream having fallen eighteen

inches in the interval of the few days since I had last passed over it.

We spent the night in a creek, starting off again



ON THE SHORES OF THE ZAMBESI.

betimes next morning. The boatmen exerted themselves to their utmost, and our progress was not much short of five miles an hour. On reaching Impalera I found that Westbeeck, with a considerable

party, had arrived before me; they were now on the point of starting to pay their respects to Sepopo. Their waggons had been left at Panda ma Tenka.

Westbeech, who had married the daughter of a farmer in the Transvaal a few months before, had his young wife with him, and was attended by his clerk Bauren; Francis, the merchant who was travelling with him, had likewise, according to his custom, brought his wife, who had already done much to secure the respect both of the white residents and the natives. They were accompanied by a distant relative named Oppenshaw, who acted as Francis's clerk. Besides Bauren, Westbeech had also brought a man of the name of Walsh, who had formerly been a soldier, and subsequently a gaoler in Cape Town; he was a proficient in the art of preserving birds'-skins, and had come out to carry on business in that way in the Zambesi district, under the arrangement that he was to share his profits with Westbeech.

The two merchants were anxious to get their visit to Sepopo over as quickly as possible that they might get back to Panda ma Tenka, and start with their wives on a visit to the Victoria Falls. They had brought with them all my correspondence, and I had welcome letters, not only from home, but from various friends in the diamond-diggings. I received about sixty newspapers, the broad white margins of which were subsequently of great service to me, in the dearth of writing-paper; amongst them was a copy of the *Diamond News*, containing my first article on the subject of my present journey.

My own departure was somewhat delayed by Makumba's absence from the town; without his

assistance I could not procure the bearers which, after crossing the river, I should require to convey the articles that I had collected in Sesheke, and the ivory which I had received from Blockley as payment for my bullocks.

The passage across the river gave me no small amount of anxiety, as independently of my uncertainty about getting bearers, I was much concerned at finding a leak in the ferry-boat as large as my fist, which threatened to do material injury to a good deal of my property. Fortunately, however, on reaching the Leshumo valley I again met Captains M'Leod and Fairly, the English officers, who most considerately, during the time of their visit to Sepopo, allowed me the use of their waggon to take me to Panda ma Tenka. I waited a little while until the team could be fetched, and started off on the night of the 3rd of September. As I went along I noticed that the burning of the grass in the district had caused a diminution in the number of tsetse fly, although the herbage was already beginning to sprout afresh.

When on the following day we reached the Gashuma Flat, we found plenty of game still lurking in places where the grass had not been burned. With the waggon were two horses that the English officers had left in charge of a servant, who seemed to me unpardonably careless. Notwithstanding my warnings, he would persist in riding on considerably ahead. Approaching the baobab I told Pit and the driver to keep a sharp look-out; I had a kind of presentiment that the horses might invite an attack from the lion that was notoriously haunting the spot. We had gone but a very short distance farther, when

the driver called out that he could see Captain M'Leod's servant up in a tree and only one horse beside him; another moment and his keen eye detected a lion retreating to the bushes on our right; I was sitting on the box, and almost immediately afterwards caught sight of the other horse lying disembowelled on the ground, the few small wounds in the neck revealing too clearly how the poor brute had met its end.

The servant's tale was simple enough. About 300 yards from the tree he had been attacked by the lion and thrown, whereupon the lion, taking no notice of him, began the pursuit of his horse; the horse-cloth had entangled itself in the horse's legs, and the creature was quickly overtaken and killed. The servant had betaken himself to the first mapani-tree, where we found him. The other horse was grazing quietly close at hand.

We all went some way in pursuit of the lion, but without success.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## TRIP TO THE VICTORIA FALLS.

Return to Panda ma Tenka—Theunissen's desertion—Departure for the falls—Orbeki-gazelles—Animal and vegetable life in the fresh-water pools—Difficult travelling—First sight of the falls—Our skerms—Characteristics of the falls—Their size and splendour—Islands in the river-bed—Columns of vapour—Roar of the water—The Zambesi below the falls—The formation of the rocks—*Rencontre* with baboons—A lion-hunt—The Manansas—Their history and character—Their manners and customs—Disposal of the dead—Ornaments and costume—The Albert country—Back again.

ON my arrival at Panda ma Tenka, I found West-beech's enclosure in a state of great animation; several waggons were there, hosts of servants were hurrying about in every direction, and certainly not less than twenty dogs were yelping and running amongst them. Most unfortunately for me the rain during my absence had made its way through the roof of my waggon, and had done so much damage to the leather cases inside that nearly all the dried insects, plants, and seeds that they contained were spoiled. Some of the traders that I had seen here before were seriously ill with fever, and a servant of Khame's, who had been hired by Africa, the hunter of whom I have already spoken, had been killed by an elephant, a misadventure for which, on his return to Shoshong,

Africa found himself obliged to pay a fine of 50*l.* to the Bamangwato king.

Westbeeck and Bauren intended, after their visit to the Victoria Falls, to stay three months at Sesheke; Blockley contemplated at the same time doing some business with the Makalaka princes to the east of the falls, Bradshaw being left meanwhile in charge at Panda ma Tenka to purchase any ivory he could from the Madenassanas and Masarwas. Theunissen at this time had quite enough to occupy him in preparing medicines for the patients laid down with intermittent fever, while I, after having been busy all day in completing my preparations for the Zambesi expedition, spent the hours far into the night in answering my letters and continuing my diary.

It was on the 10th that Westbeeck and Francis came back; they each brought about 50 lbs. of ivory, which Sepopo had sent as presents to their wives. On their way they had killed thirty crocodiles and five hippopotamuses. One of the latter had attacked them.

My temporary sojourn was full of anxiety and annoyance. Not only was I harassed by my unsuccessful endeavours to procure bearers, but I was called upon to sustain a disappointment, which I could not do otherwise than feel very keenly. The report was brought to me by one of the traders that Theunissen had made up his mind that he would go no further, but that he should forthwith return to the south. I could not believe it; he had always shown himself so staunch an ally, that I had learnt to confide in him entirely; moreover, I had chosen him out of a number of volunteers

as being in every way the most reliable of them all; and now to be told that just at the critical moment when most of all I required a trustworthy associate he was going to forsake me, was a thing that seemed incredible; but on referring to Theunissen himself, I ascertained that the report was only too true.

To add to my difficulties Pit had begun to behave himself in various ways so badly that I had been obliged to get rid of him.

Thus it was that on the very eve of what promised to be the fulfilment of my long-cherished plan, my hopes appeared suddenly dashed to the ground. I was utterly at a loss to know where I could apply for bearers; alone and friendless as I was, I was not even in a position to go and search for them in any of the native villages in the woods to the east. My condition was altogether disheartening.

In my dilemma Westbeech and Francis most considerately came to my assistance. Under the condition that I should first accompany them to "the splendid falls," they guaranteed to find me bearers enough amongst the Manansas or Batokas that we should fall in with on our way. I felt that I had no alternative but to accept their offer. Before starting I engaged a man as my servant in the place of Pit; he was a Masupia, who had come from the Zambesi to seek employment. I gave him the name of "Elephant."

As the Victoria Falls were fifty miles to the right of the route which I had proposed taking, it was not part of my original scheme to visit them at all; it was only the circumstances in which I found

myself that led me to undertake the journey, but I have since congratulated myself very much upon the decision to which I came.

Leaving my waggon in the charge of Westbeeche's people, I started off with my new friends. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Westbeeche, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Bauren, Oppenshaw, Walsh, and myself, besides four Cape half-castes, my own Masupia servant, and twenty Makalalas and Matabele, who were engaged as bearers, and carried our provisions, cooking-apparatus, and wraps. We travelled in a couple of waggons as far as the Gashuma Flat, the way thither being attractive and pleasant for travellers. It was about three o'clock in the morning when we reached the first pools on the plain, whence we altered our course, which previously had been north-north-west, to east-north-east towards the falls.

The next portion of our route lay through a district known to be so much infested by the tsetse-fly, that we left our bullocks and waggons, and proceeded in a cart drawn by six donkeys. We did not, however, start until the 15th, waiting till we had put up a thoroughly substantial fence around the waggons, because we had noticed a number of lion-tracks in the neighbourhood. The plain was adorned with some splendid fan-palms and dense palm-thickets. The grass had been nearly all burnt down, but here and there, in patches where it had begun to sprout again, pretty little orbekigazelles were lying in twos or fours quite flat on the ground, and would suddenly start up at our approach and bound away, turning round to gaze at us when they were at a safe distance. Oppen-

shaw and I started off in pursuit of them, and were induced to go a very considerable way from our party; we were obliged to give up the chase as unsuccessful, and were making our way back, when scarcely thirty yards in front of us, a pair of orbekis sprang up. Oppenshaw fired at one of them as it was turning to look at us, and broke its fore leg just above the ankle; it bounded away on three legs; we fired again, but missed; the gazelle continued its flight, and seemed likely to escape altogether, when a third shot from me caught it on its side and brought it down. It died just as we got up to it, and as we had no servants in attendance, we had to carry it in turns for two hours under a burning sun, till we came to the spot where our companions were camping in the wood.

In the course of the afternoon we went six miles farther, making altogether an advance of thirteen miles in the day. Beyond the Gashuma Flat and a sandy forest, we crossed four shallow valleys, and made our camp for the night in a fifth, that in point of size was more important than the others; all the spruits except the last two were dry and overgrown with grass, the whole of them becoming deeper towards the south-east, the direction which they took to join the Panda ma Tenka. As we crossed the third of these valleys we saw a herd of giraffes, about 600 yards away.

Between the Gashuma Flat and the place where we encamped we came across the following sorts of game, or their traces:—Orbekis, rietbocks, steinbocks, waterbocks, zulu-hartebeests, koodoos, giraffes, buffaloes, elephants, and zebras.

The little river beside which we were staying was





A TROOP OF GIRAFFES SURPRISED.



called the Checheta. At one part it rippled in narrow streamlets over stones, and at another flowed through a reedy morass, where its clear waters formed a deep broad pool. The soil of the valley was rich, and the grass in some places as much as five feet high. These limpid pools in the upper affluents of the Panda ma Tenka are some of the most interesting spots in the hilly district around the Victoria Falls, and many an hour have I spent by their side stretched upon the grass and investigating the multiplied examples of animal and vegetable life beneath the glittering surface, so clear that I could feel assured that no crocodile was lurking below.

Nevertheless since the long grass on the borders of the South African rivers is very frequently the resort of various animals of the feline race, it is always advisable to throw a few stones into the middle of it before venturing to enter; but this precaution taken, it may be approached with security.

The pond that was closest to our encampment was thirty feet long and twelve feet wide, its depth about six feet. It was fed by a tiny thread of water scarcely three inches wide; its outlet in a reedy thicket being somewhat wider. The water was as clear as crystal, so that every object, even to the bottom, was plainly discernible. Half the pond, or nearly so, was occupied by a network of delicate algæ,—here of a light colour, there of a dark green—and everywhere assuming the most fantastic forms. In some places it seemed to lie in strata one above another like semi-transparent clouds in the azure depths; in the part near the

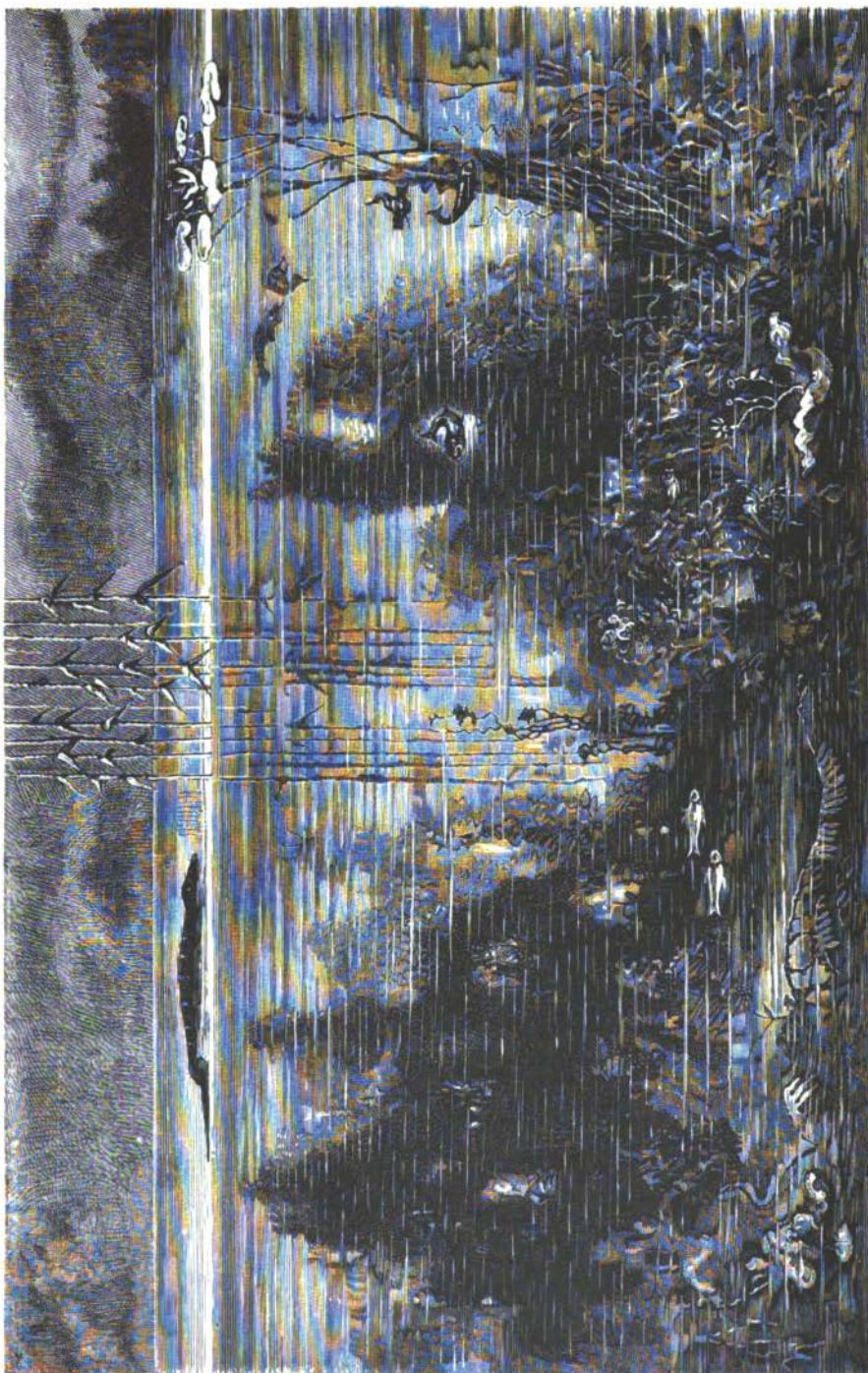
outflow it formed a dark labyrinth of grottoes; whilst on the right it might seem to represent a ruined castle, so well defined was the foundation from which rose the square watch-tower with its circular turret, the tender weeds turning themselves into a Gothic doorway, through which small fish kept darting to and fro. On the top of the tower were some projecting growths, that kept up the similitude of broken battlements.

Making a dark green background were the lower stems of the reeds that rustled above the water, and in the open space between the water-weeds and the margin of the pond rose the three spiral stalks of a large flowering nymphœa, two of them throwing out their flat glossy leaves, and the third a beautiful pale blue lily, that lay like a gleaming star upon the surface of a crystal mirror. Besides the algæ that I have described, there were others at the bottom of the pool, with their lobulated and dentated leaves, rivalling ferns in the gracefulness of their form.

At first this miniature plant-world appeared to lie in motionless repose, and it was not until the eye grew quite accustomed to the scene that it detected the gentle current that the streamlet made. Once perceived, the effect was very charming; the reed-stems were seen to vibrate and quiver with ever-varying degrees of motion, the fictitious towers of algæ were observed to tremble without any disturbance to their general outline; the very grottoes had the appearance of being impelled forward by some secret force to seek admission to some other pool. From the bottom of the water, plants with bright yellow blossoms and serrated cryptogams, stretched up their heads as if they aspired to share the honours







of the water-lily, the acknowledged queen of all, and longed, like her, to rock upon the bosom of the lake, to be greeted by the sunbeams, to be refreshed by the morning dew, and sheltered by the shades of night.

Equally fascinating was the exhibition of animal life. In the more open spaces where the range of vision was widest lay some dark-striped fish not unlike perch, perfectly motionless except for the slight vibration of the hinder fins; from the dim recesses of the algæ, bearded sheat-fish would emerge, generally in pairs, and sometimes side by side, sometimes one behind the other, would roll themselves in sport from side to side; and far away right across the reeds by the opposite bank stretched itself as though lifeless a yellow-mottled object, that might at first have been mistaken for a snake, but which on further scrutiny turned out to be a water-lizard biding its time to secure its prey.

Nor were the lower orders of creation less fully represented. Water-beetles and water-spiders abounded; the beetles were species of *dytiscus* and *hydrophilus*; the spiders were all activity, some towing themselves up, some with glistening air-bubbles letting themselves descend, and hastening to conceal themselves amidst the intricacies and entanglements of the algæ. The larvæ of the beetles as well as of the dragon-flies were clambering over the filaments of the plants and the stems of the lilies like rope-dancers, whilst the pupæ of the shore-flies were slowly emerging from their mummy-like cases.

The variety of the scene was infinite, and made one loth to turn away.

We went on the next morning across a great many small streams, the valleys of which were covered with deep dark soil and generally much overgrown; the streams appeared to flow in various directions, south, south-east, south-west, but the whole of them, I imagine, ultimately found their way into the Panda ma Tenka. The valleys were divided from one another either by rocky hills or sandy woods. We saw traces of koodoos, steinbocks, waterbocks, bushvaarks, and of a great many elephants. In the after part of the day we came to a forest in a somewhat more extensive valley, with side-valleys opening into it on either hand. We made our camp for the night close to a perpetual stream, that received the waters both of the main valley and its branches, and was called the Matopa river by the Manansas who formerly lived there. For three-quarters of its course it is a mountain-torrent not more than twenty feet wide and from three to four feet in depth, but towards its mouth, which is below the Victoria Falls, its width materially increases.

On the following morning (September 7th) we left our encampment betimes, in order to reach the falls the same day. All day long and throughout the remainder of the trip, I had to get along in great discomfort. In making provision for my longer journey I had reserved all my good boots, and for immediate use had bought a pair of shoes from a trader at Panda ma Tenka, but after two days wear they fell to pieces, and I was obliged to fasten the fragments together by straps bound round my feet, while, as if to make the difficulty more trying, the road became extremely rough and

thorny, and the rocks were heated by the glowing sun.

Arriving at a point where the Matopa valley took a sudden turn to the east, I became conscious of a dull heavy noise, as it might be the rumbling of distant thunder. I was considerably in advance of the others, as the condition of my feet induced me to get a good way forward every now and then, so that I might have the benefit of a rest. Being alone I had no one to explain the cause of the noise, but I was not long in satisfying myself that it must be the roar of the famous cataract. Several times, and in places where the passage was difficult, the Matopa had to be crossed, but in spite of my suffering I kept pushing on ahead, buoyed up by the prospect of a long rest afterwards. I noticed some zebras running on the declivity of the left hand shore in the direction of the cloud of vapour which I could now distinctly see, and I came to the conclusion that it would be well to follow them; they made for a wooded glen leading to the valley, and though of course I could not overtake them I kept to their track. The farther I went the more painful my feet became, until at last I took off the soles of my shoes altogether and made my way barefoot. All day long I had taken no food, and at four o'clock, after forcing my way through a dense thicket, I began to feel very faint. By another effort I mounted a hill, and scrambled through another thicket, when all at once I found myself on the brink of the abyss, into which the seething waters were rolling with a tremendous plunge. The impression of that scene can never be effaced!

But glorious as was the spectacle, bodily ex-

haustion made me retire from contemplating it. Crawling rather than walking, clinging to bush after bush to save myself from falling, I made my way along the river-bank in search of some wild fruit to sustain me. I had not gone far before I spied out a fruit hanging down from a half-withered stem. I threw up some stones and brought it down, and sure that its thin yellow shell covered a sweet fleshy pulp, I greedily swallowed it, when all at once it occurred to me that the seeds bore a great resemblance to *nux vomica*; my fear was only too well founded, in a very few minutes I was seized with a most violent sickness, and sunk powerless and prostrate to the ground. It was some time before I could rouse myself sufficiently to creep to the bank of the Zambesi, where I took a large draught of the clear water, which revived me very considerably. To attract the attention of my friends I fired off several shots, but receiving no response had to resign myself to wait awhile.

After about half an hour I felt so far recovered that I ventured to make a move, and had hardly proceeded more than fifty yards when I saw one of our party coming in my direction. We returned together, and before night set in we had chosen our position beneath three wide-spreading trees, rather more than a quarter of a mile from the river, and about half a mile from the falls, and proceeded to erect our "skerms."

Skerms is the name given to the screens that are put up every night for protection against wild beasts. In districts infested by buffaloes, elephants, or lions, travellers erect one or more of them according to their numbers; they are



semi-circular in form, and are made of stakes six feet long driven firmly into the ground, after which branches are twisted in amongst them; along the outer side a line of fires is lighted, and the servants are made to sit up in turn and keep them from going out. In our case we had four skerms, one enclosing a couple of huts for the married folks, another for the four bachelors, a third for the half-castes, whose dignity would not allow them to lie down with Zulus and Makalakas, who consequently required a fourth for themselves.

The spot upon which we had fixed for our encampment was almost in the centre of the real Zambesi valley, between the river and a sandy wooded elevation of the ground, the slope of a high plateau and mountain-system that runs more or less parallel to the stream from the mouth of the Chobe. Along the river-side was a thicket of saro-palms, and between these and the rising ground lay the valley proper, overgrown with long grass, bushes, and trees, amidst which majestic fan-palms and huge baobabs rose predominant.

In spite of the suffering which I continued to endure from the state of my feet, I look upon the three days which I spent in the vicinity of the falls as the most satisfying and enjoyable part of my sojourn in South Africa. To my mind the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi are one of the most imposing phenomena of the world. At many cataracts, particularly at Niagara, our wonder is excited by the stupendous volume of the plunging water; at others, by the altitude of the perpendicular rocks over which the torrent is precipitated; but here our amazement is aroused by the

number of cascades and jets into which the down-rushing stream is divided, as well as by the narrowness of the deep ravine into which the raging waters are compressed. The width of the current below the falls is but a thirteenth part of what it is above.

After flowing from west to east, the Zambesi here makes a sudden bend to the south, so that the side on which we were stationed had become the western shore. As the river below does not cover the full breadth of the valley, it is quite practicable for a spectator to take his stand almost anywhere at no great distance below the level of the shore above, and so to view the cataract with his face turned to the north. Unfortunately the constant dash of the spray renders the soil too slippery to allow any one to approach the actual branch of the abyss into which the waters are hurled, but many an effective point of view is to be found within a few hundred yards of the cataract.

Let the reader then imagine himself to have taken his position upon a spot facing a rugged dark brown rocky wall about 200 yards away, rising 400 feet above its base, which is out of sight. Over the top of this are dashing the waters of the Zambesi. About 100 yards from the western bank he sees several islands adorned with tropical vegetation in rich abundance; further on towards the eastern shore and close to the edge of the abyss his eye will light upon nearly thirty bare brown crags that divide the rushing stream into as many different channels. To the left again, between the bright green islands and the western shore, he will observe that the great wall of rock is considerably lower, allowing a ponderous volume of

water to rush impetuously as it were into a corner, whence it is precipitated in a broad sheet into the gulf below; beyond this and the next cascade he will see another portion of the surface of the rock, and as he carries his eye along he will be struck with admiration at the jutting peaks that stand out in vivid contrast to the angry foam that seethes between them. The countless jets and streams assume all colours and all forms; some are bright and gleaming, some dark and sombre; some are wide and some are narrow; but as they plunge impetuously into the depth below they make up a spectacle that cannot fail to excite a sensation of mingled astonishment and delight.

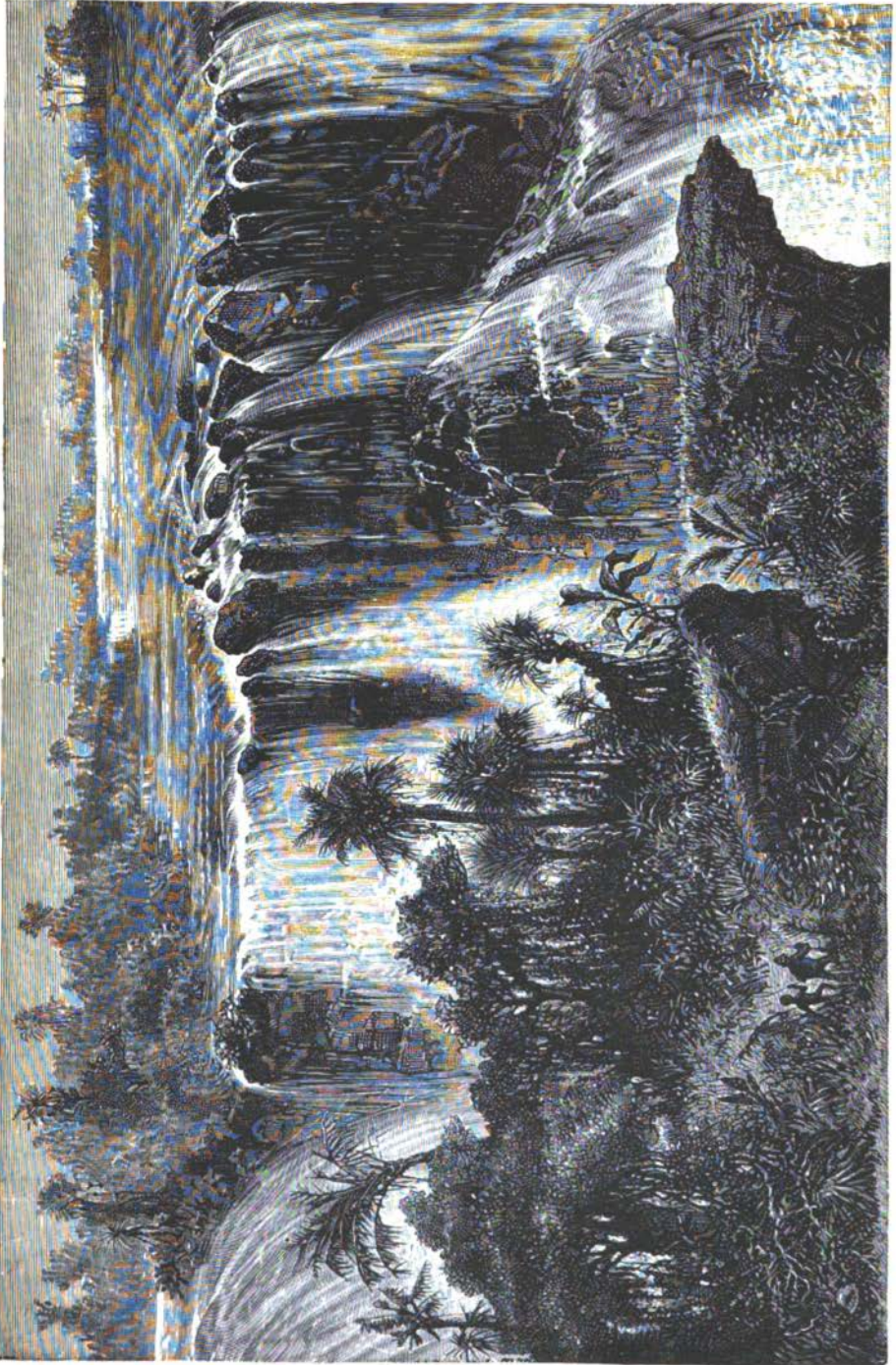
Of the jets of water some are so thin that they are dispersed before they reach the lower flood, and bound up again in vapour; others are from ten to fifteen feet in breadth; these dash down with tremendous fury, their edges curled up and broken into angry foam and spray; the largest streams, especially those that pour along from the eastern shore, are caught by the jagged peaks and torn asunder, ending their career by rolling over and over in cascades. In the diversity of the forms the water takes, I believe that the beauty of the Victoria Falls is quite unparalleled.

Nor does the magnificence of the view end with the prospect of the giant waterfall itself. Let us raise our eyes towards the blue horizon; another glorious spectacle awaits us. Stretching far away in the distance are the numerous islands with which the river-bed is studded, the gorgeous verdure of their fan-palms and saro-palms standing out in striking contrast to the subdued azure of the hills

behind. All around them, furnishing a deep blue bordering, lies the expanse of the mighty stream that moves so placidly and silently that at first it might seem to be without movement at all; but gradually as it proceeds it acquires a sensible increase in velocity, till checked by the rocky ridge that impedes its flow, it gathers up its force to take its mighty plunge into the deep abyss. Especially beautiful are the islands immediately at the edge of the falls; they are overgrown with palms, aloes, and creepers, and surrounded on three sides by the surging water. As Livingstone had bestowed the name of "Victoria" on the falls in honour of his sovereign, I ventured to call the adjacent hill-district by that of "the Albert Country," and to designate the various islands after the royal princes and princesses of England.

Not less striking is the effect when we turn towards the chasm or rocky trough that receives the rolling flood. The rock on which we stand is rich with varied vegetation; gigantic sycamores and mimosas on the verge of the declivity, taller than the loftiest poplars, afford a welcome shade, their wondrous crowns of foliage springing from the topmost section of the stem and spreading wide their grateful canopy. Creepers as thick as one's arm, sometimes straight, sometimes spiral, clamber up to the elevated tree-tops, and make a playground where the apes can sport and exhibit their antics to the spectators concealed from them below. Palm-bushes and ferns contribute to the charm of the scene; the soil is an elastic carpet of moss, adorned at intervals with tiny flowers, or, where the naked rock reveals itself near the brink, interspersed with





Vol. 11.

THE VICTORIA FALLS.





dark green algæ, singly or in clumps, some small as a pea, some of the size of an egg, lying loosely on its surface.

In a large measure this peculiar vegetation owes its existence to the perpetual fall of spray from the cataract; from every separate cascade clouds of vapour incessantly ascend to such a height that they may be seen for fifty miles away; at one moment they are so dense that they completely block out the view of anything beyond; another moment and a gust of wind will waft them all aside, and leave nothing more than a thin transparent veil; as the density of this increases or diminishes, the islands that lie upon the farther side will seem alternately to recede or advance like visions in a fairy scene.

The effects at sunrise and at sunset are incomparably fine. Arched rainbows play over and amidst the vapoury wreaths, and display the brightness of their hues. The movement of the spray is attended by a suppressed hissing, which, however, is only audible when the wind carries off the deafening roar that rises from the bottom of the abyss. I do not know that it would be absolutely impossible to make one's way through the bushy thickets to the very edge of the precipice and so to look down to the base of the cataract, but certainly it is not visible from any of the best standpoints for viewing the general scene. The incessant roar that rises from the mighty trough below fills the air for miles around with a rolling as of thunder; to hear it and not see from whence it comes never ceases to be bewildering; the seething waters before us crash against the crags; we find the ground beneath our

feet tremble as though there were some convulsion in a subterranean cave beneath; we become every moment more conscious of a desire to witness the origin of the strange commotion; it is hard to suppress the sense of nervousness; no infernal crater in which the elements were all at strife could produce a more thrilling throb of nature! Truly it is a scene in which a man may well become aware of his own insignificance!

There is still another direction in which it remains for us to look. We have yet to make our wondering inspection of the great ravine into which the water in its massive volume is precipitated. That huge ravine is a long zigzag. At first it proceeds for 300 yards due south; it then makes an angle and runs for 1000 yards to the west-south-west; again it turns for 1100 yards to the south-east, and thus it continues to vary its direction. Except where deep chimes break in, too precipitous to be crossed, it is not difficult to walk along the edge and to see how perpetually the rugged walls of rock present some fresh diversity of form; at one time they are absolutely perpendicular as though they had been hewn by a mason's hand, at the next turn they slope like the glacis of a gloomy rampart, and then suddenly they assume the aspect of a huge garden-wall dotted over with clusters of green and crimson in striking contrast with the dull brown ground. Every here and there particles of earth containing the seeds of aloes have been carried into the clefts of the rock, and, nourished by the fertilizing matter already there, have germinated and thriven admirably, as their fine trusses of bloom are present to testify; meanwhile their own seeds are

ripening, destined to be conveyed on the bosom of the stream to districts far away, where they may flourish on an unaccustomed soil.

There are places in which the cliffs take the formation of horizontal ledges of bare rock alternating with belts of thriving vegetation; in other parts, notably upon the western shore, may be observed a luxuriant growth of foliage that extends half-way down the surface or occasionally right to the edge of the stream, covering also the sides of the numerous chines that pierce the rocky mass, and afford an outlet for the accumulated rain.

But while I thus describe the general character of the scenery along the entire course of the zigzag, I would not have it overlooked that its peculiar attractiveness arises from the great diversity of conformation which it perpetually presents. This I hope may be better appreciated if I depict one or two of the reaches of the ravine more in detail.

The first short reach on the right or western shore, below the falls and close to them, is hemmed in at first by a perpendicular wall of rock, which, after receding so as almost to form a creek, suddenly juts out into a promontory against which the full torrent of the gathered waters breaks with all its vehemence. The opposite shore upon the eastern side is a range of rocky heights connected with the mainland beyond; upward from its base for about a third of its height it is naked and precipitous, but all above are terraces richly clad with tropical vegetation; its ragged peaks are very striking, and as often as I contemplated it I could not help associating it with the idea I had formed of the hanging gardens of Semiramis.

Between the second and third longer reaches is a short arm, midway in which there rises a huge projection, steep as any of the rocks around, but consisting of enormous blocks piled one above another; on the north, on the south, and on the east it is lashed by the torrent of the stream; on the west it stands detached from the mainland by a deep dry gully. Upon this isolated eminence, rearing itself to an altitude of 300 feet, not a leaf is to be seen; Flora and all her progeny have been utterly banished from its inhospitable soil, but it bids defiance to the flood: for thousands of years the elements have wreaked their fury on its mass; lightnings have burst upon its summit; Æolus and all his crew have spent their efforts upon its sides; floods of water, that deadliest foe to all the strongholds of earth, have done their utmost to sap its foundations; but yet it stands immovable; it holds its dry valley inviolate, and imperiously bids the rushing stream to seek another channel.

Nor can the waters of the torrent itself fail to arrest our attention as they tear along, with the speed of an arrow, through the deep ravine. The channel along which they flow gradually narrows to about a third of its original width, and the very compression gives intensity to the current, which strikes against one impediment only to gather fresh impetus for dashing against another. The billows roll over the boulders that project above the surface of the flood, or they part asunder as they come in contact with some jutting promontory that impedes their course; but though centuries elapse, they avail not to displace the rocky walls by which they are



confined, nor to wear down the barriers by which they are opposed.

It was a subject of much regret to me that our stay could not be prolonged beyond three days. Adequately to explore all the features of the cataract, to visit the islands, and to investigate the character of the opposite shore would be the work of weeks, if not of months; and I am quite resolved that if ever I return to the Victoria Falls my visit shall not be hurried, and I hope that no such drawback as arose from the painful condition of my feet will again interfere to mar my enjoyment of the magnificent scene.

On one of the days that we stayed, I and my servant had a *rencontre* with a herd of baboons. We caught sight of them in one of the glens or chines which I have mentioned, and to which I afterwards assigned the name of "the baboon glen." They were on the farther side, and being anxious to obtain a specimen of their skulls, I fired and killed one baboon; but, unfortunately for me, the creature fell into the river. At my second shot I wounded two more. This induced the right wing of the herd to retreat; but the main body kept their ground, and the left flank, moreover, assumed the aggressive, and commenced pelting us so vigorously with stones, that, remembering that I had only one cartridge left, I considered it far more prudent to withdraw than to run the risk of a hand-to-hand encounter. Accordingly we retired, most ignominiously defeated.

Some of the Batokas who resided upon the farther shore, under the dominion of their chief Mochuri, came over to us in their canoes, bringing goats,

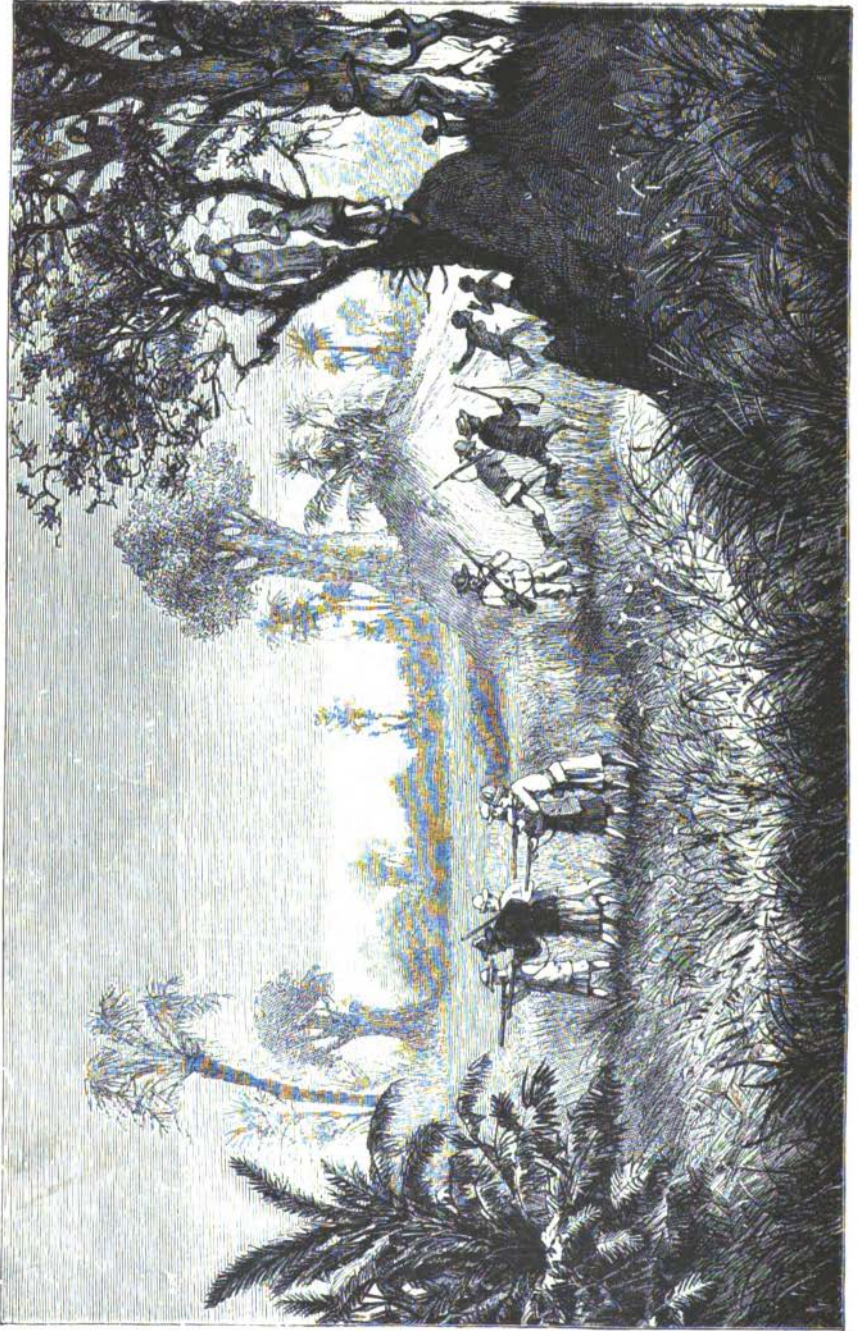
kaffir-corn beer, and beans for sale. I afterwards met one of them again at Sesheke; he was a sub-chief, and a relation of Mochuri's. Sepopo, supposing that I had never seen a Batoka before, introduced him to me; I recognized the man at once, but he took care not to show that he knew me, as he was conscious of having bought guns of us in direct contravention of the king's commands, an offence for which he was liable to the sentence of death.

Whilst I was engaged in completing my cartographical survey of the falls, I came across several herds of grazing pallahs. The Cape servants succeeded in shooting one of the graceful creatures, which are the most common of all the antelopes of the Zambesi.

On the evening before our departure we had an adventure with a lion, which terminated in a way that was somewhat amusing. I had returned from an expedition to the falls, and was followed by Walsh, who was coming back from one of his bird-hunts; he came in rather excited, declaring that in crossing a meadow on his way towards the river, he had seen a lion. The spot which he described was only about three-quarters of a mile away, and it did not require a very long consultation before we resolved forthwith to commence a lion-hunt. I confess I was not a little concerned when I heard that the ladies proposed to accompany us; but my objections were soon overruled, Mrs. Francis urging that she had already seen several lions killed, and Mrs. West-beech, the bride of a few months, insisting that her husband should not go without her.

The greater part of the Zambesi valley is thickly wooded, but as I have described, there are occa-





Pl. II.

THE LION EXPECTED.

sional tracts of meadow, almost bare of trees, bordered towards the stream by hedges of saro-palms. It had been in coming over one of these that Walsh had seen the lion spring from behind a tree, and disappear into the palm-thicket. On reaching the tree we found another tree close beside it, only about fifteen feet high, against the stem of which a pyramidal ant-hill had been erected.

We lost little time in making our arrangements; we divided into four detachments, the first including Westbeeck, Francis, Walsh, and myself; the second, Oppenshaw, Bauren, and two of the Cape servants; the third, two more Cape servants, and two Matabele with guns; whilst the fourth was made up of the rest of the servants, who were armed with assegais, kiris, and sticks. The three former detachments were to march upon the thicket from opposite directions; the fourth was to remain at a distance outside to give warning of any movement they should see.

Hardly had we gone ten yards towards the assault, when the ladies' voices brought us to a stand; they had come to the conclusion that they were unsafe beneath the tree, and requested their husbands to help them on to the top of the ant-hill.

Again we started, proceeding very slowly and with much caution. Just as we got within a few feet of the palm-bushes we were startled by a tremendous roar, sonorous enough to try the nerves of the most experienced hunter, and to make him realize the essential difference between a *felis leo* and a *felis domestica*. The hero of the forest was so close to Francis, that it might easily have pounced upon him before we could render any assistance.



We stood still and gazed upon the bush, but no lion could be seen. Some one suggested it might be prudent to retire a little, and everybody seemed ready enough to act upon the suggestion; accordingly, with our guns cocked and our eyes fixed upon the spot from which the roar had proceeded, we stepped gradually backwards; still no signs of the lion; we resolved to fire, but we fired in vain; we determined to set light to the bush, but all to no purpose; the lion had escaped.

On turning round to look for the other detachments, we discovered that the sound of the roaring had thrown them into a state of dismay; some of them had disappeared entirely; the whole of the fourth company had climbed up into the trees.

Just at this moment our attention was arrested by another cry from the ladies; the wind had fanned the flames of the bushes to which we had set light, and the smoke was driving so densely towards them that they were in danger of being choked; we soon rescued them from their unpleasant situation, and were all but agreed to give up the chase, and to go back again to our camp.

Westbeech, however, made the proposition that the hunt should be continued higher up the river; he was an experienced and daring hunter, and perhaps was a little anxious to exhibit his capabilities to his young wife. In order to carry out the proposal, it would be necessary to cross the meadow over which Walsh had been passing when he first saw the lion. After some hesitation it was settled that the party should undertake a second chase, with the exception of Mrs. Westbeech, who was left in charge of some of the Matabele servants, who were

quite content to undertake so pleasant a part of the enterprise.

But although we crossed the meadow, we did not arrive at the bushes; startled by a cry of distress we looked back, but no trace of Mrs. Westbeech could be seen. Our amazement was great; Westbeech himself was the first to recover his composure, and started back with all speed to ascertain what had happened; we followed after, but what was our surprise, when all at once we found that he too had disappeared! We did not notice that the Matabele were in fits of laughter, nor for a while could we understand what Francis, who had run on some way in front, could mean when he turned round and threw his gun upon the grass before our feet, and bade us stop. In another moment Westbeech emerged from under ground, and directly afterwards Mrs. Westbeech reappeared after the same fashion. The explanation of the mystery was not hard to find. The natives had dug pitfall after pitfall to catch game; having no guns, they make great holes in the ground, sometimes ten or twelve feet long and nearly as many deep, so much narrower at the top than at the bottom, that it is impossible for any animals to get out when once in. Into one of these Mrs. Westbeech had had the mischance to fall, and Mr. Westbeech, in his eagerness, had run into another.

Beyond a few scratches, the lady happily had sustained no injury, but the *contretemps* naturally had the effect of making us abandon all further thought of the chase.

As for the lion, we were informed by some Batokas who came to visit us as usual in the evening, that it

was quite true that one was lurking in the neighbourhood; but it was so accustomed to human beings that it gave no cause for anxiety, and the natives were not afraid to pass it, even at night.

Before quitting the vicinity of the Victoria Falls, I may say a few words about the Manansas, the native tribe that is to be found in various parts of what I call the Albert country, and who formerly possessed a kingdom of their own.

The Manansas occupy the hill-country south of the falls, a district that although it may belong by right to the Bamangwatos is always claimed by the Matabele rulers, the inhabitants themselves being invariably the greatest sufferers by the contention. The Bamangwatos ordinarily call them Masarwas, although the two tribes have really nothing in common. They cultivate sheltered spots in the valleys, or pass their lives in hunting without any settled place of residence. When oppressed by the Bamangwatos they take refuge with the Matabele, and when persecuted by the Matabele, they seek protection under the Bamangwatos; or if, as sometimes happens, there seems no way of escape, they submit themselves in the most abject and servile manner to their conquerors. Thus it comes to pass that the Albert country is a sort of debateable land, and it follows that the Bamangwatos are perpetually claiming the Manansas for their vassals, although the Manansas do not actually render them any vassal-service.

Until the year 1838 they had their own independent kingdom that extended as far south as the western Makalakas, and a long way up the Ugu and Kwebu rivers. The kingdom was

governed by "a great chief," who made every sacrifice he could to come to reasonable terms with the encroaching Matabele. But the time came when the bloodthirsty Moselikatze, a very tiger amongst men, having ruined the Makalaka empire and half devoured the Mashonas, proceeded to annihilate the Manansas also. No credence had he to give to the conciliating proposals of the good honest chief; as a Matabele he was quite incapable of putting faith in any promise, or appreciating any right feeling; he was sure that some ulterior motive lurked behind the proposals that were made, and that the chief was only temporizing while his forces were collecting; and so he overpowered him in his own courtyard, pierced him with assegais, tore out his heart, pressed it to the still quivering lips, and shrieked aloud, "You had two hearts; one was false, and you shall eat it!"

Practically this victory and deed of Moselikatze put an end to the Manansas as a nation. Most of the boys were carried off to be trained as Matabele warriors, while of the men who escaped some took refuge with Sepopo, some with the Batoka chief Mochuri to the north, and others with Wankie, the ruler of the north-eastern Makalakas.

While I was in daily intercourse with them, I made repeated inquiries as to whether they had now any recognized chief, but I had great difficulty in getting a definite reply. They always appeared to suspect me; and any one of whom I asked the question seemed to fear that I wanted to put his name down in my "lungalo" (book) in order to betray him to the Matabele king. At length, however, they acknowledged that they all, wherever

they might be, owned allegiance to the son of their basely-murdered chief, who had been permitted with a small number of their tribe to settle on a piece of land in the eastern quarter of Wankie's territory. On my expressing my wonder that they did not all go and join him instead of staying where they were to be worried like dogs, they replied that this was their own country; and I learnt that like the Bushmen of the south they regarded with affection and reverence the wooded heights and pleasant valleys where they first saw the light of day.

In many of their customs the Manansas differ from other South African tribes. Like the Marutse, they treat their women in a way that offers a very favourable contrast to either the Bechuanas or the Matabele. They have a somewhat peculiar mode of wooing; when a young man has been captivated by a maiden of his tribe and has ascertained that he has secured her affection in return—an assurance for which neither Betchuana nor Zulu thinks it necessary to wait—he sends an aged woman to carry the proposal that she should become his wife; this agent is commissioned to portray the young man in glowing colours, to extol the excellence of his temper, to praise his skill in procuring “nyama” (game), to describe the productiveness of his garden, and to enumerate the skins with which he has made his bed soft and comfortable. Hereupon a family council is held; the father, mother, and daughter all have a voice, and if no objection is alleged, the old woman is sent away with the message that the suitor may be admitted. When he enters the hut he must never fail to bring a present; until quite recently this was nearly always a valuable skin of



a rare monkey, but since the introduction of beads into the country they have been used as a substitute, and a handful of small blue beads is now the usual offering; when this has been accepted, the girl is at liberty to speak to the man, and is held to have pledged herself to him as his wife. There is an entire absence of those hideous orgies which characterize both the betrothal and marriage ceremonies among other South African tribes, and nothing transpires beyond this simple form before the marriage is deemed to be settled. The next step is for the parents every night to vacate their own hut and retire to another in the courtyard, leaving their usual abode for a week or two at the service of the newly-wedded pair. Every morning the bridegroom goes out to his work, and the parents reoccupy their proper dwelling for the day. Meanwhile the young man continues to acknowledge every favour by repeated gifts of beads; even the ablutions of the morning are recompensed in this way; but at the end of a fortnight or thereabouts, the son-in-law brings the father-in-law either four couples of goats, or eight rows (about 2 lbs.) of beads, whereupon they set to work to build a hut—or two if there were not one already in the possession of the bridegroom—which henceforward he makes his home.

Any breach of conjugal fidelity was, I understood, extremely rare; on the part of the husband indeed it was quite unheard of; the Manansas in this respect being superior to the more cultivated Marutse, amongst whom the demoralizing system of "mulekow" drives the wives into unfaithfulness even against their will.

When any woman is near her confinement a host of the old women in the neighbourhood come to her house. Their first business is to remove the husband's gun or assegai into his other hut, or if it should happen, which is rarely the case, that he has not a second, into the hut of one of his neighbours; he is then prohibited from entering the sick chamber for a period of eight days; at the end of that time he is conducted by the bevy of old nurses back to the hut, where he finds his wife and infant, washed in warm water, ready to receive him. The visit, however, which he is thus allowed to make is only temporary; he is not permitted to take up his quarters in his home permanently for another month. Altogether the cleanliness that prevails throughout is a great contrast to the filthiness and impurity of the Hottentots and Makalakas.

When any one dies, his burial takes place in the evening near his own enclosure, the grave, if the soil permits it, being dug to the depth of five feet. An adult is wrapped in his mantle of skins and his assegai is buried with him. The interment is conducted in silence that is broken only by the sobs of the women. Should the deceased be the master of a household all his effects are collected on the day after the funeral, and in the presence of the entire population the eldest son comes forward to take formal possession. If there be a failure of legitimate heirs, some near relative or close friend is appointed, who takes the property and the name of the deceased.

As a general rule it may be said that the Manansas are of middle height and slightly built, but it is somewhat difficult for a traveller to distinguish

them, as since the dismemberment of their country they have become very much crossed with the fugitive Matongas and Masupias, and with the tribes north of the Zambesi. Their complexion is dark brown; their heads are small, and they have mild-looking eyes and thick lips.

In their more palmy days their ornaments had probably been more elaborate; but I noticed that the lower classes wore bracelets and ankle-rings of gnu or giraffe-hide, and sometimes of iron wire. Their earrings, always simple in form, were mostly made of some better material. For clothing the men usually had nothing more than a bit of calico about the size of one's hand, and only rarely was a skin of some small animal fastened round their loins; the women wore a short petticoat of tanned leather.

As servants the Manansas are to be preferred to any other of the South African tribes. I found them remarkably skilful in tracking game, their quiet, cautious method of proceeding often proving more effectual than greater dash and daring. As far also as my experience went, I must say that they are civil and beyond the average for honesty and fidelity. By the more powerful tribes they are regarded with great contempt, and laughed at as "the simpletons of the north," but nothing worse seems to be alleged against them than their habitual courtesy and good-nature—qualities which, since the Matabele rule has spread from the Limpopo to the Zambesi—have become synonymous with hypocrisy and cowardice. Not content with murder and rapine, the savagery of the Matabele Zulus has gone far to stifle every noble

impulse, and to cast mistrust over every friendly word.

Whenever the Manansas are being pursued, and find themselves cut off from every prospect of escape, they will stop, turn round, and advance towards their adversaries with the points of their assegais lowered, and as soon as they come near their conquerors they will lay down their weapons, squat upon the ground, and wait until the enemy has done his worst. During the time when Moshesh was the Bamangwato king, they could generally manage to appease him and stay his acts of oppression by gifts of ivory; but Moselikatze carried off their boys and a great number of their women, while the present Matabele despot commissioned his hordes to plunder everything upon which they could lay their hands. It is only when they have been put in charge of some white man whom the missionaries have introduced as a person of importance to be protected as far as the falls, that orders are given to refrain from robbery or violence. Such, for instance, was the case when Major S. was escorted through the district in 1875; the object of the king in such cases being that the traveller should have no tales of cruelty to tell "the great white queen" of England on his return.

I used to talk to a Manansa who was hired every year by one of the traders, and appeared to be above the level of his fellow-tribesmen in intelligence. Happening to say something about the cowardice imputed to his race, I saw him shake his head and smile. "No," he replied, "we are not timid pallahs, nor ever have been; but we

love our village life and our hunting; we catch our game in pits and not by arms; we give up our elephants' tusks to the remorseless Matabele; we show them where to hunt the elephants; let them hunt as they will; we want not the blood of the beasts, much less do we thirst for the blood of men!"

It had been a Manansa custom, after the death of a king, for the men to meet together and conduct the heir to the royal residence; then they brought a handful of sand and small stones from the Zambesi, and a hammer; these they gave him as tokens of his sovereignty over the land and over water and iron, symbolizing industry and labour. At the same time they reminded him of the obligation that rested upon him that from the day of his accession to the throne he was to eat the flesh neither of the rhinoceros nor the hippopotamus, as these being "mischievous" animals, would be likely to impart their own evil qualities to him.

Even regarded as unassociated with the magnificence of the Victoria Falls, the Albert country, with its wooded rocks and grassy valleys, is undoubtedly one of the most attractive districts in the whole of South Africa. Intersected by the Zambesi, it is bounded by the sandy pool plateau on the south, and extends as far as the mouth of the Chobe on the west. Geologist, botanist, mineralogist, all alike must find it full of interest. Except the springbock, blesbock, and black gnu, all the larger kinds of mammalia are to be seen that Southern and Central Africa can show. Reptiles are numerous, and crocodiles haunt the banks and troubled waters of the remotest mountain streams. Insects of



various sorts abound, the lepidoptera especially exhibiting new species. Let proper means be taken to exterminate the tsetse-fly, and to guard against the prevalence of summer fever, and the rich soil and mild climate of the valleys would be found amply to repay a liberal cultivation, and would yield a profitable return of tropical produce.

It was by a slightly different route that we made our way back to Panda ma Tenka. On the Matopa river our servants shot a wild pig; and a little further up the valley some of our people discovered a dead elephant. Their attention was caught by a disgusting smell, which they thought they recognized; and pushing into the bushes they found the carcase of a huge male elephant, dead from gun-shot wounds. The adjacent flesh had been gnawed by lions, and one of the blacks declared that he saw a lion making off as we approached. Westbeech and Francis took possession of the ivory, leaving the carcase to the servants who had smelt it out. They cut off the feet, intending to carry them off as a dainty for their next meal, but the stench of them was so intolerable that we soon made them throw their tit-bit away. When cooked fresh the fleshy substance enclosed beneath the tough skin of the elephant's foot is accounted as choice a morsel as a bear's paw, but it is the only fragment of the brute that is in any way suited for human food.

So sore did my feet continue that it was with the greatest difficulty that I dragged myself along. The ladies, as they had done on the way out, walked the greater part of the distance between the falls and the Gashuma Flat; and apart from my own

trouble, the whole of us were in perfect health when, on the 24th of September, we reached Panda ma Tenka. There I found two Matongas and a Manansa on the look-out for employment. I engaged them at once, and Westbeech and Francis did their best to assist me in procuring what was requisite for my start again to the Leshumo valley.

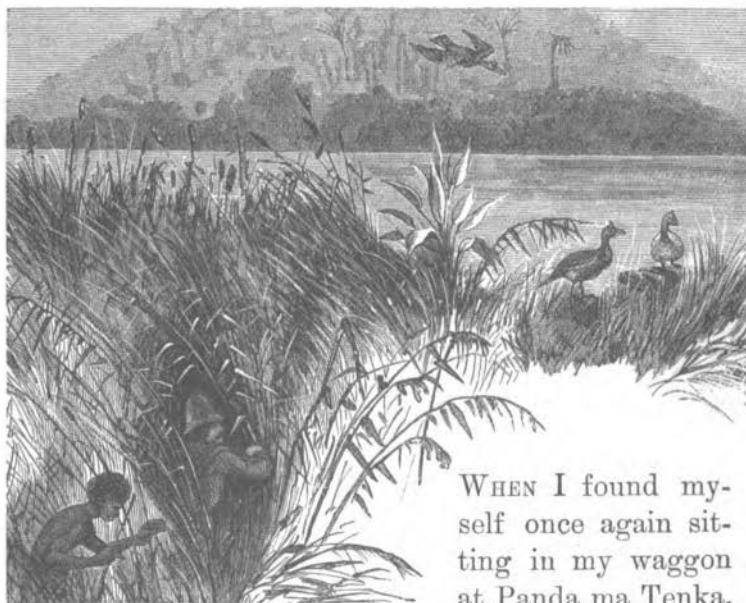


ENCOUNTER WITH A TIGER.

## CHAPTER IX.

## SECOND VISIT TO THE MARUTSE KINGDOM.

Departure for Impalera—A Masupia funeral—Sepopo's wives—Travelling plans—Flora and fauna of the Sesheke woods—Arrival of a caravan—A fishing-excursion—Mashoku, the king's executioner—Masangu—The prophetic dance—Visit from the queens—Blacksmith's bellows—Crocodiles and crocodile-tackle—The Mankoë—Constitution and officials of the Marutse kingdom—A royal elephant-hunt—Excursion to the woods—A buffalo-hunt—Chasing a lioness—The lion dance—Mashukulumbe at Sepopo's court—Moquai, the king's daughter—Marriage festivities.



HUNTING THE SPUR-WINGED GOOSE.

WHEN I found myself once again sitting in my waggon at Panda ma Tenka, I occupied myself in writing my journal, but I was altogether much

dispirited and out of sorts, the continued pain in my feet tending in no slight degree to aggravate my sense of depression. I was temporarily cheered by the companionship of my good dog Niger, who returned to me after having been left behind at the falls; but I felt very keenly the prospect of soon losing him altogether for a time; I was unwilling to expose him to the attacks of the tsetse-fly, and accordingly had arranged for my Bamangwato servant, Meriko, to take him back with him to Shoshong and confide him to the care of Mr. Mackenzie. Could I have foreseen that I was parting with the creature finally, I would not have suffered him to leave my side; I paid Meriko well to attend to him, and took care that he had a proper supply of provisions, but unfortunately it turned out that Mr. Mackenzie was away from home; poor Niger was entrusted to a waggon-driver in the employ of Messrs. Francis and Clark, who just then was starting for Grahamstown, and from that time forward, notwithstanding all my inquiries, I never could ascertain what became of him.

By this time I had come almost to the end of the stock of goods that I had procured for bartering; it was absolutely necessary that the supply should be replenished, and in spite of the exorbitant prices that were asked I had no alternative but to buy what calico, cloth, and beads I could.

On the 27th I had an attack of dysentery, which happily did not prove very serious.

During my stay I made the acquaintance of a man named Henry W., who came from the neighbourhood of Grahamstown; he was an experienced hunter, but somehow or other I could not take to

him ; I could not get over the barbarities which he permitted during his excursions. On one occasion, after wounding a female elephant that had been pursuing him, he allowed his servants to torture it for a couple of hours with their assegais before he put the poor brute out of its miseries by shooting it dead.

Although there had been no rain in the district for several months, the two days before we left Panda ma Tenka were wet and stormy. When we started we made but a very short progress on the first day, as my baggage proved too heavy for the cart, and I was obliged to halt and send back for a waggon ; this did not arrive until the afternoon of the following day, but we lost no time in moving forwards again, and spent the night on the Gashuma Flat. Our encampment was an attraction to several lions that prowled around, ready to pounce upon any animal that might be scared from the enclosure.

Three out of my four servants spoke as many different dialects, Sesupia, Setonga, and Senansa, but they all understood the Sesuto-Serotse, so that from the chatter which they kept up I was able to pick up a number of colloquial expressions.

A short distance before we reached Saddler's Pan, one of Westbeech's servants had a narrow escape ; having seen some zulu-hartebeests grazing a little way off, he approached them by degrees, and was about to fire when he found himself almost within the clutches of a lion that was watching the very same herd. He was glad enough to make a timely retreat.

- Late in the evening of the 4th of October, all safe and sound we reached the Leshumo valley. Next



morning I sent my servants forward to the Chobe, and as Westbeeche had placed the eight donkeys at my disposal, they took the greater part of my baggage. I myself followed on later in the day, and on my way fell in with two English traders named Brown and Cross, who were pleased to see me; they were returning from a fruitless visit made in the hope of seeing Sepopo; they told me that they had been fortunate enough to kill two magnificent lions, one of them a full-grown male of the maneless species.

I found sixteen boatmen waiting my arrival at the Chobe, and next morning Sepopo sent six more; they were to take both Westbeeche's goods and mine to Sesheke, where the king was very anxious to inspect everything, having been already informed that Westbeeche had brought a considerable number of elephant-guns. I should have been quite ready to cross the river that same morning, but the wind was too high for the passage to be attempted prudently; setting aside the prospect of being capsized, which would have been sufficiently unpleasant, there was the risk of falling a victim to the numerous crocodiles. I myself subsequently witnessed some casualties of this kind at Sesheke.

Strolling about, I observed that the poisonous mushungulu-tree was now in full bloom, covered with large crimson blossoms. On my way back from my ramble my attention was arrested by a succession of gun-shots, which I was told were part of a funeral ceremony that was then taking place. A Masupia was being buried, and on an open space between two trees, about 400 yards from the settlement, I saw a dozen or more men running about

wildly and letting off their guns, shouting aloud during every interval between their shots: under one of the trees a number of people were sitting drinking beer, and under the other tree was the grave that had been just closed in.

The Masupias are accustomed to make their graves six or seven feet deep and two feet wide, and to bury with the deceased his coat, his mattock, and other weapons; a little corn is likewise thrown into the grave. The friends always spend the rest of the day at the place of interment, and if the buried man has been wealthy a large quantity of meat is consumed as well as the beer. The shouting and running about and the discharge of the guns are supposed to scare away the evil spirits from the spot. I asked one of the bystanders how the person just buried had come by his death; he only raised his eyes to signify that it was all owing to Molemo.

In the course of the day some of the people brought in a quantity of the flesh of a hippopotamus that they had killed; they considered it quite a young animal, but its teeth were full ten inches long.

In the conveyance of my baggage to Makumba's landing-place I was assisted by a brother of the chief's, named Ramusokotan; he resided some miles further up the left bank of the Chobe, and was entrusted with the duty of guarding the lower course of the river. On my way to the landing-place I saw several pallah-gazelles, being twice so close to them that I could observe all their movements.

The Zambesi was lower than I had seen it before. As we crossed it we had a narrow escape

of being upset by a hippopotamus, another of the three animals of which Blockley had killed the largest on our previous voyage to Sesheke. Remembering the spot, we were trying to pass along as quietly as possible, when Westbeeche's boatmen felt a sudden jerk at one of the paddles close under their canoe; the creature was probably startled for the instant, and allowed the boat to proceed without attacking it; the next moment, however, it made a furious dash towards my boat, which was following close behind. But my men had fortunately been put on their guard by the cries of Westbeeche's crew, and made so vigorous a spurt that when the head of the hippopotamus emerged from the water, it was several yards in the rear.

On arriving at Sesheke I was informed that I was at liberty, if I liked, to occupy one of the new huts just erected by the king, but I preferred accepting Westbeeche's invitation to take up my quarters in his own courtyard, where Blockley also had put up a small warehouse for himself. My first greeting from the king was that I had been too long coming, that I was too late now, and that he could not keep his Marutse men waiting for me; but I went to see him in the afternoon, and took him a variety of little presents, which seemed to put him in a very much better temper, and he was evidently pleased when I tried to speak a few sentences to him in the Sesuto-Serotse language.

It was getting towards evening when Blockley called me out of my hut to witness a curious scene. The king was receiving a visit from his wives who resided in the Barotse valley, and from his daughter Moquai, the Mabunda queen; they were arriving

with about forty canoes, those occupied by the royal ladies being covered in the middle by a mat to protect them from the sun and rain. Many of the canoes had thirteen oarsmen, who all rowed standing, such of them as did not convey passengers being laden not only with great mats, pots, and



KING SEPOPO.

provisions for the way, but with baskets full of presents for the king.

I called the next morning upon Captain M'Leod, Captain Fairly, and Cowley, whom the king had accommodated in a round hut near the royal enclosure; they were full of complaints because Sepopo persisted in putting off the great elephant-hunt for

which they had come the second time. I also went with Westbeeche to pay my respects to the newly-arrived queens, most of whom he had already seen in the Barotse valley. Amongst them was the chief wife, Mokena, or "mother of the country." Altogether I made acquaintance with sixteen of the wives. Sepopo's favourite was a Makololo named Lunga. The third wife was Marishwati, the mother of Kaika, already nominated as the future heiress to the throne. The fourth wife was named Makaloe; the fifth, Uesi; the sixth, Liapaleng; then came Makkapelo, on whose account two men were put to death in 1874; next in order were Mantaralucha, Manatwa, Sybamba, and Kacindo. The twelfth was called Molechy; this wife, as well as another named Sitan, had been all but drowned by Sepopo for faithlessness.

A seducer of any of the royal wives is at once handed over to the executioner's assistants, with the instruction that he is "to be sent to fetch buffalo-meat for the king," meaning that he is to be taken to the woods, and there assegaied. The mode of dealing with an adulterous wife may be illustrated by Sepopo's proceedings with Sitan. He ordered a number of canoes full of people to push off into the middle of the stream, taking his place in one of them with the culprit. He then had her bound hand and foot, and ducked under the water repeatedly until she became insensible; on her recovering consciousness, he asked her to tell the people how she liked being drowned, and warned her that if ever her offence should be repeated, he should simply put her under water, and leave her there.



The fourteenth wife was Silala, and there were two others, but both of these had been presented by the king to two of his chiefs. The true heir to the throne had died two years previously. His name was Maritella, and he was the son of Marishwati. Just before his death he was lying on his bed, and complained of being thirsty, whereupon the Barotse chieftain, who happened to be present, poured him out some drink from a pitcher standing by; the lad died very soon afterwards, and Sepopo immediately accused the chieftain of having poisoned him, and condemned him, in spite of his being universally beloved by his people, to be poisoned himself.

The king's daughter, Moquai, had married Manengo, one of the few Makololos who had survived the general massacre. The king of the Makololos, Sepopo informed me, had died a miserable death, his body having become a mass of ulcers, and after his demise the whole tribe had been distracted by party squabbles.

I was determined to give the king no peace on the subject of my journey, and on the 12th I had a long conference with him and the Portuguese. He told me that although I might make up my mind to stay only two days at each of the towns in the Barotse, the whole boat-journey through his kingdom could not take me less than two months, and that after I had reached the kingdom of the Iwan-yoe, where I should find the sources of the Zambesi, I should have to go on for about another nine weeks to get to Matimbundu.

I went more than once to visit the queens, and always found that they were treated with great

respect, their quarters being nearly always surrounded by residents patiently waiting their turn to be admitted to an audience.

On the 14th I received a visit from a dancer. The calves of his legs were covered with bells made of fruit-shells, and his dancing consisted of little more than shaking himself so that the bells were all set in motion.

Amongst the other inmates of Sepopo's court was a Mambari named Kolintshintshi, who held the office of royal tailor; he had been taken prisoner during one of the raids of the Marutse to the west; two companions who had been captured at the same time had been restored to their home after receiving a liberal present of cattle, whilst Kolintshintshi had been detained.

During the time that I was delayed at Sesheke I took several opportunities of rambling into the surrounding woods, and found a number of trees and bushes that were quite new to me, whilst a great proportion of the kinds that I had already seen in the Bechuana forests appeared here to attain double the height that they did elsewhere. Four-footed game was very plentiful, and I noticed a hartebeest with flat compressed horns, different from any kind with which I was acquainted. Birds, likewise, seemed tolerably numerous, and I found a singular kind of bee-eater (*Merops Nubicus*), a grey medium-sized hornbill, the great plotus, and two species of spurred plovers with yellow wattles.

Returning from a walk I came across one of the caravans that arrive from the more distant parts of the kingdom, bringing in the periodical tribute for the king. It consisted of about thirty

people, but very often a caravan of this kind will include considerably more, because whether the men come voluntarily, or under the compulsion of a chief, they are always obliged to bring their whole households with them. On making their entry into Sesheke the party was arranged mainly with regard to the stature of the people who composed it; a leader went in front, carrying nothing but his weapons and a great bell, which he continued ringing without intermission; following him were the men laden with the elephants' tusks, the manza-roots, and the baskets of fruit that composed the tribute; then came the women in charge of the travelling-apparatus and provisions, the children all trudging on behind.

On the 19th Westbeeck, Bauren, Walsh, and myself made up a party to go and fish in one of the lagoons. We arranged to go two and two in separate boats, but we were so unlucky in our choice that we soon found that we were in perpetual danger of losing our equilibrium, and had to return and exchange into craft of safer dimensions. We had an opportunity during our excursion to observe the way in which the Marutse and Masupias manipulate their nets. Made of bast, with meshes that are somewhat wide, each net is cast out with its ends secured to two boats, which are stationed at a distance from each other, and manned by four oarsmen apiece; when the net is sunk the two boats are made to approach each other at the same point upon the shore where the net is drawn up; the fish are stupified by being knocked with kiris, and then brought to land.

We were witnesses on our way back of a scene

that was anything but pleasing. Some girls had been bathing in a creek, and one of them had stolen some beads belonging to another. On discovering that she had been robbed, the owner of the beads fell upon the unfortunate thief, and belaboured her so savagely with the reeds that she tore from the stream, that the culprit fell down and sued for mercy. A man who was standing near attempted to interfere, but nothing could pacify the anger of the infuriated girl; she persisted in administering chastisement, and was not deterred from her violence till she had actually snatched off the leather apron from the victim's loins.

The same evening I was again invited to supper with the king. On this occasion an episode took place which unfortunately was by no means rare in Sepopo's court, and which serves to illustrate his habitual cruelty. It was about an hour after sundown, and there was no lack of merriment in the royal enclosure. The king was sitting in his usual fashion—crossed-legged upon a mat. The wives whose turn it was to entertain him were on his right. On his left was spread another mat for myself, his nephew, and his immediate attendants. The rest of the company were arranged opposite to him, in a semicircle. The intervening space was left free for Matungulu, the royal cup-bearer, to dispense the honey-beer, a beverage peculiarly belonging to the court; all honey, as crown property, being sent to the royal kitchen. Men, moreover, are sent out to collect it by the aid of the honey-cuckoo, their expeditions frequently lasting several days. The king took a little draught of the beer, and handed the remainder to Lunga,

his favourite wife, with a remark universally supposed to be so witty, that the whole assemblage, according to etiquette, burst into roars of laughter. Meanwhile one of the inferior chiefs took advantage of the noise to approach the king; and, clapping his hands gently without cessation as he spoke, said: "There was a man in my village, my lord king, too weak in his legs to hunt *polocholo* (game). It has pleased Nyamba (the great god) that all his wives should die; so that he can no longer procure any *mabele* (corn). This man has now come to settle here with you in *Sesheke*; but he is old, very old, and his relations are far away in the *Barotse*." Sepopo nodded to signify that he quite understood the story. While he had been listening, his eye had again and again glanced towards a distant quarter, where the general crowd were gathered; and when the chief ceased to speak, the king cried out "*Mashoku!*" In an instant the executioner hastened towards him and received his commission to take care that the old man should no longer be permitted to be a burden to the neighbourhood.

Throughout the kingdom no one was more feared or more hated than the executioner *Mashoku*. He was a *Mabunda*; but the peculiar aptitude he had shown for his office had induced the king to raise him to the rank of a chieftain. He was over six feet high, and of a massive build; so ill-shaped, however, was his head, and so repulsive his cast of countenance, that I could never do otherwise than associate him in my mind with a *hyæna*.

Nothing could be more odious than the way in which *Mashoku* received his orders. Crawling up



on all fours to the royal presence, he grinned with satisfaction at the instructions he received. He kept clapping his hands softly while he was attending; and having taken a sip from the goblet offered him by his royal master, he crawled back to his former place. The king was in high good humour; and after a few more jokes, retired to his bed-chamber, whilst the band played their usual serenade from their adjacent hut.

Only too faithfully was the king's sentence carried out next morning. Before it was light, five men wended their way towards the old man's hut, one of whom, Mashoku himself, went in and seized his victim by the leg. Quite incapable of making any resistance, the poor man trembled like a leaf. He was dragged off to the river-side, and there thrust into a canoe that was lying in readiness. A few strokes of the paddle brought it into mid-stream; and while three of the assistant executioners kept it steady, Mashoku and the other man lifted the helpless creature by the shoulders and legs, and held him in the water. A gurgling noise, a few bubbles on the surface of the stream, and all was over. The body was hauled back into the boat, to be thrown into the water again at a spot near the bank where the king's scavengers always flung their refuse to the crocodiles.

Such is an example of the summary way in which Sepopo would dispose of the friendless and infirm; and as the number of strangers that gathered round the king at Sesheke was considerable, executions of this kind were more frequent than in many other places. Under certain rulers—such for instance as Sepopo's grandfather, who was much respected by

the people—these cruelties fall into disuse, nor are they often practised when a queen holds the reins of government.

Next day I paid a visit to Masangu, to whom, as being responsible for the control of the guns distributed to the king's vassals, I have already given the designation of governor of the arsenal. He was likewise superintendent of all the native smiths. I found him employed in repairing a gun, for which he was using hammers, chisels, pincers, and bellows, all of his own making, and of the most perfect construction that I had yet seen in South Africa.

He asked me whether I had ever seen the Masupias dance, and drew my attention to the sound of the drums in the royal courtyard. On hearing that I had never been present when any dancing was going forward, he invited me to go with him to the performance that was then about to commence.

All the inhabitants of the Marutse kingdom are fond of dancing, most of the tribes appearing to adopt a style peculiar to themselves. In common with the Bechuanas they have a dance which is performed by girls on reaching the age of maturity. This is repeated day after day for weeks at a time, and, accompanied by singing and castanet playing, is sometimes kept up till midnight, and is supposed to answer the design of uniting the girls of the same age and born in the same neighbourhood in a bond of friendship. There are also betrothal dances and elephant dances, at which a great quantity of butshuala is consumed, the ill-effects of which soon become apparent. On these occasions the instruments of fan-palm are beaten very rapidly with

reeds, the time being marked by striking gloves of steel, or bells without clappers. Besides these, again, there are the lion and leopard dances, which are performed by hunters returning from successful expeditions, in conjunction with the villagers, who go out to meet them. In an elephant dance the



THE PROPHETIC DANCE OF THE MASUPIAS.

king himself occasionally takes a part, as likewise in the mokoro, or boat dance.

That to which Masangu now invited me to accompany him was known as "the prophetic dance." It was one of several juggleries peculiar to the Masupia tribe. The largest drums of the royal band are brought out, and while they are beaten about thirty performers stand round, singing and clapping their hands with all their

might. Two men then commence dancing in the middle of the open space, and continue their performances for hours together, sometimes from sunrise to sunset, till they sink down almost in a state of exhaustion. In this condition they have to deliver their prophecies about any royal hunt or raid that may be coming off. As a general rule these predictions are favourable, and the dancers are rewarded with presents of beads or calico; but if the event should belie the anticipation, they take good care to keep themselves out of the way, to escape the chastisement that would be sure to fall to their lot.

The two Masupia dancers that I saw had their heads, arms, and loins fantastically adorned with the tails of gnus and zebras. The dance itself seemed to consist principally in hopping from one foot to another, varied by the performers occasionally laying themselves flat on the ground, at one time falling suddenly, at another sinking so gradually that no joint appeared to stir, although the head was kept in a perpetual agitation. Attached to the calves of the legs were little bells and a number of gourd-shells, which acted as rattles; and when the dance is executed in their own homes, the Masupias very often introduce some conjuring tricks, one of which consists in giving a tremendous gash to the tongue, from which flows a stream of blood: but the tongue is immediately afterwards exhibited, and shown to have sustained no injury.

After having devoted some days to a general examination of the fish in the Zambesi, I took an opportunity to make a more precise investigation of several varieties, applying my attention particularly

to the sheat-fish (*Glanis siluris*), which, however, I could not discover differed in any respect from the same species in the more southern rivers, except that it was of a somewhat darker colour. We set some ground-lines in places that appeared to be free from crocodiles, and were successful in getting a very fair haul.

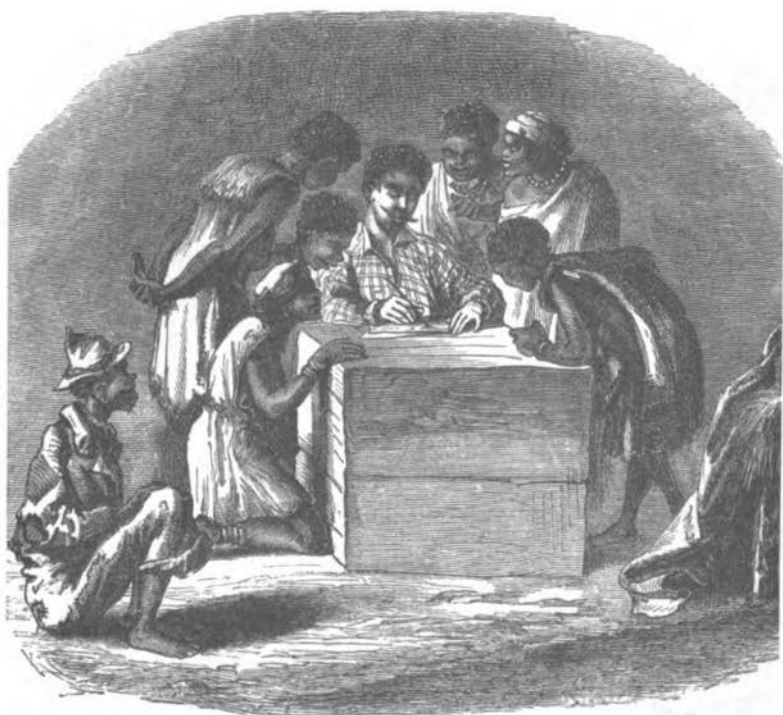
A loud clamour of women's voices that broke the silence of the night was explained to me to betoken that a Marutse had just died in the village of Katan, a chief on the west. This was followed in the morning by the discharge of guns, indicating that the deceased was being buried.

In the course of that day the king sent a boat to convey Blockley and Bauren to Impalera, to enable them to start on their trading-expedition to the territory of the Makololo prince Wankie. The offer, however, of a single boat to carry a white man, several servants, and all the merchandise, was regarded by Blockley as little less than an insult, and did not tend to heal the unpleasantness which Sepopo's recent want of courtesy and consideration had provoked. He was not long in visiting our quarters again, coming not only with his full band, but attended by a company of 120 servants, that completely filled our courtyard, his design evidently being to make us sensible how thoroughly we were in his power.

Sepopo had hardly taken his departure, and I had seated myself to finish some sketches that I had begun, when twelve of his queens pushed into my hut. They had heard that I had taken the likenesses of the king and his executioner, and were not only very curious to see them, but anxious



to learn how they were done. In their eagerness to handle everything, I almost thought they would squeeze the breath out of my body; one of them took hold of my pencil, several of them felt the surface of my paper, whilst those behind, who could not see, pushed those in front, till their breasts



VISIT OF THE QUEENS.

pressed against my shoulders. Certainly they were more obtrusive in their behaviour than any of the Bechuana or Zulu women that I had elsewhere seen. When the royal ladies entered, one of our black servants, who was in the hut, prepared to leave, but knowing the jealous disposition of the king, I

thought it advisable to make him remain where he was.

My guests remained with me for about half an hour, when they betook themselves to the small warehouse next door, and began to pester West-beech very much as they had pestered me. As soon as they had gone, I hung a mat over my doorway, leaving only aperture enough to admit a little light, but the expedient was an utter failure; I had taken much too moderate an estimate of woman's curiosity. Almost immediately afterwards one voice was heard, "Sikumela mo' ndu" (a curtain is hung up), followed by another, "Nyaka chajo" (doctor gone out), and two of the queens were inside, much disconcerted, no doubt, at finding the doctor at home.

Altogether, I consider the Marutse to be the cleanest of all the South African tribes that I came across. Although there are but few shallow sandy spots in the river near the larger settlements, and even these are dangerous on account of the crocodiles, the people will not allow themselves to be deprived of their bath; if the stream is deep or the bank precipitous, they pour the water over their heads. Washing is to them an absolute necessity, and they rinse their mouths and clean their hands after every meal.

I made an excursion on the 23rd to the plain known as Blockley's kraal, and there saw some puku, letshwe, and water-antelopes. The plain lies under water during the floods; but at its edge, close to the woods, I noticed a number of fields under cultivation; women and children were digging, and men were felling trees, the clearance they made being an enlargement of their master's estate. On

my way back I saw several homesteads already finished, and close beside them some rude, conical huts of grass and reeds, so slightly put together that they could have taken only a few hours to construct. They were intended for the female slaves, and were not allowed to have any enclosure, so that the ingress and egress of their occupants might be under supervision.

Going into a hut next day I found a Mambari doing blacksmiths' work with some tools that Masangu had lent him; he was sharpening mattocks, and kept his fire alive by means of a pair of the bellows that are in ordinary use among the Marutse. These bellows were somewhat peculiar, and may claim a detailed description. They had two compartments, formed of circular boards covered with leather, and with an aperture in the sides; these were alternately raised and lowered by handles, the air being forced into two wooden tubes that ran parallel to each other into the two compartments; fixed into the ends of the wooden tubes were two shorter tubes made of antelopes' horns, but these, instead of running parallel, converged in front, and met in a clay nozzle, which was applied to the fire.

I was taking an afternoon stroll along the riverside, when I saw a crowd of natives manifestly in great excitement; it appeared that the body of a girl, who had been killed by a crocodile a few days before, had just been washed ashore. Crocodiles have the habit of drowning human beings, or any animals that they are unable to swallow, by holding them down at the bottom of the water until the cessation of all struggling seems to make them aware that no resistance is to be expected,

when they open their jaws and let free their prey. Unless one crocodile is assisted by another, it cannot by itself tear a fresh corpse in pieces; but it has to wait until the process of decomposition sets in, when the gaseous exhalations raise it to the surface in a condition that permits it to be torn asunder and devoured piecemeal. If a crocodile's attention should be attracted by a fish, or anything else that seems fit for food, it will forsake its larger prey in the daytime, but only to return to it in the evening. I was told by Sepopo and by many of his people, that these reptiles are more dangerous near Sesheke than in most other parts of the kingdom. Shortly before my arrival a man had been dragged by one of them from his boat, and a boy of six years of age had been snapped up while bathing; and during my stay I heard of no less than thirty deaths that were attributed to the rapacity of these creatures.

Small crocodiles are occasionally caught by accident in the fishing-nets; the larger ones have to be captured by an arrangement of great hooks. The crocodile-tackle is very ingenious, and probably may be more easily understood from an illustration than from any verbal description. The bait which conceals the hook is covered by a net, which is attached to a strong bast rope more than twelve feet long by a number of twisted bast threads, the other end of the rope being wound round a bundle of reeds that serves as a float. It is only now and then when the casualties have been unusually numerous that the king gives orders for the tackle to be brought into use, and then the bundle of reeds is laid upon the bank; the hook is generally baited with a piece

of putrified dog's flesh, of which the Marutse believe the crocodile to be especially fond, and is supported on a tripod of reeds, three or four feet above the water, and almost close to its edge. After a crocodile has scented the bait, it usually hovers round it for a long time, sometimes until late in the evening, before it makes a snap at it; but when it attempts to swallow it, the projecting points of the hook prevent the closing of the jaws, and the water rushing into the throat and windpipe makes the brute sink to the bottom, where it soon becomes exhausted; its carcass floats down the stream, either towards the shore or against a sandbank, its position being indicated by the float which it drags after it. Two or three crocodiles have been repeatedly known to be taken in this way during a single night from the setting of five hooks. Except they are found alive on the hook, or are accidentally wounded by fishermen or hunters, they are never speared. Crocodile-snares, like fishing-nets, are all royal property.

On one occasion, when the hooks had been baited overnight, I went down to the river to ascertain the result, and met three large canoes with two men apiece, each of them conveying the carcass of a crocodile big enough to contain a human body. As soon as the carcasses were brought to shore, some of Sepopo's people proceeded to cut off their heads; the eyelids, the coverings of the nostrils, and a few of the scales from the ridge of the back were reserved for the king, to be used as charms.

I did what I could to induce the crowd that had found the body of the poor girl to have it buried, but my pleading was to no purpose; her relatives



declared that it was Nyambe's will that the crocodile should seize her, and therefore the crocodile must be allowed to have her. The body was accordingly left to be devoured at sunset.

Queen Lunga took an opportunity of calling upon me, to introduce her daughter Nyama. She was a girl of fourteen, and had just been married to Sepopo's eldest son, Monalula, who was half an idiot. Before the wedding she had been sent to reside with her mother and some other of the royal wives in a retired hut in a neighbouring wood, where she was made to fast, and to spend her time in working and in learning her domestic duties; her hair meanwhile had been all shaved off, except an oval patch that was rubbed with manganese. Nyama's father was Sekeletu, the Makololo prince.

In one of my next rambles through the woods, I came upon a little Mankoë settlement. The people were perhaps the finest men in the Marutse empire. They had long, woolly hair, which they combed up high, giving their heads the effect of being larger than they really were. Their purpose in coming to Sesheke was to assist the king in his projected great hunting-excursion. I noticed that their travelling-utensils of horn and wood were ornamented with carvings scarcely inferior in execution to those of the Mabundas. The four huts in which they were residing were about seven feet in height, and the same in width, and were arranged in the shape of a horseshoe. On my way back I saw several graves of Masupia chieftains, all adorned with ivory; I likewise noticed some calabashes, with sticks thrust right through them, resting mouth downwards on a small ant-hill, and filled with pulverized

bone. They were supposed by the Marutse to bring rain.

From a conversation with Sepopo I gathered some information about the constitution of the country and the ranks of the officials. The hierarchy may be divided into four classes; first, the officers of state; secondly, the koshi or viceroys of the tribes in the different provinces; thirdly, the kosanas or makosanas, sub-chieftains who serve under the koshi; and lastly, the personal attendants of the king, whose rank may be said to be intermediate between the two latter classes.

The officers of state were, first, the commander-in-chief, who in Sepopo's time was a Marutse relation of his named Kapella, and whom he afterwards condemned to death; secondly, there was the controller of the arsenal, having, as I have explained, the supervision of the ammunition and guns distributed to the vassals, an office that under Sepopo was shared by two Masupias, Masango and Ramakocan; next there was the captain of the body-guard, a post then held by Sepopo's cousin, Monalula, but whose services were only required in time of war; and fourthly, the captain of the younger warriors, who had the command of a special division of the army during a campaign; this office was at present held by a man named Sibendi.

The second class of officials includes all the governors of the more important provinces. They are invested with both civil and military powers. In some of the more extensive districts, as the Barotse, there are several of these chiefs appointed, but they are all subordinate to the one who is chosen to reside at the principal town, and in all

cases they are accountable to the head governor of the Barotse, who is regarded as ranking next to the king. In Sepopo's time this office was filled by Inkambella.

Officials of the third grade were such as held control as deputy-viceeroys over separate towns or small villages where cattle-breeding, hunting, or fishing, was carried on in behalf of the king. Their principal duty was to look to the proper payment of the royal tribute; the contribution of cereal products was ordinarily sent to the koshi, who were responsible for forwarding it to the sovereign. It is the law of the land that when a vassal kills a head of game, and even when a freeman slaughters any of his own cattle, the breast must be given to the kosana, or must be sent to the koshi if he should happen to be in the neighbourhood, or must be reserved for the king himself when the royal residence is within reach. The law likewise demands that all matters of importance should be submitted at once to the deputies, who refer them to their superiors to transmit, if need be, to the king himself.

Dignitaries of what I have called the fourth class comprise what may be designated as the king's privy-council. Nominally they are reputed to rank below the koshi, but practically the monarch holds them as their superiors; they include the state executioner, five or six private physicians, the royal cup-bearer, one or two detectives, the superintendent of the fishermen, and the overseer of the canoes. There was likewise a kind of council belonging to Moquai. Although the king had virtually withdrawn the sovereignty from his daughter, the Mabunda

people persisted in regarding her as their proper ruler, and she was allowed to retain her court-retinue, of whom her husband, Manengo, was the head; she had moreover a chancellor and a captain of the guard, both of whom were appointed viceroys in her dominions. I myself made the acquaintance of Sambe, her premier, as well as of several of her chiefs, Nubiana a Marutse, Moquele, Mokoro, and two Masopias, Monamori and Simalumba.

Sepopo had both a privy-council and a general council. Under a queen a privy-council has no existence at all, and in Sepopo's hands it was entirely his tool, composed of men as cruel as himself. Nor in his time was the general council itself, made up mainly of state officials, much better than a farce; whatever decisions it might arrive at, and whatever sentences it might pass, were completely overruled in the other chamber. Besides the state officials the larger council always included any chiefs or subordinate governors who might be resident near the royal quarters.

Although Sepopo had several times changed his residence he had hitherto generally succeeded in getting a council fairly amenable to his authority; recently, however, his barbarities, and especially the wholesale way in which he was putting people to death upon the slightest pretext, had brought about a spirit of dissatisfaction. Conscious of the growing opposition, the king proceeded to yet greater severity in his dealings, and condemned a number of the leading counsellors, both of the Marutse and Barotse kingdoms, to be executed, an arbitrary measure which only served to hasten his downfall.

By the tribes of the Marutse kingdom in general

the larger council was held in high esteem, the privy-council being regarded only with detestation and servile fear.

In Sepopo's employment there were likewise two old wizen-looking magicians or doctors, Liva and his brother, who exercised almost a supreme control over state affairs. They had practised their craft for more than sixty years; they had served under previous sovereigns, and their experience enabled them now to minister to Sepopo's suspicions, to manage his temper, and to foster his superstitions. They enjoyed a kind of hereditary reputation, as in spite of the atrocities which they were known to have encouraged, they were regarded by the various tribes with awe rather than with hatred. That there had not been a revolt long ago against Sepopo's tyranny was mainly to be attributed to the belief that he had those in his secret council who could divine any plot beforehand and frustrate any stratagem that could be devised, and even when his despotism grew so great that the life of the highest in the kingdom was not secure for a day, not a man could be found to lift an assegai against him. At last it happened that a certain charm which he had publicly exhibited and proclaimed to be infallible failed to produce its proper effect; scales as it were fell from the eyes of the populace; they discerned that all his pretensions were hypocrisy and deceit, and proceeded forthwith to expel him from the throne.

The elephant-hunt, so long talked of, came off on the 27th. At dawn of day all Sesheke was in commotion; the royal courtyard, where the king was distributing powder and shot, was so full of



men equipped for the excursion that I could only with difficulty make my way across. I hurried to tell my English friends the news, but I found that they had already been apprised of the hunt by one of the chiefs, and that although they had not been invited by the king, they were preparing to join the throng. The excitement between the royal enclosure and the river was very great; as the people ran backwards and forwards they shouted and laughed, and I had never seen them in such high spirits and so generally blithe and genial. A hunt on this extensive scale was very rare; the present occasion had been anticipated for months, and it had a special interest of its own from the circumstance that some white men and the king himself were to take part in the sport. Long rows of canoes lined the river bank, another flotilla having collected on the opposite side, the crews on the sand ready to embark at a moment's notice. Hurrying on their way to the Kashteja to await the arrival of canoes to take them across were caravans of men, chiefly Mankoë, Mabundas, and Western Makalalas; every chief made his own people arrange themselves in proper order, and despatched the proper contingent to look after the embarkation of the clothes and water-vessels, and especially to look to the guns, which necessarily engrossed a good deal of attention.

As the king was leaving his residence he was confronted by the party of Englishmen, who remonstrated with him very severely because he had failed to keep his promise of inviting them to the hunt. His behaviour towards them had really been abominable. After endeavouring to fall in with his wishes

in every way, and having twice come from Panda ma Tenka on purpose, and, moreover, having submitted to be fleeced by him till they had little more than the clothes on their backs, they now found that he was about to start without them. This could not be. No doubt Sepopo had his own motives for his conduct; he was accustomed to consider all elephants as his own property, whether shot by himself or not, and probably he was anxious to conceal what numbers of elephants there were in the country, lest the visits of white men should become too frequent; but he was bound to keep his word, and at length, in deference to the representations of some of the chiefs who were in attendance, he consented that the three sportsmen, as well as a trader named Dorehill, who had paid him a visit the year before, should have a canoe placed at their disposal.

It was about noon when the king and his flotilla started off. He was accompanied by his band, and at least two hundred canoes set out from Sesheke alone, apart from those that joined at other parts of the river. It was with no little reluctance that I refrained from going, but I considered it prudent to do nothing to arouse Sepopo's suspicions, and feared that by taking part in the hunt I might lead him to suppose that my proposed expedition in his country had some design of interfering with the elephants.

My general rule at this time was to spend my evenings with Westbeech, where with his assistance I tried to converse with the natives, and gathered many particulars about their manners and customs. In his hut I met a Marutse named Uana ea Nyambe, i. e. the child of God, who prided himself very

much upon his wisdom, and was often consulted by Sepopo.

On the 29th I stayed at home to keep guard while Westbeeck and his servant went out hunting; they were more fortunate than I had been on my last excursion, and returned with a letshwebock that had no less than ten bullets in its body. I believe that the muscles of the neck are more strongly developed in this species of antelope than in any other.

The next day we received a visit from several Marutse who had their foreheads and chests tied up with bandages of snake-skin, to keep off pain, as they explained; they told us that they not unfrequently fastened the bandages round their waists to allay the pangs of hunger; the Makololos use leather straps, and the Matabele strips of calico for the same purpose.

Two boatmen came in a little before sunset to fetch some provisions for the white men on the hunting-ground; they reported that hitherto the chase had been somewhat unsuccessful, but that it was to be resumed in the morning. But about another hour later we were much surprised to see Cowley and Dorehill turn up; they were disappointed, and consequently angry; they told us that they had been stationed in a reed-thicket with the king and the principal members of his suite, and had been waiting for the elephants to be driven up; Sepopo, however, grew so impatient that he fired while the herd was more than sixty yards distant; the consequence was that they immediately took to flight; there were nearly 800 huntsmen following the king, and almost as many beaters, and when the elephants began to run, a sort of panic seized

everybody, guns were fired in every direction, often without an aim at all, and in the general pell-mell it was no great wonder that only five elephants should be killed altogether. Cowley and Dorehill affirmed that they had been obliged to throw themselves on the ground to escape the random volley of shot; and they declared, moreover, that the beaters had utterly failed in their work, which would have been done far more effectually by a couple of Masarwas than by the whole host of them. The king had given vent to his anger at the bungling in his usual fashion by thrashing every one within reach with a heavy stick till his arm ached. Before starting, he had been smeared with a variety of ointments which he called a "molemo" to give him influence over the elephants.

Wishing to make rather a longer excursion into the Sesheke woods than I had previously done, I started off before sunrise, and having passed the site of Old Sesheke, turned to the west. On my left lay the Zambesi valley, an apparently boundless plain overgrown with trees and clumps of reeds, and intersected in various places by side-arms of the river, some of them several miles in length. The woods to which I was bending my way were about twenty feet above the level of the water. Some of the lagoons extended right up to the trees, stretching along the edge of the forest for miles, though the river itself was at an average distance of three miles away. Near one of the lagoons I saw a couple of darters, and very singular their appearance was as they perched upon a bare projecting bough, their stumpy bodies and short legs being quite out of proportion to their long, thin necks, that never

rested from their snake-like contortions ; but a still stranger sight it is to see them swim, the whole of the body being immersed and nothing but the upper part of the neck with the head and sharp beak visible above the water. Until arriving at the Zambesi, I had not seen the darter (*Plotus congensis*) since I left the eastern parts of Cape Colony. In a way that is scarcely credible without being witnessed, their long, narrow throats are capable of swallowing fish as large as a man's hand. I shot several, but they all fell into the water, and as the lagoons abounded with crocodiles, it was not without risk that I and my four servants contrived to fish them out again. Shortly afterwards I shot a *Francolinus nudicollis*.

Noticing some buffalo tracks that apparently led down to the river I determined to follow them, and found that they soon turned back to the woods, past a native village. We continued our way about three miles beyond this, when we observed how the grass alongside the tracks had been quite recently eaten away, and drew an inference that the buffaloes were not likely to be far distant, and that we ought to be on our guard ; the trees around us were not of any great height, but the underwood was dense, and the bushes round the glades were rather thick, so that our progress was not at all easy.

We kept on our way, however, and at length came to a spot where the tracks were so unmistakably new, that it was certain the buffaloes must be close at hand. We moved forwards with increased caution, keeping only a few yards apart.

“Narri! narri!” (buffalo! buffalo!) suddenly whispered Chukuru, and beckoned to us to halt.



“Kia hassibone narri,” (I see no buffalo), I answered, and kept on.

But Chukuru touched me on my shoulder as a sign that I should crouch down; the others took the hint and concealed themselves instantly in the grass.

“Okay?” (where) I asked.

He pointed to four dark objects lying on the ground about 120 yards distant. There could be no mistake. They were four buffaloes. One of them had its head towards me. I took aim and fired; up jumped every one to see the effect. Up sprang the buffaloes, and made off in a gallop. One of them however lagged behind; it rolled over for a moment, but sprang up quickly and overtook the rest; then again it seemed to linger. We had no doubt that it had been wounded, but whether mortally or not we could not tell.

Nothing can exceed the cunning that a buffalo will exhibit when it is wounded or infuriated. Having better powers of discrimination, it is more wary than a hippopotamus, and consequently is not so dangerous to an unarmed man, but once provoked it will fight to the bitter end. It generally makes a little retreat, and conceals itself behind a bush, where it waits for the hunter, and when he comes up makes a dash at him. Attacks of this kind are by no means unfrequent, and huntsmen of considerable experience have been known to be outwitted and seriously injured by these South African buffaloes. Sometimes the angry brute will content itself with tossing its victim into the air, in which case the mischief is generally limited to the dislocation or fracture of a limb, but far more often it

holds its antagonist down upon the ground, whilst with its feet it tramples him to death. I heard of an instance on the Limpopo, where a white man and three negroes were killed, and a fourth negro much injured, all by a single buffalo bull.

The buffaloes of which we were in pursuit came to a standstill after about 200 yards; the leader of them turned, and seemed to be scenting us out; then again they started off, but after a very short run the one that was wounded fell behind and appeared anxious to conceal itself under the shelter of a tree. I made my servants approach and attract its attention, while I crept up unobserved till I was within proper range, when I immediately discharged both my barrels. The first shot entered the breast, the second hit the shoulder; and tottering forwards on to the open ground, the animal almost directly fell upon its knees. With shouts of glee my servants ran up to the spot, but on discovering that the buffalo was not dead, they were careful not to go too near, nor would I allow them to touch it until I had contrived to get sufficiently close to send a bullet behind its ear, when it fell back powerless, and its limbs were stiffened in death. The delight of my negroes was unbounded; they danced round the carcase for a few minutes, and then set to work to light a fire, at which they roasted the best part of the heart, and cutting off one of the feet toasted the marrow.

I went home with one of the men in the evening, leaving the rest to dismember the buffalo's body. There were many lion-tracks about, and as they cut up the joints they were obliged to hang them up out of the lions' reach. In the midst of their





Pl. II.

CHASE OF THE WATER-ANTELOPE.

operations a heavy storm came on, which made it quite impossible for them to light a fire, so that they were themselves obliged to spend the night on the branches of a tree.

Before I reached my quarters the wind had begun to blow violently, and just as I was entering the town, I saw a boat capsize with two fishermen and a quantity of fish. Fortunately the men managed to get safely to shore, but the surface of the water was covered with the dead fish, which the current carried inland. In a moment, almost like magic, from every direction there started up a crowd of boys, who began taking possession of the unexpected haul; they tore off their leather aprons, and were filling them with the best and biggest they could find, when all of a sudden their mirth was checked, and they were as eager to scramble out of the water as they had been to plunge in. The well-known red coat of the overseer of the fishermen had been observed in the distance, and the dread of the thick stick of that important official was for the tribe of juvenile freebooters a sufficient notice to quit.

The next morning I was somewhat startled by seeing a large number of men all carrying arms, and hastening towards the woods. I was beginning to wonder whether there had been an alarm of some enemy approaching, when the mystery was solved by the arrival of some young men with a message from their chief that they were going out on a lion-hunt, and inviting us to join them. Four lions had made an attack upon the royal herds, and had killed four cows.

The scene of the disaster was not far away. About 150 yards above our courtyard the Zambesi



made a sudden bend from west to north, and then, after awhile, turned at right angles to the east, past New Sesheke; on the opposite side at this last bend was a lagoon that branched off into two arms, and it was on the strip of land between these that the havoc had been committed. Neither Westbeeche nor Walsh cared to join the hunt, but I and Cowley accepted the invitation.

Cowley was a good-natured young fellow of eighteen, with a face round and rosy as a girl's; his manners were very genial, and he had nothing to spoil him, except perhaps a little weakness in his desire to be a Gordon Cumming; he had already killed two lions, and was quite ready to risk his life in adding a third to the number.

Although about 170 natives had assembled with their chief, only four of them were provided with guns. It was not much more than half an hour after I had received my invitation that I arrived at the lagoon, where the whole troop advanced to meet us. It had been already decided that the track of the largest lion should be followed, and the herdsmen were being questioned about the details of the attack. It appeared that they had thought it impossible for any lions to come so near the town, and leaving their herds in a place that was quite unenclosed, they had all gone to sleep in some huts close by.

I understood that it is only when lions have done some injury that the Marutse ever go out to attack them.

Our arrival was the signal to commence operations. The procession was opened by a few natives and a couple of dogs that were put on the lion-

track ; Maranzian, the chief, went next, followed by Cowley and myself ; the rest of the throng came on without much order behind. But it was only in the open places that any particular rank could be kept ; the thorn-bushes were often so thick that even the dogs could hardly make their way through, and every one got forward as best he could. The bushes however hardly impeded us so much, or were so uncomfortable as the tall reeds in the dried-up hollows. We persevered for more than an hour without coming in sight of our prey, and the negroes began to joke about the lion feeling itself guilty, and said that it was ashamed to show its face, and glad to hide away ; but on leaving the next hollow the dogs commenced growling angrily, and made a rush into another hollow beyond again, about ten feet deep and thirty feet wide. The condition of the trail satisfied us that the lion was concealed here close at hand. We made the crowd of natives halt, Maranzian and I hastened round to the farther side and prepared to fire, Cowley staying on the nearer side, and sending the dogs into the reeds ; but we schemed to no purpose, the baying of the hounds made us aware that the lion had got round behind us, and we were obliged to change our position.

Followed by the throng, we proceeded to the open space beyond the reeds, close to the spot in which we imagined that the lion was now concealed, and having chosen our places where we thought we had the best chance of firing at it on its escape, we made the whole crowd shout to the top of their voices, and throw in bits of wood ; and when that proved ineffectual we ordered them, whether they liked it

or not, to go into the thicket and rummage about with their spears.

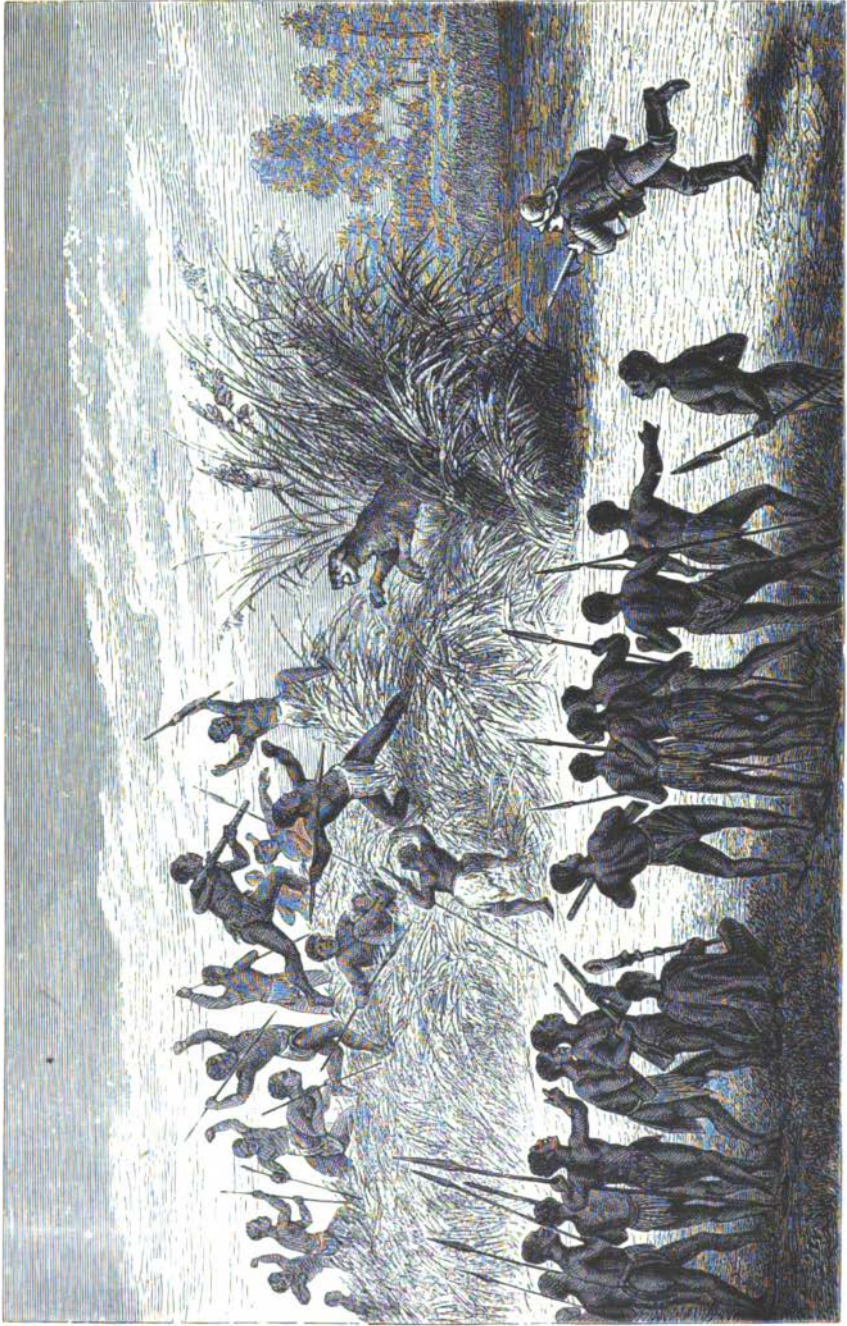
It was a very pandemonium. The screaming and yelling of the negroes was quite unearthly, and the noise seemed to grow louder and more frightful as their courage increased at not finding any lion to alarm them. Maranzian, with his four men that had guns, was standing about twenty yards in front of me. We were beginning to think that we were again baulked, when, like a flash of lightning, a lioness made a tremendous spring out of its concealment, and then another spring as sudden into the very midst of the excited crowd of hunters. There were so many of them scattered about between me and the angry brute, that it was out of the question to think of firing, and it made a third bound, and disappeared into another thicket close behind; it knocked over several of the men, but fortunately it did not hurt any of them seriously.

Without the loss of a moment, Maranzian sent his men to drive the lioness to the very extremity of her new retreat. It rather surprised us to find the dogs perfectly silent as we followed them into the thicket, but before long we heard them barking vehemently in the open ground beyond; they had driven out the brute, and were in full pursuit.

As he saw the lioness bounding away in the distance, with the dogs at her heels, Cowley was terribly chagrined at having abandoned his former position, and sighed over his lost chance of adding to his rising renown as a lion-hunter.

Only an artist's pencil could properly depict the scene at this moment. The plain was more than half a mile long, and nearly as wide; bushwood







enclosed it on the north, reed-thickets on the south and west; far in front was the fugitive lioness; the dogs were pressing on at various intervals, whilst the frantic crowd of well-nigh 200 negroes was scampering in the rear; nothing could be imagined more motley than their appearance; their aprons of white, or check, or brown, or red contributed a variety of colour; their leather mantles on their shoulders fluttered wildly in the wind; many of them brandished their assegais as if ready for action; others kept them balanced evenly in their hands; some of them continued to yell at the very top of their voices, and a few could be heard chanting, as if by anticipation, the strains of the lion-dance.

The climax was now at hand, and full of excitement it was. Again the lioness took refuge in a triangular thicket, with its vertex farthest from us. Close beside it was a sandbank, some ten feet high. Maranzian, with a number of men, placed himself on the right side of the thicket; I took up my position on the left, Cowley stationing himself on the sandbank at a point where he conceived the lioness when pressed by the negroes would try to escape. By encouraging words, and where words failed by the free use of a stout stick, Maranzian made a lot of the men go and ransack the reeds, and as they tumbled about they gave the place almost the aspect of a battle-field. The excitement became more intense when there remained but one little corner of the thicket to be explored. Now or never the lioness must be found. Suddenly there was an angry growl, and the beast leaped towards the pursuers. A shot was fired at that moment, but it only struck the sand; the negroes, taken by

surprise, fell back, some of them disappearing altogether, a few of them desperately hurling their spears. Once again the lioness retreated, and when the natives had recovered themselves, they saw her crouching down as if prepared for another spring. Here was my chance; catching sight of her head, I took deliberate aim and fired; my shot took good effect, and at the same time a couple of spears hit her on the side. One more growl and she was dead.

It was only for greater precaution that Cowley and I, before we permitted the carcass to be moved, each put another bullet into it, but it was subsequently pierced by more than twenty spears; many of the negroes, as they approached the lifeless body, thrust the points of their assegais into it, muttering some mysterious formula. As it was the king's cattle that had been slaughtered by the lions, the skull of the brute we had now killed would be employed as a charm, and hung up in the royal kraal.

Cowley and I returned home, leaving the carcass to be brought in afterwards. When it arrived it was received with much shouting and singing. It was carried by four of the strongest of the men on a couple of poles, its paws tied together, and its head hanging down well-nigh to the ground; it was brought into the town just as my own servants were returning with the buffalo-meat, and a large proportion of the male population turned out to greet the hunters. The next thing to be done was to beat the lion-drums, and to announce that the lion-dance would be performed. The procession advanced in two groups, one consisting of the bearers, with the

carcase as a trophy of success ; the other being the hunters. The leader of the expedition opened the dance, and he was followed by such of the hunters as had been nearest at the death ; they were accompanied in their performance by the beating of a drum. The dancers next gave a representation of the lion-hunt, running in all directions, and pretending to hurl their spears ; the singing was taken up by the two groups alternately, and though it was not so monotonous as some that I heard at other times, yet any melody it might have had was utterly destroyed by the painful discord of the instruments that accompanied it.

After the body of the lioness had been deposited on the ground under a mimosa, we took the opportunity of investigating the wounds. It turned out that my first bullet had passed completely along the left side of the skull, and that immediately on receiving it the wounded beast had fallen so as to leave only the lower part of its face exposed ; this we had both struck, and we traced one bullet into the vertebræ of the neck, while the other, Cowley's we presumed, had shivered the lower skull-bone to splinters.

In making my memoranda of this lion-hunt I used up the last of my writing-paper ; it was some that Westbeech had torn out of his own journal and given me. It was now that I found the newspapers that I had received from Shoshong very useful ; the parts that were printed on were very serviceable for pressing plants, and I was only too glad to fasten the margins together into sheets by means of mimosa-gum, and to use them for writing on.

After our hunting triumph Maranzian honoured

me with a visit next day. In the course of his conversation with Westbeeck and myself, he gave us some fresh information about the Barotse, the mother country of the Marutse. Noticing how I made entries in my "lungalo" (book) of all that I had seen in Sesheke, he told me that when I got to the towns of the Barotse I should see many objects much more worthy of being recorded; the buildings, he assured me, were very superior, and he referred especially to the monuments of the kings. What he described, added to what I had heard from Westbeeck, as well as from the king, from Moquai, from the chiefs Rattan and Ramakocan, and from the Portuguese, only served to increase the longing with which I looked forward to the journey before me. The conversation afterwards turned upon Maritella, the heir to the throne, who had died. Maranzian said that after his death the king had had all the cattle from the town and environs driven to the grave, and left standing there until they belled with hunger and thirst; whereupon he exclaimed: "See, how the very cattle are mourning for my son!"

When the king returned from his great hunting-expedition he was extremely discontented with the result, and consequently very much out of temper. On one of the days the party had sighted more than a hundred elephants in the swamps near Impalera, but although at least 10,000 shots had been fired only four elephants had been killed. I called to see him and he showed me the tusks that had been brought back; there were two weighing 60 lbs., six between 25 lbs. and 30 lbs., four small female tusks, and four from animals so small that they were

comparatively of no value. The two largest tusks had been much injured by the bullets.

On the 7th I started off on the longest pedestrian excursion I had yet taken, rambling on for fifty-two miles. Leaving Sesheke in good time, I crossed the western part of Blockley's kraal and made my way to the Kashteja, where I had to go a long way up the stream before I could find a fording-place. The lower part of this affluent of the Zambesi is flat and meadow-like and bordered with underwood. On my way thither I noticed zebras, striped-gnus, letshwe and puku antelopes, and rietbock and steinbock gazelles. In the river-valley itself the orbekis and rietbocks had congregated in herds, a mode of living which I had never seen before, nor do I think that any other hunter had.

Altogether dissatisfied with their visit to Sesheke, the English officers were now very anxious to leave; but Sepopo would not provide them with canoes, and though they urged their request again on the following day, they were again refused. Blockley returned from Panda ma Tenka on the 9th. I was much pleased to greet once more a man who had shown me so much kindness; and I accompanied him when he paid his visit to Sepopo.

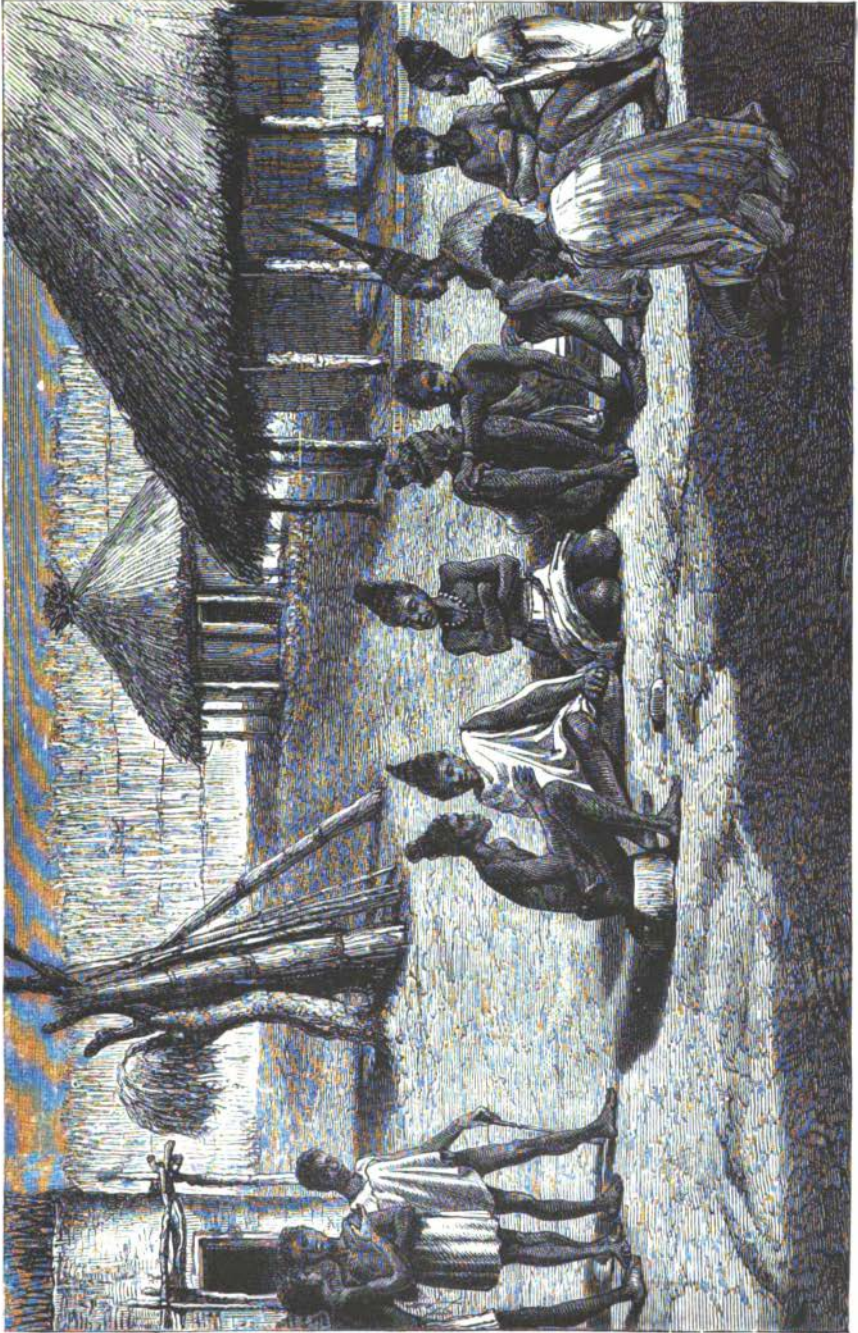
The king at length rejoiced my heart by acceding to my long-cherished wishes; he told me that Moquai and the queens who had come from the Barotse country were about to return, and that I was at liberty to go with them. Fellow-travellers more influential than these distinguished ladies could not be desired.

On my next visit to Sepopo I found the royal courtyard crowded with people. As soon as I en-



tered the house the king asked me whether I had ever seen any Mashukulumbe; and understanding that I had not, he took me by the hand and introduced me to six men who were squatting on the ground. Their appearance was strange, and seemed to invite a careful scrutiny. Their skin was almost black, and their noses generally aquiline, though they had an effeminate cast of countenance, to be attributed very much to their lack of beard and to the sinking in of the upper lip. All hair was carefully removed from every part of their bodies, except the top of the skull, where it was mounted up in a very remarkable fashion.

The Mashukulumbe, Sepopo informed me, were the people who lived to the north and east of his territory; and the men who had now arrived were ambassadors who were sent every year to the Marutse court with complimentary presents, and who would go back in a few weeks carrying other presents in return. When at home they go perfectly naked, the women wearing nothing but a little leather strap, hung with bells and fastened round their waists. Their pride is their *coiffure*, which consists of a conical chignon that fits tight round the head, and is composed of vertical rolls or horizontal tiers, the tresses being most ingeniously plaited together, sometimes crossing and recrossing each other, sometimes kept quite parallel; the whole being finally matted together with gum, which gives it the appearance of really growing from the crown of the head. But this is by no means the case; the hair that is periodically shaved off the entire body, except from the patch of ten or twelve inches in circumference on the head, is all carefully preserved



Fol. 17

MASHUKULUMBE AT THE COURT OF KING SEPOPO.



until enough has been accumulated for the head-gear; and the master of the house will not unfrequently add the hair of his wives and slaves, twisting it up into bands that are intertwined with his own. I saw a coiffure twelve inches round, worked into a tail more than a yard long that inclined towards the right shoulder; so that every time the man moved, and especially when he stooped, the head-dress appeared to be toppling over with him. The average height to which the hair was trained was about ten inches; but in all cases the unusual weight upon the skull had the effect of developing the muscles of the temples till they stood out like cords, not unfrequently as thick as one's finger. The falling in of the top lip was caused by extracting the upper incisor-teeth, an operation with the Mashukulumbe that corresponds with the boguera of the Bechuanas, and is practised upon youths when attaining the state of manhood, being part of their discipline. One of the Makalaka tribes north of the Zambesi, as well as the Matongas on its bank, break out their top incisor-teeth from the sheerest vanity. Their women say that it is only horses that eat with all their teeth, and that men ought not to eat like horses.

With the help of his attendants, the king was engaged in manufacturing a musical instrument out of the leaf-ribs of a saro-palm. Except just at the ends, the concave surface was hollowed into a furrow, the convex side underneath being scored with a number of little incisions about the thirtieth part of an inch in width. When played, the instrument is struck with small sticks, and is used particularly at the elephant-dance.

Westbeeck, Dorehill, and Cowley left on the 10th for Panda ma Tenka; but Sepopo still refused to provide any canoes for the English officers, who were becoming more impatient than ever to get away.

On the 11th he had a mokoro, or boat-dance, executed through the town. It was supposed to represent a boating-excursion, the principal feature being a boat-song that was sung in chorus. On this occasion the king himself took the leading part, and went through all the gesticulations of a steersman, whilst about seventy of his people had to follow him and imitate the movements of rowers.

Not doubting that the English officers would very soon be permitted to depart, I had devoted some time to the preparation of several articles for insertion in various journals in England and at home; but I now began to fear that the opportunity of entrusting my correspondence to their charge would be again deferred. At length, however, the desired boats were forthcoming, and they were suffered to take their departure. Sepopo made a last effort to detain them, but finally yielded to their solicitations. The boatmen, taking their cue from the king, were at first inclined to be disagreeable; but I interfered and checked their insolence, and they were all brought to reason before the officers proceeded on their way.

My next excursion was towards the north-east. I shot a steinbock, and secured a good variety of coleoptera.

Rising before daybreak on the 21st, I set out on a ramble to the north, not returning till after sunset. The dew in the morning was very heavy; and I was



tired in the evening by my long exertions ; but I was amply compensated for all inconvenience and fatigue by the many objects of interest that I saw and collected. Many parts of the wood were overgrown with a tall spreading shrub covered with large white blossoms that perfumed the air with their fragrance. In one of the glades I found two new kinds of lilies, one with a handsome violet-coloured flower. A leaf-beetle of a yellow-ochre tint had settled on the other lily ; and I likewise discovered another species with red and blue stripes, and two new species of weevils on the young sprouts of the musetta bushes. As I went back I caught three sorts of little rose-beetles on the white-flowering shrubs ; and in a dry grassy hollow I found the species of *Lytta* which I had already seen in Sechele's country during my second journey.

Having arranged to join a buffalo-hunt on the 24th, I retired to my hut rather earlier than usual on the previous evening ; and it was scarcely nine o'clock when I was roused by a noise like sounds of weeping coming from the river. At first I did not take any particular heed ; but finding that the noise continued, and that there was a murmur of voices that seemed to increase, I had the curiosity to send Narri, one of my servants, to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. In a few minutes he came running back with the news that Queen Moquai was having one of her maids drowned. Unable to believe that she could be capable of such an act, I hurried out, determined to convince myself by the testimony of my own eyes before I would credit so shameful a report.

A crowd of men and women, brawling, screeching,

and laughing, was gathered on the shore; and just as I arrived, the body of a girl, apparently lifeless, was being lifted up the bank. In a few moments, however, she recovered consciousness and was dragged away towards Moquai's quarters.

I followed in the train, and as I went I elicited the facts of the case. The girl was a slave of Moquai's, and on the day before had been informed by her mistress that she was to marry a hideous old Marutse wood-carver. Folding her hands upon her breast, she had expressed her desire to be submissive as far as she could, but was quite unable to conceal her aversion to the husband that had been chosen for her; she burst into piteous sobs, which had the effect of making the queen extremely angry, and she dismissed the girl from her presence. Altogether unused to have her wishes questioned, the queen presently had the girl recalled. Again she protested that she was anxious to serve her mistress with all fidelity, but pleaded that she might have nothing to do with the odious old man she was expected to marry. Moquai's fury had known no bounds; she had sent for the proposed bridegroom, and given him instructions to carry off the girl that very night from the royal hut to the river, to hold her under the water till she was half dead, and thence to take her to his own quarters, where she would wake up again a "mosari"—a married woman.

The orders were duly executed; and I had not been awake long next morning before I heard the singing and beating of drums that betokened that the nuptial dance was being performed in Moquai's courtyard before the door of the newly-

married pair. On going to the spot I found ten men kicking up their heels and slowly twisting themselves round in an oval course, while a man in the middle pirouetted in the contrary direction, and beat time with the bough of a tree; they all wore aprons of roughly-tanned leather, mostly the skins of lynxes and grey foxes, and many of them had the calves of their legs, as in the other dances, covered with bells or fruit-shells. The singing of the man in the middle was accompanied by the beating of two of the large drums; and four more dancers were squatted on the ground, ready to relieve any of the ten men that were tired out. Two boys of about ten years of age were amongst the dancers; and various passers-by stayed and took a turn at the performance for the sake of having a share in the kaffir-corn beer which the queen would distribute when the dance was over. Every now and then the whole of the dancers would put shoulder to shoulder, sing aloud in chorus, and quicken their pace to a great rapidity. The dance would be repeated at intervals for no less than three days.

I passed the place again on the afternoon of the following day as I was on my way back from the woods, and found the huts appropriated to the attendants in the queen's enclosure still in a state of uproar; there was still the group of dancers; a number of extra performers were drinking from the brimming pitchers of butshuala that were continually replenished; while many spectators, attracted by the sound of the drums, added the hum of their voices to the general merriment. The unfortunate bride alone seemed to have no enjoyment

of the festivity; dejected and miserable, she sat in front of her hut, with her head resting on her hands, and her eyes gazing vacantly towards the next enclosure; manifestly she neither saw nor heard anything that was going on.

A day or two afterwards we were surprised by a serenade from Sepopo and Moquai, who were accompanied by a band of eight musicians, including two



SEPOPO'S DOCTOR.

performers on the myrimbas, or gourd-shell pianos, and four on the morupas, or long drums. Not to offend the king, I stayed at home all day.

At noon on the following day Westbeech returned from Panda ma Tenka with guns for the king. Two Portuguese also made their appearance in the town. They called themselves *Señhores*; but one was as black as a Mambari, though he indignantly repudiated the appellation. His name was Francis

Roquette, and including some black women, he had twenty servants in his train, who all had their woolly hair shaved off, except a small tuft standing up at the top of their head like a back-comb. Both the Portuguese had arrived from the north, having come from one of the Mashukulumbe countries, where they had bartered the great bulk of their goods, and had brought the small residue to Sesheke, consisting of flint-guns, cases of coarse gunpowder, some lead and iron bullets, and a little calico.



A MABUNDA.

A MAKOLOLO.

Long before this time my servants had finished making the canvas coverings for my baggage; and as far as I was concerned I was ready to set out. It was therefore with unbounded satisfaction that I saw the council-chamber being furbished up, the great drums being put into readiness, and the various other indications that the queens were really about to take their departure.

Expectation was not much longer deferred. On the 1st of December I started on the expedition for which I had waited so eagerly and so long.



## CHAPTER X.

## UP THE ZAMBESI.

Departure from Sesheke—The queens' squadron—First night's camp—Symptoms of fever—Agricultural advantages of the Zambesi valley—Rapids and cataracts of the central Zambesi—The Mutshila-Aumsinga rapids—A catastrophe—Encampment near Sioma—A conspiracy—Lions around Sioma—My increasing illness.



MANKOË.

ON the morning fixed for the start one of the Marutse subchieftains came to me with a message that I was to accompany him to the river side. There I found three of the royal canoes waiting for me; but as they barely sufficed to carry my baggage, I had to ask for a fourth, my

servants for the present having to follow on foot.

It was about noon when we quitted Sesheke. We proceeded at good speed past a number of islands, creeks, and lagoons, at which I should have been glad to linger, and could only regret that the

approach of the unhealthy season made it necessary to hurry forwards, and quite prevented me from drawing up either a proper map or detailed plan of the river-bed. The shore, sandy and sloping, was covered with a layer of turf and clay about a foot deep; and during the first part of our voyage I noticed several plants that I should very much have liked to stay and gather; but I could not venture



TYPES OF MARUTSE.

to stop, as I was anxious to overtake the queens, who had started some hours earlier.

Towards evening we arrived at a place which required very careful navigation; some trunks of trees that had been washed down by the stream had become imbedded in the ground, and formed dangerous impediments in the line of traffic; we succeeded, however, in passing them with safety, and just about sunset reached the spot where the royal

ladies had landed. It was a bare sandy place on the bank, enclosed on two sides by sedge, and sheltered from the wind by tall bushes. The serving-maids had already lighted several fires, and had commenced their cooking, and a number of boats had been despatched to fetch reeds to build the huts for the night's accommodation.

In the course of the day's progress I had noticed a great many water-birds and swamp-birds, as well as starlings, finches, and kingfishers, all along the river.

Had I followed my own inclinations I should have stayed close to the spot where the queens had landed; but my boatmen recommended a place a few miles further on. Not suspecting any artifice on their part, I acceded to the proposal, though it turned out that their only motive was to separate me from the royal flotilla, that I might not have the protection of the queens if they should be inclined to be insolent or misconduct themselves in any way. It was quite late before we reached the landing-place to which they carried me, and which was a Mamboë settlement, containing a few huts occupied by fishermen and hippopotamus-hunters; their character being sufficiently indicated by the nets hung out on poles ornamented by crocodiles' heads, and by the quantities of fish that were lying about. We found our quarters for the night in a grass-hut thirty yards long, but not more than ten feet wide and about ten feet high.

While we were reloading our boats in the morning the royal squadron came in sight, and we awaited its arrival. The Mamboë in the place sent the queens a bullock which had been slaughtered the evening

previously, and Mokena, "the mother of the country," was courteous enough to send me one of the hind-quarters. I made my own boatmen keep up with the others all the morning, and we made our way along with good speed. The boats were all well manned; and as they darted about, sometimes in the rear and sometimes well to the front, threading their way between the islands on the dark blue water, and past the luxuriant mimosas on the banks, they formed a picture that I should willingly have done my best to transfer to paper if I had not felt that every available moment ought to be employed in making the best survey I could of the cartographical features of the stream.

When it was necessary to give the energetic boatmen a rest we lay to for something under an hour against a sandbank opposite a Marutse settlement on the right-hand shore. They all enjoyed their dacha-pipes, while the queens partook of some light refreshment; one of them, Mamangala, thoughtfully sending me some broiled fish for my luncheon. The river-scenery, and the examples of animal life, corresponded very much with what I had noticed the day before.

Towards evening we arrived at a place where some recent travellers had left about twenty huts. Here we resolved to land; and, indeed, it was high time that we did so, as a storm was gathering, and it began to rain before I could get my baggage on shore. The fourth boat for which I had asked was here awaiting me. The storm continued till near midnight; and as the huts were not waterproof I was induced to use my wraps to protect my packages. While sitting dozing-upon one of my boxes

I slipped off, and woke to find myself lying in a great pool of water that had dripped through the thatch. Of such a night's rest it was hardly to be expected that I should escape the consequences.

I yielded next morning to the solicitations of the boatmen, and started, much against my inclination, on a hunting-excursion across the plain stretching far away from the Sesheke woods towards the west. Overgrown with grass four or five feet high, the plain was full of swamps, and was subject to floods that left nothing unsubmerged except the few hillocks on which the Marutse had erected some straggling villages, the largest of which is called Matonga. The whole expedition was damp and dreary, and as far as sport was concerned absolutely fruitless. Before I reached our encampment, when we had only about another mile to go, I was seized with a sudden weariness, which increased so rapidly that I was unable to move a step, and my servants had to carry me the rest of the way back. I understood the symptoms only too well, and could come to no other conclusion than that I was in the preliminary stage of fever.

The boatmen were inclined to be very angry because we had come back without bringing a supply of game, and were also ready to make a disturbance with the villagers in Matonga for not procuring them enough corn and beer. I began to fear that I should have a difficulty with them; but happily Sekele, the sub-chieftain who had the oversight of things, took my part and brought them to reason.

During the night one of Moquai's waiting-women was reported to be missing, and it was soon found



that she had taken her way back towards Sesheke. Some messengers were sent, who quickly overtook her; she proved to be the bride who had been forced into marriage against her wishes.

Continuing our voyage, we entered a narrow side-arm of the river lying between the left shore and the most northerly of a wooded group of islands, to which I gave the name of Rohlf's Islands.

Upon the mainland was Sekhose, the most westerly of the Masupia settlements, where for many



A MAMBARI.



A MATONGA.

years there has been a good system of husbandry, manza and beans being grown, as well as other crops. The Marutse only grow what they require for their own use, and to make up their tribute; but the Masupias, Batokas, and eastern Makalakas do somewhat more than this, selling the overplus to the hunters and traders who come from the south; but even they hardly cultivate more than the sandy slopes and the wooded declivities in the neighbourhood of ant-hills, leaving the marsh-lands completely untilled; yet these are the districts which would

prove most fertile, and with the mild climate and the means of irrigation at their command, seem to me to hold out a grand prospect for the future. Away in the interior of the country are vast tracts of meadow-land, often miles in extent, that are now enclosed with primæval forest, but which might be transformed into prolific fields, while the rivers might, like the Zambesi, be utilized for watering them. The tribes are all ambitious and industrious; and if once the plough shall be introduced, and a free trade opened either to the south or east, the Marutse kingdom, it may be predicted, will exhibit a rapid development.

About twelve miles from Sesheke the woods came right down to the river bank, a foretoken of the chain of hills that accompanied the stream from the Barotse valley. East of Sesheke, half way between the Makumba rapids and the mouth of the Kashteja, where the country began to rise, I had noticed a cessation of the palms and papyrus, and west of Sekhose, where the stream has a considerable fall, was the commencement of the southern Barotse rapids and the cataracts of the central Zambesi. They are caused by ridges of rocks running either straight or transversely across the river, connecting links, as it were, between the hills on either side. The peaks of these reefs made countless little islands; and the further we went the more interesting I found their variety, some being brown and bare, whilst others were overgrown with reeds, or occasionally with trees of no inconsiderable height. Within fourteen miles I counted, besides a cataract, as many as forty-four rapids. In some cases the river-bed beneath them presented a continuous, sloping surface of rock,

while in others it fell abruptly in a series of steps ; rapids again were formed by great boulders that projected above the water, and I noticed one instance where the rocks made almost a barrier across the river, whilst only here and there were the gaps through which the current forced its way.

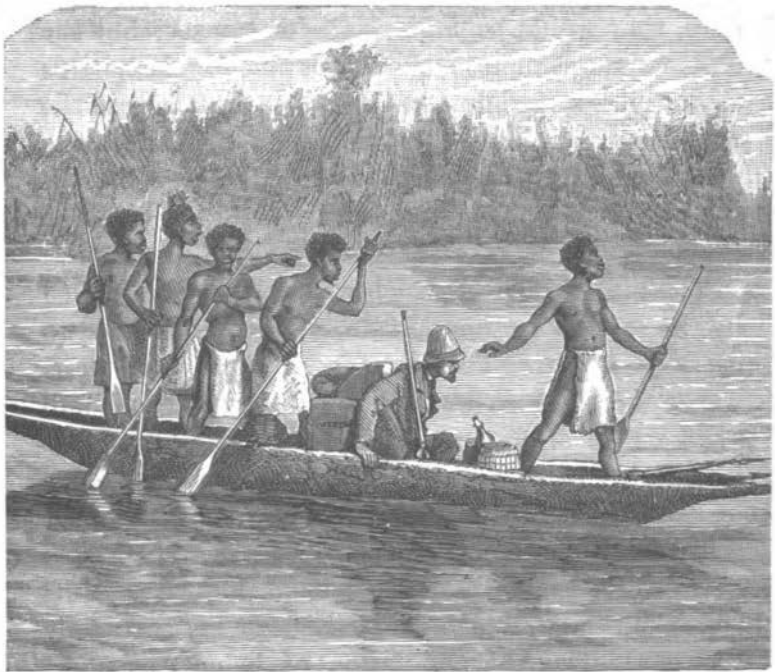
Were it not that the rapids are avoided by crocodiles, they would be impassable for canoes ; but the absence of crocodiles makes it possible for the natives to disembark, and push or drag their craft across the obstacle. In places that are especially dangerous, it is found necessary to stow the baggage on the top of the boulders, and to take the boat over the rapid empty.

The first rapids at which we arrived were called by the natives Katima Molelo. Our oars sufficed to carry us over the first stretch of them, but afterwards the boatmen were obliged to get out and pull every canoe after them, taking care to lose no time in jumping in again, well aware that the deep water just beyond was almost sure to be a lurking-place for crocodiles.

On the 5th we crossed the rapids known as Mutshila Aumsinga, which, as I found to my cost, only too justly had the reputation of being the most dangerous of any of the Sesheke and Nambwe cataracts. I was still feeling very unwell, and could not even sit in my canoe without much pain ; but there was nothing in my condition that alarmed me, and I continued to work at my chart of our course.

The Mutshila Aumsinga rapids are formed by a considerable slope in the river-bed, combined with the projection of numerous masses of rock above the

water. But the chief danger in crossing them arises from another cause. Between a wooded island and the left-hand shore are two side-currents, about fifty yards broad, formed by some little islands at their head; and as no part of the rapids is sufficiently shallow for boats to be lifted across them, the



ASCENDING THE ZAMBESI.

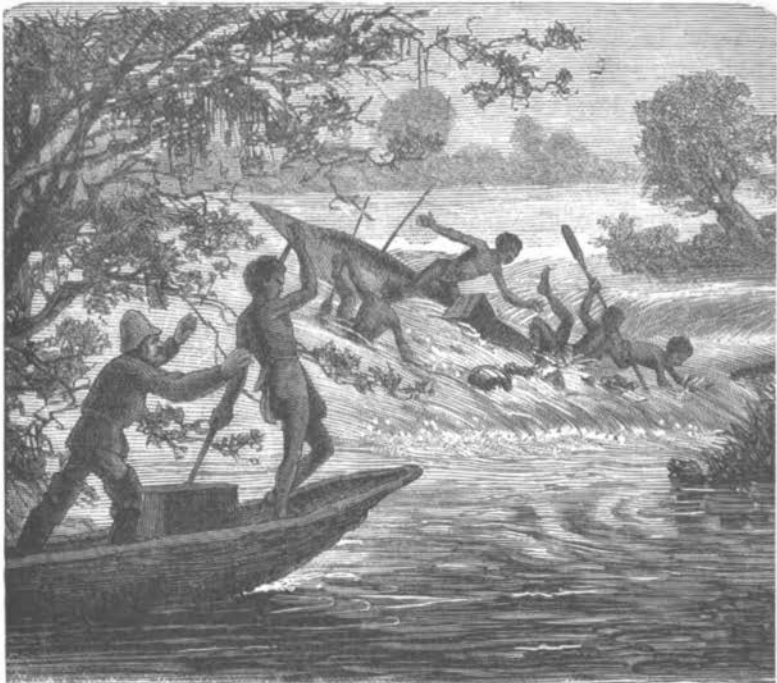
strength of the rowers has to be put to the test by pulling against the full force of the stream, and is consequently liable to be exhausted.

The boat in which I was sitting happened to be the third in the order of procession. It carried my journals, all my beads and cartridges, and the presents intended for the native kings and chiefs. Like

all my other boats it was too heavily laden, and not adequately manned. The second boat just ahead of me conveyed my gunpowder, my medicines, and provisions, and all the plants and insects that I had collected at Sesheke, the bulk of my specimens having been left with Westbeeck to send back to Panda ma Tenka. Observing that the crew in front were experiencing the utmost difficulty in holding their own against the current, I shouted to them to catch hold of the branches of some overhanging trees; I was most anxious to see them at least keep their bow in the right direction. My voice was lost in the roar of the waters. I could see that the oars of the men were slipping off the surface of the rock that was as smooth as a mirror, and that the men, although obviously aware of their peril, were paddling wildly and to no purpose at all. My heart misgave me. Nothing could save the boat; still I could not bring myself to believe that fate was about to deal so hardly with me. I could not realize that just at the moment when a threatening fever made me especially require my medicines I was about to lose them all. I could not face the contingency of having my stock of provisions, on which I depended not only for the prosecution of my journey, but for my very maintenance, totally destroyed; neither could I resign myself to the loss of all the natural curiosities that I had laboured for so many days to accumulate. I called vehemently upon my own crew to hasten to the rescue; but they, in their alarm at the desperate plight of the others, were quite powerless; they were utterly bewildered, and were letting themselves drift into the fury of the current; but happily they were within reach of the drooping



branches of a tree, at which they clutched only just in time to make their boat secure. By this time the boat in front had twisted round, and presented its broadside to the angry flood. Nothing could save it now. Heedless of the state of fever I was in, I should have flung myself into the current,



MY BOAT WRECKED.

determined to help if I could, had not the boatmen held me back. Not that any assistance on my part could have been of any avail, for in another moment I saw that the paddles were all broken, the men lost their equilibrium, and, to my horror, the boat was overturned.

At the greatest risk, by the combined exertions

of both crews, the capsized canoe was after some time set afloat again, and a few trifling articles were gathered up, but the bulk of my baggage was irrecoverably lost.

Thus ended all my schemes; thus vanished all my visions for the future.

No one can conceive the keenness of my disappointment. The preparations of seven previous years had proved fruitless. Here I was, not only suffering in body from the increasing pains of fever, but dejected in spirit at the conviction that I must forthwith abandon my enterprise.

An hour after that deplorable passage of the Mutshila Aumsinga, which never can be effaced from my memory, we landed on the right-hand bank of the Zambesi, just below a Mabunda village called Sioma. My servants, who had continued following on foot, were ferried across, and we made our encampment before it grew dark. We were rather surprised to be told by the residents that the neighbourhood was infested with lions, and that the village was night after night ravaged by their attacks; and, for my own part, I was inclined to believe that the stories were made up as a pretext to induce us to move on. In exchange for some beads I obtained a quantity of kaffir-corn beer, which I distributed to the boatmen in acknowledgment of the exertions they had made in my service. Finding that I was not intimidated by the representations they made, and pleased moreover with the beads I had spent among them, the natives became more hospitable, and gave us their advice and assistance in collecting the roofs of seven deserted huts, which we placed closely side by side in a semicircle, resting one edge on the ground,

and propping up the other on poles, so that from the wood the encampment looked merely like a lot of grass-piles. I had several large fires lighted in front.

During the voyage that had ended so disastrously, I had noticed some trees on the river-bank with a whitish bark, growing from twenty to forty feet in height. What was most remarkable about them was the way in which, from the boughs that overhung the river, masses of red-brown roots descended like a beard, sometimes as much as six feet in length.

The rain fell heavily all the next morning, and in the afternoon the wind blew so icy cold, that although the servants did all they could to cover up the front of my hut with mats, my body suffered from repeated chills. My illness increased so much that I was quite unable to turn myself without assistance. I had a sort of couch extemporized out of some packing-cases, on which I reclined and got what rest I could. While I was lounging in this way, I heard a conversation going on outside the hut amongst my servants, who supposed that I was asleep. One of them, Borili, was saying that it was a lucky thing that Nyaka (the doctor) was sick, and proposed that they should all make off with my property to the southern bank of the Chobe. The rest of them did not seem altogether inclined to acquiesce, but I made up my mind to nip anything like a conspiracy in the bud. Calling them all in, I made each of them a present of beads, except Borili, whom I asked whether he expected a gun from me when we parted, as a remuneration for his services. Of course he told me he should reckon on his gun ;

but he looked somewhat surprised when I replied that he was much mistaken, and that having found out that he was a bad servant and a thief, I should keep my eye on him, and that if he repeated his misconduct, I should send him back to Sesheke for Sepopo to punish. He knew what that meant.

Towards evening, the fever having slightly abated, I made the servants lift me on to the ground, where I sat with my back supported against the bed. In this position I received a visit from some Mabundas, from whom I obtained various specimens of their handicraft. To one of the boatmen I was able, out of the very limited stock of drugs that I had left, to give an emetic that proved very effectual. He had made himself ill by eating too freely of the fruit of a shrub called ki-mokononga; the symptoms of the man and the smell of the fruit made me inclined to believe that he was suffering from the effects of prussic acid. The fruit itself was about an inch long, and half-an-inch thick; it had a yellowish pulp, an oval kernel, and in flavour was not unlike bitter almonds. The emetic soon relieved the sufferer, and next day he was ready for work again.

The Mabunda chief from Sioma came to see me, and in the intervals between the attacks of fever I took the opportunity to ask him, as well as the guides and boatmen, all the questions I could about the land and population of the Marutse empire. Our conversation generally turned upon the Livangas, Libele, and Luyanas, the tribes between the Chobe and the Zambesi, and upon the independent Bamashi, on the lower Chobe, who are also called Luyanas, and are subject to three princes of their own, Kukonganena, Kukalelwa, and Molombe.

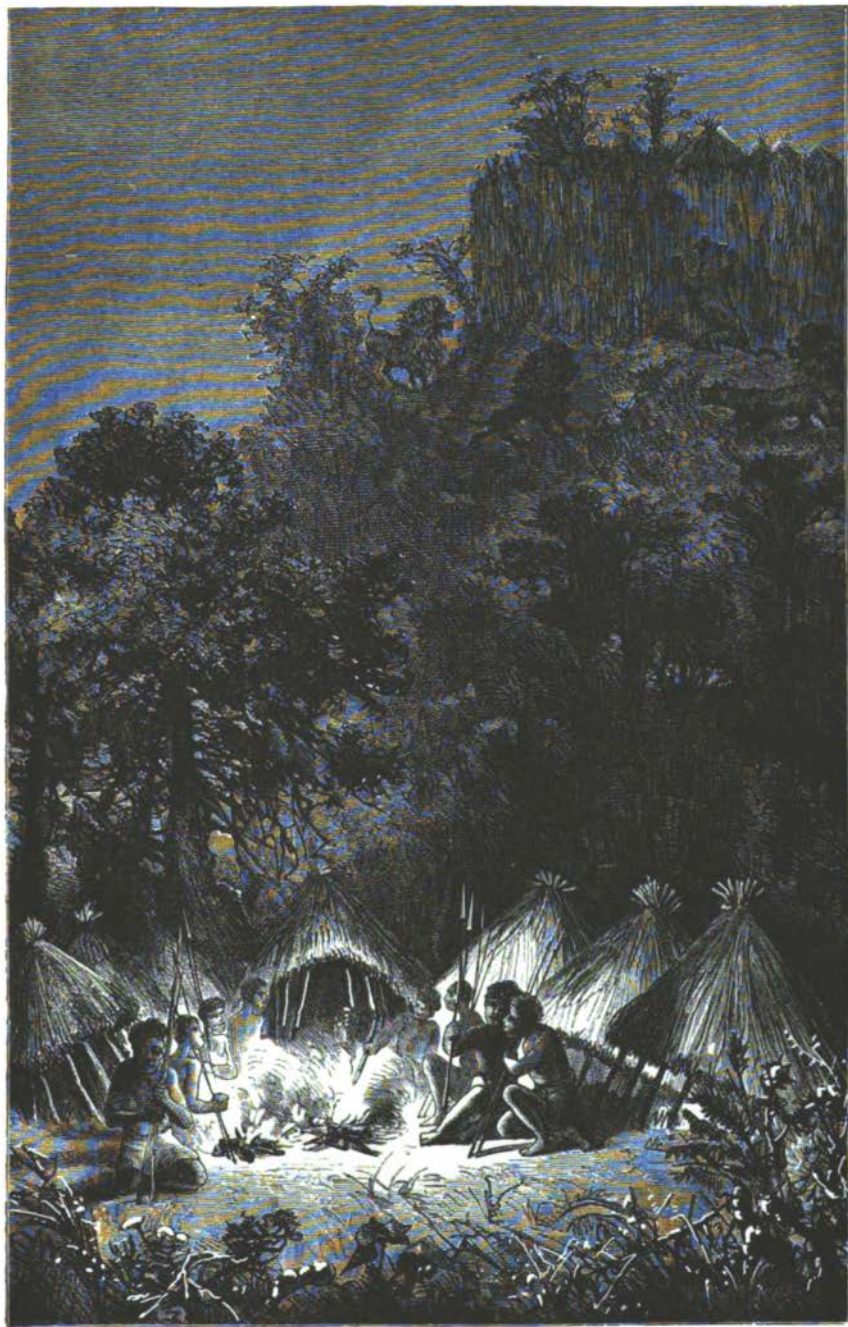
Our experience at night proved that the Mabundas had not exaggerated much in what they told us about the lions. After sunset we heard their chorus begin, and it did not cease till dawn. I should not think the animals were more than 150 yards away from us. Up in the little village the people had to be on the watch to keep them at bay, and kept on shouting and beating a drum, while nearly every enclosure was illumined by a fire. My own boatmen sat up, spear in hand, nearly all night, and weird enough their shadows were as they fell upon the fence. No lions, however, ventured to attack us.

For the next two days I was worse rather than better, and vain were my efforts to amuse myself with either my diary or my sketch-book. My disorder was aggravated by the ungenial weather, and even in the most violent fits of fever I was conscious of a feeling of shivering under the keen north-east blast. I endeavoured to keep up my spirits, but writing, which was my sole resource, was a painful trial to me, and the lines danced before my eyes.

I could not bear the thought of going back to Sesheke, and determined to make a vigorous endeavour once again to go ahead. Accordingly on the 8th we started, but the exertion was too much for me, and in the evening I had to be carried ashore. Scarcely had I been laid down in a grass-hut left by some previous passengers, when I was seized with such an attack of sickness and diarrhœa, that I really began to fear that I should not live till morning.

Except at the Victoria Falls, the part of the river













over which we had been passing was in itself the most interesting that I had yet seen. We had crossed forty-two rapids, and had now come to the most southerly of the Barotse cataracts, here about 1000 feet wide. I was removed on the following morning to a more roomy hut that had been prepared for Queen Moquai, and in which she had waited my arrival; imagining, however, that I had turned back, she had proceeded on her way, but when she heard where I was, she sent her husband Manengo back from her next landing-place to inquire after me.

The last rapids that I crossed were the most dangerous of all in the Marutse country; one of them was known as Manekango, the other was Muniruola. They were formed by ridges of rocks extending right across the river, with an average height of not much over two feet and a half, but the openings were so few and narrow that the water dashed through with the fiercest violence. I had to submit to be laid upon the reef while the men dragged the boat through the rifts at the most imminent peril.

The sickness, which had a little abated, returned again towards evening, and I had considerable difficulty in drawing my breath. In the morning I was so far relieved that I was able to take a few spoonfuls of maizena.

In the course of that day Inkambella, the most important man in the country next to Sepopo, passed down the river.

To hold out any longer was simply impossible. I grew worse and worse. I felt that I had no alternative than to yield to necessity, and calling the boatmen together, I announced my intention



of going back. To my surprise I found that my resolution had been forestalled; boats were already waiting, ready to retrace our course. In spite of my weakness I was inclined to take my people to task for presuming to decide for me, but I was given to understand that they were only obeying orders; it transpired that Sepopo had given definite instructions that my health was to be particularly studied while I was in his country; as I was a doctor, the king had been anxious that no mischief should befall me, and regarding me as a sort of magician, he feared that some dire calamity would happen to his kingdom if I were to die while under his protection.

When the men had placed me in one boat, and my servant Narri in another, they declined to start until I had distributed some presents amongst them, and I heard an altercation going on, which I was too weak to check, because my servants had detected them trying to steal some of my goods.

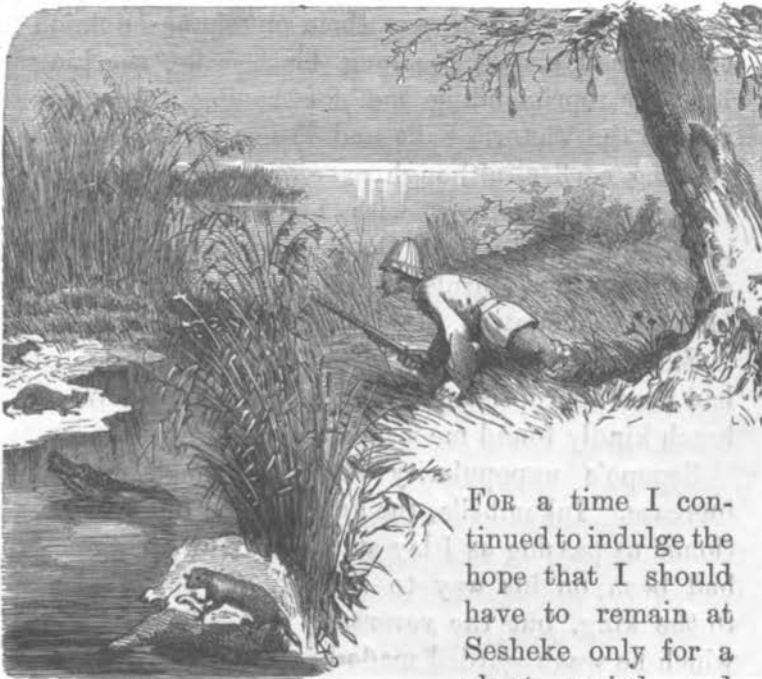
All day long the sun glowed fiercely down, and I was tortured with the most agonizing thirst. Once, in the hope of obtaining a little relief, I let my fevered hands hang from the boat's side in the water, but my people instantly replaced them on my knees, with the warning that I must not entice the crocodiles to follow us.

After a painful night in an encampment a few miles to the east of Katonga, I was put on board again and carried on to Sesheke. I was conveyed by the boatmen to Westbeech's hut. He did not recognize me.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BACK AGAIN IN SESHEKE.

Visits of condolence—Unpopularity of Sepopo—Mosquitoes—Goose-hunting—Court ceremonial at meals—Modes of fishing—Sepopo's illness—Vassal tribes of the Marutse empire—Characteristics of the Marutse tribes—The future of the country.



OTTER-SHOOTING ON THE CHOBE.

For a time I continued to indulge the hope that I should have to remain at Sesheke only for a short period, and that I should soon

be convalescent and able to start afresh upon the

journey I had been compelled to give up. But I grew worse instead of better, and as the unhealthy season was now coming on, both Westbeeck and Sepopo advised me to leave the Marutse district altogether, to return to the south, and not to resume my travels until my health was completely restored. To me, however, this suggestion looked tantamount to a proposal to postpone my project indefinitely, and I was loth to acquiesce.

I received visits, not only from the king, but from a number of the chiefs with whom I had made acquaintance, and while they all expressed their sympathy with me in my illness, they declared they had foreseen it. It was their unanimous opinion that I had stayed too long in Sesheke, the king himself reprimanding me for having taken my trip to the Victoria Falls and losing my chance of starting earlier, although every one knew that the blame rested entirely with himself, and that he had detained me from October to December, and even then had furnished me with boats only at Moquai's solicitation.

Since my departure the hut that I had occupied had been appropriated to another purpose, but Westbeeck kindly found me accommodation at his store.

Sepopo's unpopularity was very much on the increase. Inkambella, the great chief whom I mentioned as passing as I lay at the Nambwe cataract, had been on his way to Sesheke to pay homage to the king, but the reverence and affection with which he was regarded made him an object of aversion to Sepopo, who would willingly have disposed of him. No one, however, could be found to assassinate him, and the only resource was to have him

accused of high treason, the other Barotse chiefs being included in the charge; they were, however, all adjudged not guilty. Westbeeche and Jan Mahura were present at the trial, and, as an instance of how Sepopo's authority was on the wane, they told me that Mahura had plainly called him a fool, and denounced him as the greatest traitor in the country.

When Sepopo next visited me he was indulging in the excitement of the mokoro-dance, and was attended by a large court retinue. He was in a patronizing mood, and made a great fuss with me, calling me his mulekow; but when Inkambella arrived shortly afterwards, he moved off at once to Westbeeche's quarters.

On the evening of the following day I was attacked with such violent spasms in the chest that I writhed upon the ground in agony, and it was as much as four men could do to hold me still; it was not until Westbeeche had administered a dose of ipecacuanha, which made me sick, that I could draw my breath at all freely. Subsequent attacks of a similar kind recurred at intervals during the sixteen months that my illness lasted, but I always found that the same remedy gave me relief.

For several days I was unable to rise from my bed. As I lay all alone I had only too much time to brood over my disappointment and frustrated scheme. I found, however, that in the way of sickness I was not by any means a solitary sufferer; some people that came from the Chobe brought the intelligence that M'Leod, Fairly, Dorehill, Cowley, with several of their attendants, and my late servant Pit, were all ill with fever at Panda ma Tenka.

It was not until the 19th that I was able to leave

my room at all, but, with the help of my servants, I then made an effort to walk a little way on the grass outside our enclosure. A fresh inconvenience was now beginning to annoy us, for we were perpetually tormented by the mosquitoes, which at certain seasons are quite a plague on the Zambesi; every evening, and especially at night, these bloodthirsty little pests renew their attacks upon man and beast, and even woollen coverings form no protection from their sharp beaks. The only stratagem by which I could escape the irritation they caused was the unsavoury one of allowing my servants to burn a heap or two of cow-dung inside my hut.

In order to get something fresh for our larder, Westbeeck and Walsh went out for a morning's goose-hunting. It was vexatious that my state of health did not permit me to go even a little way with them. At this time of year the geese, and other birds of the duck breed, frequented the open parts of the marshes, and sportsmen, guided by their cackle, had to get at them in boats, pushing their way through the reeds. The best time for hunting them is when there is a moderate wind, as then the rustle of the reeds overpowers the noise made by the boats. When Sepopo heard of the success that had attended the expedition, he bought a lot of Westbeeck's shot, and sent some of his own people on a similar errand, and I should suppose with similar good luck, as when I breakfasted with the king a morning or two afterwards, I noticed several geese upon the table.

From the manner in which they were served, I could perceive that it was a dish to which the Marutse were by no means unaccustomed. The



people generally take their meals sitting on straw or rush mats, sometimes inside the huts, and sometimes just in front of the entrance. All solid food is taken up with the fingers, but anything of a semi-fluid character is conveyed to the mouth by means of wooden spoons.

There is little to add to my previous account of the royal meals. The queens and white men invited to breakfast sat facing the east, but at supper, which was nearly always taken in the open air, they had their seats always placed on the king's left hand. The king sipped the goblet of kaffir-corn beer before passing it first to the favourite wife, and then to the other lady-guests, and if no ladies were present, it was handed on to the court officials at once. Besides the kaffir-corn beer, honey-beer was occasionally introduced at supper, and the cup-bearer invariably tasted it before offering it to the king. As the whole of the honey in the country belongs to the crown, the beverage made from it is only consumed at court; and on occasions of festivity it is not passed beyond the circle of the royal family and certain distinguished guests, except to those from whom the king had already asked or was about to ask a favour. The honey is not purified for its preparation, but the beer is made by simply pouring water on to the honey-comb thrown into gourd-shells, and left to stand for about twelve hours in the sun.

After the 24th I was able to take more regular exercise, and went several times into the town with the object of exchanging my travelling-gear, now unfortunately of no service to me, for some local and ethnographical curiosities. Two-thirds of the plants that I collected were new to me, and most of those

that were found on the river-bank belonged to the Zambesi highland.

As the mosquitoes prevented us from sleeping, I used to sit up and talk with Westbeeck. I obtained from him all the information I could about the western Makalakas who resided on the Maitengwe as subjects of the Matabele. Some of these people I had already seen at Shoshong, and I had heard a good deal about them from Mr. Mackenzie.

About this time, Sepopo, not feeling very well, sent out instructions that no white men were to be admitted to his courtyard until further orders. No doubt Sykendu was at the bottom of this prohibition; he was always on the alert to do anything to revive the failing trade of his fellow-countrymen, and lost no opportunity of damaging the character of the merchants from the south.

Sepopo's fishermen came to us every day with fish for sale. The Marutse fisher-craft may be divided into the two sections of reptile-hunting and fishing proper. It is only a few tribes that devote themselves systematically to the pursuit of the great reptiles, the crocodile and the water-lizard; but fishing proper is carried on by every one of the Zambesi tribes, from the Kabombo to far beyond the Victoria Falls, their skill in their art being superior to that of the residents on the coast, or even of the natives at Lake N'gami, who are said to be by no means wanting in expertness. Besides its importance as an article of diet, fish constitutes a regular portion of the royal tribute.

There are five principal ways of fishing. The first method consists in net-fishing, and may be estimated as the most remunerative. The nets used

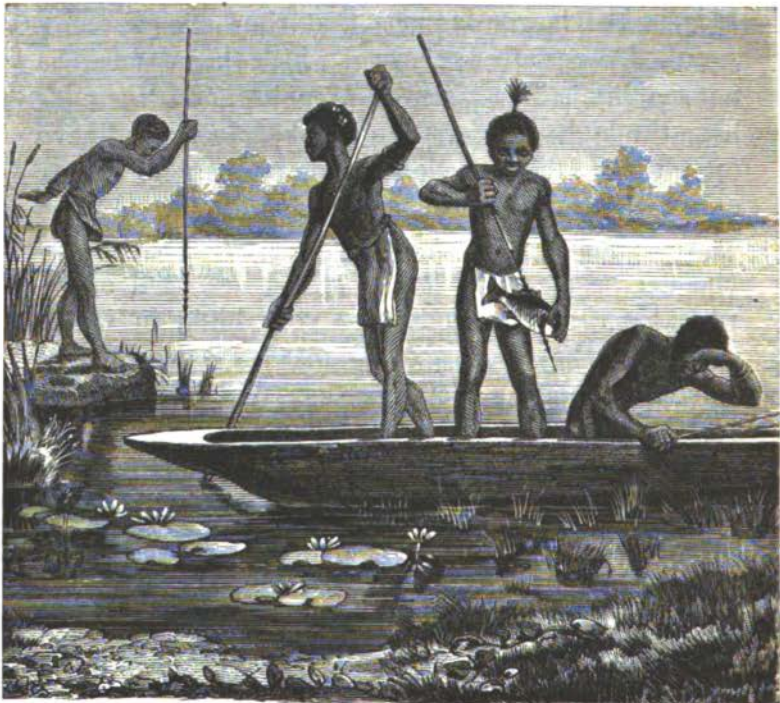
by the Marutse are of excellent quality; they are made with meshes of different sizes from bast twisted into cords about as thick as a man's finger; they vary from fifteen to twenty-five feet in length, and are provided with proper weights; they are carefully cleaned and dried whenever they have been used, and this contributes very much to their durability. It is in the larger lagoons that they are generally supplied, especially in those of which the confines are not marshy. The Marutse, Manubas, and Masupias have the highest reputation for skilfulness, and have established fishing-stations, some permanent, others only for a season, all along the river.

A second way of catching fish adopted by the Marutse people is by weels, which are used either when the river is very low or very high, in which latter case they are placed against the dams; but at seasons when the water is low and parted into several streams at the rapids, they are fixed right in the current between two blocks of rock; in construction they are obliged to be narrow, seldom more than a foot in diameter, and they are mostly about a yard and a half long; in shape they are much like those used in Europe; they are made of strong reeds, and are fixed with their mouths facing the stream.

Another method consists in enclosing certain portions of the inundated plains, just at the time of the first abatement of the waters, with circular dams or embankments of earth. The flood subsides rapidly, and the fish are easily secured, the muddiness of the water facilitating their capture. In level places, especially near towns or villages, I noticed the remains of a good many of these dams, and I was

told that the inquisi is very often caught in this way.

A fourth plan practised in the country is the simple device of blocking up the mouths of the small lagoons, where sedge is either wanting altogether or very scanty, with coarse mats made of strong rushes.



SPEARING FISH.

This mode of fishing, which is carried on from May to August, while the floods are going down, is said to be very successful. The rain-channels that make their way to the river are not unfrequently stopped up in the same fashion.

But next to net-fishing there is no kind of fishing

that can compare either in attractiveness or in efficiency with the last of the five methods to which I refer. The Zambesi people are all remarkably dexterous in fishing with the spear, and sometimes can secure water-lizards as well as fish by this means. Otters are likewise captured in this way, the assegais employed being proportioned in size to the purpose for which they are used; generally the point is not above four inches long, attached to a quadrilateral shaft, one barb being affixed to each side.

Sepopo's annoyance at his illness daily increased; he considered that it was brought about by sorcery on the part of some of his subjects, and with a view of liberating himself from the spell under which he imagined he was lying, he gave orders for a large number of executions, a proceeding that opened the way for any one to get rid of an enemy or rival, as he had only to accuse him of high treason, and sentence of death was pretty sure to be passed forthwith. Still finding that he did not recover his health, the king sent for Sykendu, and told him that he would have him executed too, if his disorder did not quickly take a turn for the better. The Mambari promised to effect a speedy cure, but stipulated that it must be on condition that Sepopo gave him a handsome Makololo or Masupia woman for a wife; he had frequently made the same request before without effect, but succeeded now in extracting the promise from the anxious king.

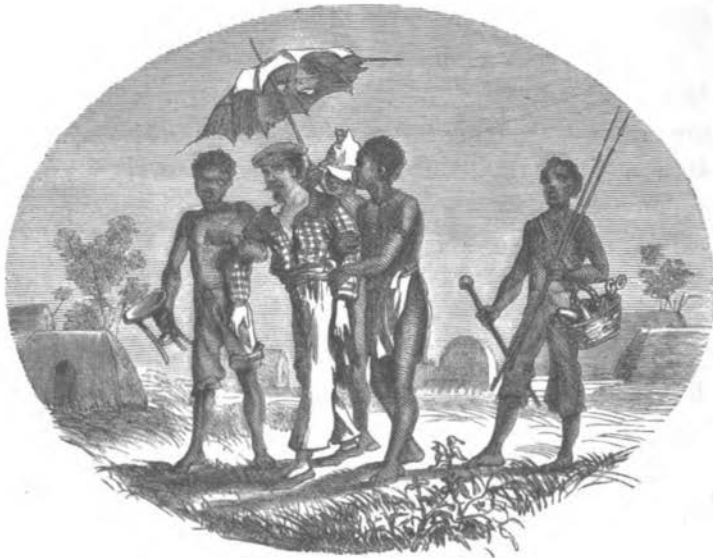
I held out as long as I could, but yielding at length to the general advice, I consented to leave Sesheke, and to return to Pauda ma Tenka.

There had been many days on which I had been



unable to leave my bed or my hut, but during these I received a number of visits from the chieftains, and learnt many particulars about the social life of the Marutse people. It appears to me a convenient place here to insert some of the facts that I elicited.

Except they have been declared free by the sovereign, members of all the subject tribes, except the



WALK THROUGH SESHEKE.

Marutse and Mabundas, are regarded as slaves, but even the Marutse, although exempt from vassal-service, may be condemned to it for any misdemeanour, or by falling into disgrace with the king. The children of any vassal who may have married a Marutse wife are also regarded as vassals, and bound to perform the same service as their father. The price of a slave in Sesheke is a boat,

or a cow, or a couple of pieces of calico; in the western part of the kingdom it is much lower, and in the north, in the upper Kashteja, a slave may be purchased for a few strings of beads. There are no public slave-markets, but slaves may be bought in any of the villages. The Mambari, who are the chief buyers and vendors, set the negroes the vilest of examples. With their prayer-books in their hand, they endeavour to represent themselves as Christians to any one who can read or write, but they are utterly unworthy of the name they pretend to bear, and so far from advancing in any way the civilization of the superstitious tribes on the Zambesi, they only minister to their deeper degradation.

Unless a man is an absolute vassal in the strictest sense, he may, with his master's permission, have several wives, and free women who have not been given away or sold as slaves are allowed to choose what husbands they please. The preference given to female rulers causes the weaker sex to be treated with far more consideration than they receive amongst the Bechuana and Zulu races, where they are reckoned as servants, not to speak of the Masarwas, who treat their women as mere beasts of burden.

On the 10th we received the melancholy news that Bauren, Westbeeche's assistant, had died of fever at Panda ma Tenka.

The next day, Kapella, the commander-in-chief, came to our quarters with a message from the king to say that he was sending six boats to convey Westbeeche's ivory to Impalera. Westbeeche sent word back that he required double that number of boats, and moreover that he was not ready to start

for a day or two ; but I took the opportunity of packing up my own baggage and departing, relying on the promise given me by Westbeech that he would follow me in three days. We did not doubt that the extra boats would be duly sent, and I only carried the provisions that were requisite to supply my wants for the time ; I little dreamed that Sepopo would be five weeks before he provided the additional boats, and the consequence was that I was exposed to the severest privation that I had experienced throughout my journey.

I propose devoting the following chapter to a description of the manners and customs of the various tribes in the empire at large, but before bringing my account of Sesheke to a close, I may be allowed to mention some of the chief characteristics of the more important tribes that reside in Marutse-land proper.

For courage and bravery none of the Marutse-Mabunda tribes can compete with the Zulus and Amaswazies of the south ; but leaving the Matabele colony in the Barotse out of the reckoning, the Mamboë and Masupias may in this respect be considered to bear the palm. The Masupia elephant-hunters exhibit great fearlessness in all encounters with wild beasts, though even they are surpassed by the Mamboë in their adroitness in killing hippopotamuses and crocodiles. Both Mamboë and Mabundas are well qualified for hard labour and for employment as bearers, the former being probably the finest and most muscular men in the whole empire. The Manansas have the reputation of being somewhat cowardly, but I found them very good and trustworthy servants. With all native races, pride

goes very much hand-in-hand with courage, and consequently while it is highly developed amongst the Matabele, it is at a very low ebb amongst the Marutse-Mabundas; and notwithstanding that the Marutse make the other tribes feel that they are a dominant race, they exhibit nothing of the arrogance of conscious power that characterizes the Zulus. Even the Matabele settled in the Barotse have been influenced by their peaceful surroundings, and have exhibited something of the qualities of tamed lions; and altogether the relations between master and servant in the districts about the Zambesi are much more friendly than amongst the tribes to the south.

The Mamboë, and all the more northerly tribes that seldom come to court, are particularly unassuming in their demeanour; and although the natives of the Chobe district, the Batokas and Matongas on the Zambesi, as well as the Marutse, can be very overbearing with white men, the blame is more often than not to be attributed to the white men themselves. But haughtiness of this kind can scarcely be called pride, and I observed that a little firmness and severity rarely failed to bring the offenders to reason, and to check their disposition to be insolent.

The blindness of the obedience which is ordinarily rendered to rulers is exemplified by the fidelity of the people to Sepopo; but I am obliged to record that a corresponding faithfulness does not extend itself to conjugal life. Although I am prepared to allow that marriage in many instances may be the result of mutual affection, I am convinced that marriage-vows are very rarely considered binding, as the mulekow system too plainly testifies.

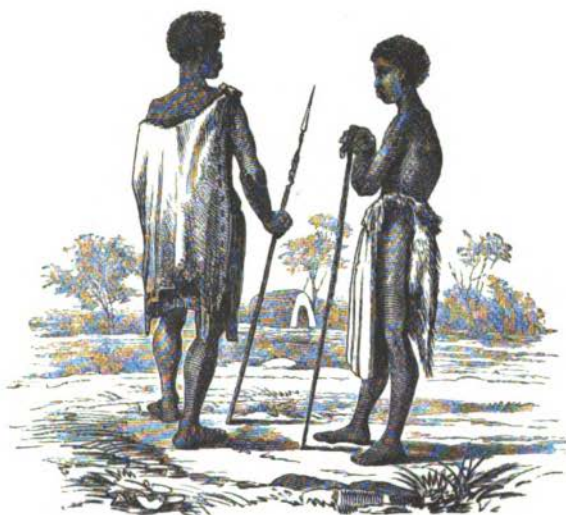
This odious regulation is like a plague-spot amongst the people; it not only destroys anything like conjugal felicity, but has the most demoralizing effect upon the rising generation, as bringing them up with the idea that affection has nothing to do with married life. Though originally confined to the western and south-western tribes, it has now generally spread all over the kingdom.

With regard to affection between parents and children, I have no hesitation in saying that it is displayed chiefly on the side of the parents, who often lavish a care upon their offspring that is very ill-requited when they become old and infirm.

From my own experience I should not advise any traveller in the Marutse-Mabunda kingdom to trust himself unreservedly to servants provided by the king; it is far better to ask a chief or some other person of importance to act as guide, and to chastise with the *kiri* all unruly boatmen and bearers; but before starting it is necessary that all stipulations with the sovereign should be definitely settled. It is unadvisable to be over-liberal, and each tribe should be treated as its character demands. From what I have already said it may be inferred that a little kindness prevails much with the *Mambqë* and *Manansas*; but more reserve must be used with the *Marutse* and *Mankoë*. The *Matabele* require a serious if not a stern demeanour; and it is necessary to recollect that with the *Makalakas* everything must be kept under lock and key. Whoever the ruler is, he should be treated with marked civility; and if there should be any difference of opinion with him, it is best to try and



conceal it; but should courtesy fail, and he begins to be in any way overreaching in his demands, he should be resisted calmly and firmly, without precipitate recourse to forcible measures. As so few of the tribes are remarkable for bravery, it follows that whenever a traveller finds his progress interrupted, or his designs thwarted, he will best surmount the difficulty, or provide for his safe retreat, by preserving a resolute and fearless bearing.



A MASUPIA.

A PANDA.

Their human sacrifices, their manner of slaughtering their domestic animals, and the use of barbed assegais for destroying game, demonstrate that a brutal cruelty is one of the predominant failings of these people; and yet malice and perfidy are extremely rare, the Makalakas alone being guilty of the latter vice. All tribes profess a certain amount of indebtedness to the white men, the measure of

gratitude increasing in proportion to the simplicity of their mode of living, or the farther they are removed to the north, north-east, or north-west of the Victoria Falls and the mouth of the Chobe.

Vanity is common, no doubt, to all savage races, but the Marutse-Mabunda tribes indulge in it with greater tact than the people farther south. Their moral standard is very low, but this, as I have before had occasion to remark, is the result of ignorance rather than of corruption; and I believe that instruction and good example, combined with a little gentle pressure put upon the rulers by white men, would in a very few years work a marvellous amendment; but to bring about a reformation, it must be confessed that the kings should be very different men from Sepopo. The first thing that it behoves a stranger to do is to set his face against the mulekow system. It is the proper way in which he should seek to gain respect for himself; and it is of great advantage to let the people know that no such custom is tolerated in any other country.

The system, too, by which the sovereign takes for wives any women he will, must also be broken down before any great moral improvement can be expected. They nearly always have to marry him in defiance of their own wishes, and are only free to refuse under the penalty of death; consequently they are seldom otherwise than unfaithful. Sepopo took care to expose every breach of fidelity that came to his knowledge; but the general example of the queens was so utterly bad, that even women who had been free to marry at their own choice, never held themselves bound to keep the marriage vow inviolate.

As one proof that the few white men who have visited the Zambesi district have exercised some influence on the habits of the population, it may be recorded that the natives have begun to wear a kind of clothing, however primitive, instead of going, like their northern neighbours, the Mashukulumbe, absolutely naked.

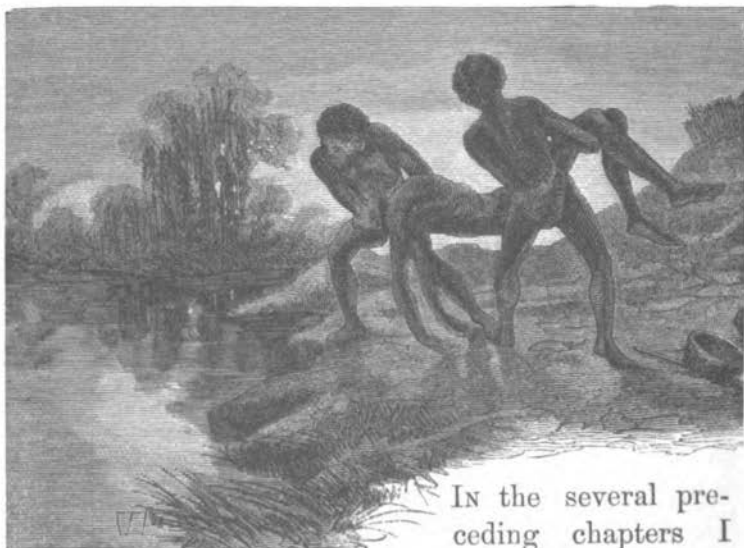


SINGULAR ROCK.

## CHAPTER XII.

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MARUTSE TRIBES.

Ideas of religion—Mode of living—Husbandry and crops—Consumption and preparation of food—Cleanliness—Costume—Position of the women—Education of children—Marriages—Disposal of the dead—Forms of greeting—Modes of travelling—Administration of justice—An execution—Knowledge of medicine—Superstition—Charms—Human sacrifices—Clay and wooden vessels—Calabashes—Basket-work—Weapons—Manufacture of clothing—Tools—Oars—Pipes and snuff-boxes—Ornaments—Toys, tools, and fly-flappers.



DROWNING USELESS PEOPLE.

IN the several preceding chapters I have had various occasions to refer to different customs and characteristics of the Marutse-Mabunda people that attracted

my attention; but I propose to devote the present chapter to some further details before resuming the account of my travelling experiences.

Before it was split up into its present large number of tribes, the Bantu family believed in the existence of a powerful invisible God; and by no people has the conception been so well preserved as by the Marutse, inasmuch as they retain an idea, however indistinct, of an Omnipotent Being who observes every action and disposes of every individual at his own will.

They shrink from pronouncing His name, generally substituting for it the word "molemo," which has a very comprehensive meaning, as besides signifying God, it is used to denote good and evil spirits, medicines, poisons, charms, and amulets. Their real designation of the unseen Deity is "Nyambe," and if ever they pronounce it they raise both hands and eyes to the sky, and not unfrequently they use the same gestures without mentioning the name at all. They assume that the Supreme Being resides "mo-chorino," i.e. in the azure of the heavens, and I have heard them allude to him as "He who lives above," or simply as "He." If a man dies a natural death, it is said that Nyambe has called him away, or if any one is killed in battle or by wild beasts, or by the fury of the elements, it is all supposed to have occurred at the bidding of Nyambe. A criminal sentenced to death meets his fate with submission, not doubting that Nyambe is sending the punishment due to his crime, or if any innocent person is condemned, as often happened during Sepopo's government, both he and his friends will hope to the last that Nyambe will interfere for



his protection from the poison, or from whatever else is to be the means of death.

The people also believe in good and evil spirits, the latter of which they endeavour to exorcise, or at least to propitiate, by means of charms, such as bones of men or beasts, hippopotamus' teeth, bits of wood, pieces of bark, and calabash-gourds, which are enclosed in baskets made of bast, and hung up on poles three or four feet high.

Most of the Marutse-Marunda tribes hold the belief of continued existence after death, and the principal reasons alleged by the Masupias for depositing great elephants' tusks on the grave of a chief are that he may be consoled for his separation from his property, and may be induced to extend to them his protection, now more powerful than ever by reason of his nearness to Nyambe.

Besides ascribing their calamities to the operation of evil spirits, they often think that they arise from the displeasure of a departed chief, who consequently has to be propitiated by certain ceremonies at his grave. For instance, if a member of the royal family is ill, he is carried, by the permission of the authorities, to the grave of the most important chief-tain deceased in the neighbourhood, and there some dignitary, not unfrequently the king himself, will repeat a form of prayer supplicating the departed on behalf of the patient, and entreating him to intercede with Nyambe that he may be restored to health.

The mode of living throughout the empire is certainly less rude than that of the tribes south of the Zambesi. Agriculture is so remunerative, and cattle-breeding in two-thirds of the country is





so successful, the other third, in spite of its being infested by the tsetse-fly, is so abundant in game, the rivers and lagoons produce such quantities of fish, and the forests yield so many varieties of fruits and edible roots and seeds, that, unlike many of the Bechuana tribes, the natives never suffer from want during the summer rains. In husbandry and in cattle-breeding alike they have great advantages in their abundance of water, their fertile soil, and their genial climate.

The fields are weeded with great assiduity by the women, and most of them are sufficiently drained by long furrows. As harvest-time approaches huts and raised platforms are erected in the vicinity, so that guard may be kept over the produce; children as well as adults are set to perform this office, which has to be maintained night and day. The corn is threshed by laying the ears on large skins or on straw mats, and then beating it with sticks. A certain proportion of the ingathering is allotted to the women to dispose of as they please; and to judge from the hard bargains they drove with myself and the white traders, they seem to manipulate their property with considerable advantage to themselves. The men, too, always demanded more for the goods that belonged to the women than they did for their own, saying the wife had fixed the price, and that if they could not obtain it they were to carry the things back again.

Apart from the tribute which they have to provide for the king and for the local chief, a family of five people, to meet their own requirements, will cultivate, according to their means, one, two, or three of the ordinary plots of ground, running about

three-quarters of an acre each. Two-thirds of the tilled soil are in the wooded parts of the country, and the land is first cleared by the men and boys, who cut down the underwood and the lower branches of the trees, the wood thus obtained being used for the fences, and the weeds and fag-gots being burnt for manure. September and October are the usual months for sowing; but gourds, leguminous plants, and tobacco are sown any time up to December; the growth of the two latter crops being so extremely rapid that they often ripen by January, whilst kaffir-corn and maize are ready by February, beans coming in during both these months.

The crops most extensively cultivated are the two kinds of kaffir-corn, the red and the white; they both thrive admirably, and form the staple of the cereal impost, and the chief material of external traffic. Both sorts are identical with those that are found throughout South Africa.

There is a third kind of corn which is only occasionally seen in the district, called "kleen-corn" by the Dutch hunters, and "rosa" by the Marutse. The grains are small, not unlike hemp-seed, and when ground they produce a black flour that binds better for bread-making than either of the two sorghum-like species. The Marutse regard it as being especially choice, and it is double the price of the others.

Maize is very frequently cultivated, and with good success; but there is a still larger preponderance of crops of the gourd tribe, such as various species of water-melons, edible gourds, and bottle gourds, which are only grown for the sake of their shells.



About as common as these are two species of beans, one small and almost colourless, the other larger and of a crimson or purple tint. Like mabele (common corn), rosa, and imboni (maize), these beans, known respectively as the "li-tu" and the "di-nowa,"



MARUTSE-MABUNDA CALABASHES FOR HONEY-MEAD AND CORN.

form a certain part of the contribution to the royal revenue. When boiled with meat or with hippopotamus-bacon they have a flavour which is reckoned superior to our European species.

Three other vegetable products must be added to the list, viz. manza, masoshwani (*Arachis hypogæa*) and cotton. The manza is all crown property, and is

sent to the royal quarters whole ; it is there ground and used for a kind of pap without salt. The arachis, which forms part of the tribute, being identical with the ground-nut of the West Coast, is grown nearly everywhere ; it is eaten by the natives after it has been roasted in the shell, and not unfrequently utilized by Europeans as a substitute for coffee. The cotton is cultivated for domestic use, and is woven into good strong fabrics ; but it is hardly ever seen except in the eastern districts. The growth of all these crops furnishes a proof that rice might be cultivated with advantage.

Round about the huts and amongst the corn and maize may be seen luxuriant masses of sugar-cane (imphi) which is grown not so much for food as for a means of relieving thirst ; it is the same sort that is found throughout South Africa, and here ripens between December and February.

The spots chosen for the tobacco plantations are generally hollows, from ten to twenty square yards in area. After being dried and pounded, the tobacco is slightly moistened and made into conical or circular pellets, in the corn-mortars. As a general rule, that which is grown by the Marutse tribes is of closer substance, keeps better, and contains a larger amount of nicotine than that produced amongst the surrounding people.

Considering the climate and the ample means of irrigation, I cannot help being of opinion that all our cereals, especially wheat, would thrive perfectly well in this country, and that not only rice and coffee in the eastern districts, but likewise the vine and many descriptions of European fruits could hardly fail to ripen admirably.

Taking all the various articles of food into account, we find that, after game, ordinary kaffir-corn, kleen-corn, maize, and gourds hold a foremost place; next comes fish; then follow in diminished proportions, sour milk, fresh milk, beef, mutton, goats' flesh, forty-two species of wild fruits, the two kinds of beans, ground-nuts, fowls, wild birds, manza and honey. Meat is generally boiled in covered earthenware pots, or roasted in the embers, either with or without a spit. In their way of dressing meat, the people are really very clever, and I do not believe that dishes so savoury could be found throughout South Africa as those which are served in the better-class residences of the Marutse, and this is the more surprising when it is remembered that they lead a far more secluded life than any of the Bechuana tribes.

Wild birds are either roasted or boiled, and served up with their head-feathers or crests unremoved, on handsome perforated dishes. Many tribes reject certain kinds of wild game through superstitious motives; some will not touch the pallah; others will not eat the eland; and still more refuse to taste hippopotamus-meat; while, on the other hand, there are some of the Marutse people who enjoy the flesh of certain wild beasts of prey which the great majority of South Africans would hold to be utterly revolting. Both meat and fish are dried and preserved without undergoing any salting process. The various kinds of corn are either boiled or pounded in mortars, and then made into pap with milk or water, maize being boiled or baked, both in its green and dried state. Beans are boiled, and earth-nuts baked; gourds and water-melons are cut up and

boiled, the latter being also eaten raw. *Manza* requires a somewhat careful preparation; when green the roots contain poisonous properties, but after being thoroughly dried and finely pounded they may be safely mixed into a pap something like arrowroot, which forms an excellent sauce for meat



BARK BASKET AND CALABASHES FOR HOLDING CORN, USED BY THE MABUNDAS.

of any kind. Wild fruits are baked, both when fresh, and when they have been dried in the sun; sometimes, too, they are stewed in milk, and occasionally they are reduced to pulp; some sorts are ripening at all periods of the year, so that there is an unfailing supply of this means of subsistence.

Salt has to be brought from such long distances, either from the west or south-west, that it is only the wealthier people that can afford to use it at all.

The poorer people have only one regular meal a day, which is taken in the evening; the well-to-do classes have two daily meals; the first an hour and a half or two hours after sunrise, and the other at sunset. Beer is usually drunk after every meal. Of the two kinds of beer made from kaffir-corn, one is strong, called *matimbe*; the second sort, known as *butshuala*, being much weaker; besides these, there is a sweet beer made from wild fruits, that produced from the *morula* fruit being like cider; and there is likewise the honey-beer, or *impote*, which I have had to mention several times before.

Besides being clever in their cooking, the Marutse-Mabundas are very clean; they always keep their materials in well-washed wooden or earthenware bowls, or in suitable baskets or calabashes. They were the first people that I saw making butter. Their cleanliness in their work only corresponds to that of their persons, and I am repeating what I have elsewhere observed in stating that rather than lose their bath they are always ready to run the risk of being snapped up by crocodiles.

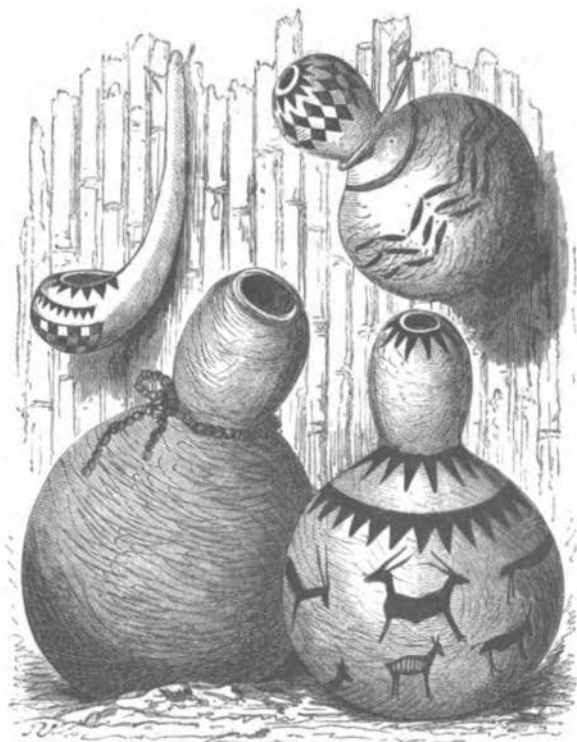
They smoke more tobacco than any of the tribes among whom it has been introduced by the white men, accustoming themselves to it from their earliest youth, and all of them, including young girls, take snuff. The snuff which they use is a compound of tobacco ashes, pulverized *nymphæa*-stalks, and the secretion from the glands of the *Rhabdogale mustelina*. Tobacco is usually made up into little cakes, which are strung together in rows.



In spite of its simplicity the costume of the Marutse may be pronounced more graceful than that of the majority of South African tribes. Instead of the leather fringe of the Zulus, or the narrow strap of the Bechuanas and Makalakas, the men wear leather aprons, which are fastened round their waist-belts, from the front to the back. Tribes like the Batokas, Manansas, Masupias, and Marutse, who frequently visit the southern side of the Zambesi, and consequently come more in contact with white men, wear cotton aprons, for which they generally require nearly three yards of calico; they are by no means particular about colour, but if they are unable to procure a piece of sufficient length (which they call a *sitsiba*), they make a point of getting at least enough for an apron to reach down to the knees in front. Those who wear leather aprons make them of the skins of the smaller mammalia, the Marutse and Masupias using those of the *scopophorus* and *cephalopus*, which are pierced all round the edge with square or circular holes, and the head part thrust through the girdle. The Manansas wear a small flap about as wide as their hand, made of calico, cloth, or leather.

In the style of their mantles, too, the Marutse subjects show a marked difference from the other branches of the great Bantu family. They prefer those of a circular shape, something like a Spanish mantilla, and reaching to their hips. Small mantles made of letshwe and puku skins are also worn. The sovereign and some of the principal officials occasionally attire themselves in European costume, but more often than not they wear nothing but their aprons, covering themselves in a woollen wrap in

rainy weather. The waistband is made of every variety of material; sometimes of the hide of gnus, gazelles, or elephants, sometimes of the skins of water-lizards, boas, cobras, and other snakes, and occasionally of simple plaited grass or straw.



MABUNDA LADLE AND CALABASHES.

Boys go entirely naked until some time between their sixth and tenth years of age. Little girls on attaining their fourth year begin by wearing tiny aprons made of twisted cords about ten inches long, and sometimes ornamented with brass rings; when ten years old they have small square leather aprons

fastened to a belt. Many of them, who are affianced when very young, wear two aprons, a short one in front, and a longer one behind.

Married women have short petticoats of roughly tanned leather, generally cowhide, with the hair inside; these reach to their knees, and are fastened on by double waistbands. A red-brown substance that is prepared from bark, and has a somewhat agreeable odour, is rubbed into the outer surface. Women who are suckling their infants wear mantles of letshwe-skin like the men, which are generally thrown across their back, and drawn over their bosom on the approach of a stranger.

In bad weather the women, and sometimes the men too, wrap themselves up in a huge circular leather cloak reaching to the ankles, and fastened at the throat with a strap or a brooch of wood or metal; it requires to be held together in front by the hand. As a rule the people go barefooted, which is much more practicable on their sandy soil than in the thorny districts south of the Zambesi; for long journeys, however, they wear sandals made of rough leather, which are fastened to the great toe and ankle by a strap across the instep.

The eastern vassal tribes who grow cotton make pieces of calico of all sizes, from handkerchiefs to sheets. The smaller pieces are used for men's aprons, and the larger, which are one or two yards wide, and from one and a half to two and a half yards long, are used for domestic purposes; their narrower ends are all finished off with fringes, varying from four to sixteen inches in length. The Mashonas weave similar articles of clothing, but employ bast for the material instead of cotton.

The position held by the women of the Marutse empire is better than that of their southerly neighbours. Although they till the soil, and assist in the erection of huts, all the hardest work, such as hunting, fishing, and the collection of building materials, is performed by the men. I generally found the elder people at work, the men gathering wild fruit in the woods, and the women in the fields, either superintending the young or engaged in some of the less arduous labour. The sons of the poorer people, and slave boys, usually act as shepherds, sometimes by themselves, but more generally under supervision, whilst boys of the upper class go hunting, either with assegais or guns. At harvest-time a very serviceable occupation is found for them in watching over the crops and scaring away the gazelles and birds; they are likewise employed to warn the villagers of the approach of any antelopes, buffaloes, or elephants.

It is not the habit of the Marutse to indulge in much sleep; they generally retire to rest late, and go to their work an hour or two before sunrise. Their recreations seldom begin until the close of the day, the lower their rank the later. They sleep chiefly upon mantles, skins, or straw mats. The king's bed consisted of forty-five splendid mantles, piled one upon another, and three or four of the queens were appointed every night to keep watch over his slumbers.

The training of the children is entrusted to the women, though the boys soon escape the maternal eye, and associate more with the fathers. The children of freemen are allowed to have slave-children as companions and playmates, and as

these are to form their future retinue, they often have a great influence upon the rising generation, who become much more attached to them than to those who have the natural authority over them; in fact, the children in this way are often so much indulged that I have known boys of only twelve years of age have quite the upper hand of their fathers. Boys are instructed in the use of weapons while they are quite young, and soon acquire the art of building a hut. The girls are kept strictly to their work, and the householder always expects the daughters to take a share in the maintenance of the family as soon as possible. Until ten or twelve years of age they are chiefly employed in fetching water.

Marriages are celebrated by noisy demoralizing orgies, of which, as at funerals, a large consumption of kaffir-corn beer and a special dance are the principal features. Children, as I have remarked, are often affianced at an early age, and the marriage is consummated as soon as the girl arrives at maturity. Not unfrequently a man of rank, although already he may have several other wives and a number of children, obtains the daughter of a friend for a wife, arranging meanwhile to give one of his own daughters to his new father-in-law in return, thus making him his son-in-law likewise. Sepopo, it has been mentioned, held this double relationship to several of the koshi and kosanas.

When a girl reaches her maturity, the fact is formally announced to all her companions, an invitation is sent round, and they visit her at her own home every evening for about a week, and execute



a dance, which is accompanied by singing and castanet-playing. The performance is generally kept up until a very late hour. If the girl is a daughter or near relation of the king or a koshi, she is carried off by her people to some out-of-the-way place in a neighbouring wood or reed-thicket, where she has to reside in seclusion for eight days, attended only by her own maid, except that in the evening she is visited by her friends, who perfume her head, and instruct her in her conjugal duties, so that at the end of her probation she may be ready to go to her husband. I have already described the marriage-dance, in which only men take part. As a rule, even in the case of vassals, it lasts for three days and nights. A vassal may only marry by the consent of his lord, who assigns him one of his slave women as a wife.

In complete contrast to the tribes south of the Zambesi, who bury their dead at night in secluded spots near their homes, or under the hedges; the Marutse-Mabundas celebrate their funerals with music, singing, shouting, and firing of guns. Many of them mark the place of interment by depositing on it the hunting-trophies of the deceased, such as the skulls of gazelles and zebras, that during his lifetime have been preserved upon poles. Sometimes trees are planted in an oval form round the grave, which never fails in being protected by some means or other from desecration by wild animals. The ceremonies observed at funerals, it is only reasonable to suppose, are associated with certain ideas of a future existence. Monuments of more elaborate construction are said to exist in the Barotse, the mother country of the dominant tribe, where a

mausoleum is erected to the memory of every important member of the royal family. It is a matter of much regret to me that I failed to get far enough north to enable me to inspect these monuments; the only accounts that I received of them were from Sepopo and several of the chiefs, and from West-beech and Blockley, who, under the king's authority, had visited the district in 1872 and 1873.

Audiences with the king are conducted in prescribed form. When subjects who have come from distant provinces enter the royal courtyard they keep repeating the cry "tow-tu-nya" over and over again, and then squat down close to the entrance in silence, and wait until they are summoned; in course of time they are generally introduced by their own koshi or kosana residing in Sesheke, who crawls up to the king and announces their arrival; on their admittance they have to creep forwards on their knees, and when within a few yards of the king they have to halt and keep clapping their hands gently, while their leader acts as spokesman. As soon as they have received the royal answer, the audience is at an end, and they have to retire in the same way as they advanced. Visitors from the neighbourhood greet the king with the cry of "shangweshangwe;" other forms of salutation are "shangwekoshi," and "rumela-rarumela intate," the former of these being more particularly addressed to white men.

There is one form of salutation to a stranger which is observed by every householder, from the king downwards. After a few words have been exchanged, the host produces a snuff-box that hangs from his neck or his waistband by a strap, or

from his bracelet, and having opened it, offers it to his guest; though, sometimes, instead of passing the box, he empties its contents into his own left hand, from which he takes a pinch himself, and then extends his half-opened palm to those about him.

Travelling is performed with the help of bearers, who are either hired for the entire distance, or from tribe to tribe, the conditions being rigidly investigated by the king. In return for a supply of bearers the king expects a present of a breechloader and 200 cartridges, or three elephant-guns, or muzzle-loaders, and recently looks for some articles of clothing in addition; and every governor of a province that is traversed has to be presented either with a gift of clothes or with a good blanket. If hired for two months a servant receives a cotton sheet, or three yards of calico, or a pound of small blue beads. No subject may be engaged as servant to a white man for a period of more than six months without the consent of the sovereign, except the transaction be a private one between a koshi and his slave. For a year's service the remuneration on the Zambesi was usually a musket, the servant of course being kept by the employer, and receiving an occasional present of tobacco, or dacha. If bearers and boatmen are under the supervision of a good overseer they do their work very well, are contented with one meal a day, and with intervals of one rest of half an hour, and about five more of a quarter of an hour each, they will march or row from daybreak until after four o'clock in the afternoon. Immediately upon halting they light a fire with a brand which they always carry with them, and commence smoking their dacha-pipes.

But without a good makosana or overlooker the case is very different. Then the traveller, especially a white man, is exposed to all sorts of annoyances, and not only will the servants do all in their power to hinder his progress, but the more indulgently he acts, the worse they will be. The baggage is generally carried on their heads, or on a stick placed across the shoulder, very heavy packages being conveyed on a long pole by two or four men. They travel on an average at the rate of nearly three miles an hour. On the river, boats make from three and a half to four and a half miles against the stream, and from five and a half to seven miles with the stream, if unimpeded by rapids, and not interfered with by hippopotamuses.

When travelling alone the natives take very few provisions. The small two-oared boats that convey the corn-tribute to Sesheke are nearly always so heavily laden that the boatmen take nothing with them but a little fish, satisfied to get what food they can upon their way by gathering wild fruits from the banks, and by knocking over with their thoboni-sticks, which they use with an aim that seldom errs, some of the birds in the rushes, which their noiseless advance allows them to approach without disturbing.

The administration of justice in the Marutse kingdom is a topic not without its interest. By the formation of the greater council the cause of judicial equity was materially advanced, but unfortunately this institution, founded by a constitutional ruler now long deceased, has latterly lost much of its *prestige*, and has received almost its death-blow under the despotism of Sepopo. For the last ten years

justice has been set at defiance more and more. Long established customs, having the sanction of law, are fondly clung to by the natives, who naturally resent any interference with their privileges, and it was Sepopo's attempt to suppress the ancient usages that first estranged him from his subjects. The laws of property, the social relations between the tribes, the law of succession to the throne, the recognized rule of treaties, and the criminal code, were all completely subverted by him, being either abrogated altogether, or remodelled to suit his own fancy. It seems, however, a matter of certainty that under Wana-Wena, his successor, the greater part of the old Marutse law will be re-established.

Minor differences are adjusted by the kosanas and makosanas, more important charges being referred to the governing chiefs; but all offences of a serious character, if they are committed within moderate distance of the royal residence, are tried before the king and the greater council. Murder, which is of rare occurrence, is always punished with death. More executions took place at the royal quarters than in any other part of the country, because any one who incurred any unpopularity in the provinces was tolerably sure to be dragged thither upon a charge of high treason. When once Sepopo's suspicions were aroused against an individual, he had no respect of persons; neither close relationship, faithful service, nor official rank had any weight with him, and he would credit no evidence; in such cases the mere accusation of high treason, murder, desertion, selling ivory or honey, stealing royal property, adultery with one of the queens, or man-



slaughter, was quite enough to secure a conviction, and the accused would forthwith be condemned to be poisoned and burnt. Brawling, causing bodily injury to others, and pilfering, were punished by hard labour in the king's fields, or by slavery for life. When the king had no personal interest in a case he suffered the council to pass sentence without interference on his own part, and when any criminal was declared to be worthy of death, the sentence ran that he was to be poisoned by the judgment of God.

I was myself a witness of an execution under this sentence. It was a singularly calm morning, and after a night disturbed by a grand carousal of the people, there was perfect silence. Before day-break, however, the stillness was broken by the noise of the Mamboë starting off with their canoes and nets to get the daily supply of fish for the court, and being aroused, I went out, as I had occasionally done before, to watch their departure. As I was returning I met a group of about twenty people hurrying off towards the woods; a second glance explained the cause that had brought them out so early. At the head of the party was that Mabunda hyæna, Mashoku, the king's executioner; he was attired in a gaily checked woollen shirt, reaching almost to his heels, and close behind him was a dejected-looking man of middle age; then followed two old creatures, like walking mummies, who, by their fez-like headgear, were at once known as the king's physicians, and the ruling spirits of his secret council; next came four young men armed with assegais. Two little clusters of people brought up the rear; in the foremost of these was a woman and two children; the last batch was screeching and

shouting with excitement. As I stood watching the proceedings I heard a voice whispering close behind me—it only confirmed what I had already supposed—“*Camaya mo mositu, ku umubulaya mona mo*” (they are going to the woods to kill that man there). I looked round, and found that I was being informed of what was going on by one of the Sesheke boys who used to sell me his fish for beads.

I ascertained that the unfortunate who was being dragged to execution had been accused of high treason by some of his neighbours, who were jealous of his crops, and Sepopo had condemned him to death in spite of the general wish of the council to acquit him; but it happened that Sepopo was more unwell than usual, and it was made a part of the charge that his illness was brought about by some charms that the man had devised.

On reaching the woodland glade that was the place of execution, Mashoku tore off the condemned man's leather apron, and broke his wooden and ivory bracelets, the four young men in attendance fastening on him another apron made of some leaves that they gathered on the spot. In the middle of the glade stood a sort of low gallows, consisting of two upright posts, five feet high and three feet apart, with one horizontal crossbar along the top, and another about a third of the way up. There were several piles of ashes lying about, from which projected some charred human bones.

Mashoku made his victim sit down upon the lower cross-bar and take hold of the uprights with each hand. One of the four assistants then brought out a small gourd-bottle, and he was followed by a second carrying a wooden bowl. Having poured out into

the bowl a black decoction with which he had been supplied by the king, Mashoku ordered the man to swallow it. The order was immediately obeyed; but no sooner had he drunk the contents of the bowl than all his relations who were present rushed up in the hope of seeing him vomit the draught. "Father, husband, brother, friend!" they cried; "fear not! you are innocent. Your foes were jealous; they grudged you your mabele! Nyambe knows you are a good man! Nyambe grant you to vomit the poison!" But meanwhile the accusers took advantage of any opportunity they could get to revile the poor creature bitterly; they shook their fists at him; they spat in his face; they called him scoundrel, thief, cheat; declared that he was getting only his deserts, and that his bones should be burned as the bones of a traitor.

According to the old Marutse law, every condemned malefactor has to drink a bowl of poison; if after swallowing it, he falls down, succumbing to its influence, he is declared guilty, and his body is at once burnt; if, on the other hand, he vomits what he has taken, he is discharged as innocent; the respite, however, is practically only temporary, as the poison is almost certain to have caused such a disorder in the blood that death ensues in the course of a year or two. In his general subversion of all the long established ordinances of the kingdom, Sepopo set aside this rule just when he pleased, and often gave his executioner private orders to proceed to burn the accused under any circumstances.

Several instances of this were related to me. When he moved from the Barotse to Sesheke he

was unable, on account of the tsetse-fly in the neighbourhood, to bring his cattle with him; some large herds belonging to one of the chieftains aroused his envy, and the owner was soon a doomed man. He was brought to judgment and condemned, but evacuating the poison, he escaped; he was brought to trial again with the same result; the third time he was not permitted to get off, but his body, by private orders, was exposed to the fire till he was dead. On another occasion, after I left Sesheke, the wife of the chief Mokoro was sentenced to death; the poison test declared her innocent, but the executioner informed her that he was commissioned by the king to burn her alive next day all the same. To avoid her fate the wretched woman flung herself into the river, where a huge crocodile seized her and mangled her body frightfully before carrying it to the bottom.

But to resume my account of the victim in the wood. When the clamour around him ceased a little, and the accusers grew tired of reviling him, the two old doctors came forward and twisted him round and round, to make the poison, as they said, work itself into his system. They then made him resume his old position on the scaffold, where all the hubbub of the sympathizers and enemies was again renewed, the impatience of both parties continually increasing till they saw whether the poison would act as an emetic or a narcotic. Their curiosity was not set at rest for half an hour, when the man at last fell senseless to the ground. This was the signal for the executioner's deputies to proceed to business; without losing an instant they pounced upon the

body and carried it off to the fire already kindled ; it was in vain for wife or friends to protest ; the poor wretch's head was held over the flames until the face was half-burned away, and he was choked. A quantity of brushwood was then added, and the body, as rapidly as possible, was consumed in the bonfire. The relations, uttering loud lamentations, began to return homewards, but they were careful to suppress all their wailing on reaching the town, lest their tokens of grief should excite the king's anger, and provoke him to further barbarities.

During this reign of terror many who thought themselves likely to come under suspicion tried to leave the country, and some even committed suicide to avoid coming under the royal sentence. Runaways who were caught were either assegaied by their pursuers, or brought back to Sepopo for execution ; if any of them were interceded for either by an important chief or by any of the white men, it was very likely that the application would be received with a very gracious acquiescence, but the chances were that a few days afterwards he would be again accused and convicted afresh.

In cases of theft neither the king nor any of his officials will punish a man except upon his own confession, or upon the evidence of a number of witnesses. No pains are ever taken by the authorities to discover or apprehend a thief ; they simply say to a complainant, "Bring your man here, and then we can deal with him."

I have already mentioned that two respited criminals acted as scavengers at the royal residence. These men had always to be up and to com-



plete their work before any one was stirring; and occasionally they had to remove corpses out of the thoroughfares, as Sepopo regarded all dead bodies, except those of his own people at the court, merely as offal, and gave orders that they should be treated as other rubbish.

It is only giving the Marutse people fair credit for their medical knowledge to say that it is certainly in advance of that of other South African tribes; on this superior knowledge the physicians in the secret council have devised their sorceries in such a way as to gain for themselves a kind of awe from the common people; their acquaintance with the medicinal or poisonous properties of many plants is such as might enable them to be of universal service, were they not actuated by the desire to maintain their hold upon the ignorant by the old routine of magic. Apart, however, from this, I found that they quite understood the treatment of dysentery, fever, coughs, colds, wounds, and snake-bites, although their remedies were always accompanied by mysterious ceremonies to inspire the faith which, perhaps, after all, contributed very largely to the cure. As with the Bechuanas, bleeding was quite a common operation; it was performed with metal, horn, or bone lancets upon the temples, cheeks, arms, breast, and shoulders, the blood being drawn out by bone suckers; it was adopted in cases of neuralgia to relieve any local pain, and was supposed to reduce inflammation in any of the neighbouring organs. Plants of which the medicinal qualities had been ascertained were dried and used in powder and decoctions, or sometimes they were burnt and reduced to charcoal. The animal sub-

stances employed for medicine were bone-dust, scales of the pangolin, and the glandular secretions and excrements of certain mammalia. In one respect the Mabunda doctors differed from the Bechuanas, in having no external indication to mark their profession, unless their extreme old age might be interpreted as a badge of their calling.

The prevalence of superstition is no doubt the principal and most serious obstacle to the intellectual development of the Marutse-Mabunda tribes. It was the awe with which his subjects regarded him that enabled Sepopo, in spite of his atrocities, so long to maintain his power over them; the aged doctors that he kept about him never failed to inculcate the most superstitious notions upon the people, and the influence they exercised was very largely increased by the manifest efficacy of many of the remedies they used; there was no room left to question the sacredness of the person of the sovereign.

It would be absolutely impossible to enumerate all the charms that are employed, and I will only pause to recapitulate a few of them.

At the commencement of a war, after the completion of a new town, or in any season of general calamity, certain portions of the human body, removed during life, are deposited in special places in vessels designed for the purpose.

Bracelets and chestbands made of buffalo fat are supposed to keep off various disorders, and to act as a protection in cases of pursuit.

Fat, taken from the heart of a domestic animal, and fastened crosswise to a stick, and placed near the hut of any fugitive from his country, is

imagined to be sure before long to overpower his senses and to make him reel home again like a drunkard to receive his proper punishment.

Pulverized and charred bones of mammalia, birds, and amphibious animals are sold to hunters to ensure their fleetness in the chase, the powder being either carried in bags about the person, or rubbed into incisions made in the arms and legs.

All kinds of pharmaceutical preparations obtained from white men are regarded as possessing magic properties, as are also the skins of rare animals, such as the great black lemur, the eyes, nostrils, and ridge of the tail of the crocodile, the horns of the *Cephalopus Hemprichii* and of the *Scopophorus Urebi*, beads of any scarce sort, and any abnormal growth in the hair, on the bones, or on the horns of animals.

Other charms consist of small bags made of the skin of the python, belts and chestbands cut from the skins of snakes and lizards, and little shells fastened together into headbands, necklaces, bracelets, and girdles. The shells, as well as other products of marine animals, have been introduced by the Portuguese, and are in great demand.

Instead of being worn about the body, charms and amulets are often deposited in some secret place known only to the master of the house. All along the enclosure at the back of his reception-hut, Sepopo had a row of clay-pots and calabashes containing a great collection of charms, besides those that were stored in his laboratory. The receptacles were very diversified. Those that were uncovered consisted of bags and baskets made of bast, grass, or straw, rude wooden dishes of many

sizes, pots and pans of baked or unbaked clay, generally covered with patterns and glazed, either supported by wooden legs or hung upon poles, and calabashes that were generally arranged under little roofs of their own. The closed receptacles were makenke baskets, tiny baskets made of palm-leaves, small calabashes in the shape of an hour-glass with wooden stoppers, horns of gazelles with the end plugged up, goats' horns engraved all over, and the horns of the larger kinds of antelopes, such as harrisbocks and gemsbocks, neatly carved and in shape like powder-flasks. All of them were provided with straps by which they could be hung up. I also noticed some boxes that had been carefully carved out of wood, reeds, birds' or animals' bones, hippopotamus' and elephants' tusks, fruit-shells, and various sorts of claws; and there were bags made of skins, and even the intestines and the bladders of certain animals, while some were merely fragments of woollen cloth or cotton sewn together. The greatest care seemed to be bestowed on the preservation of every article of this character.

If it could be transferred to a European museum, Sepopo's medicine-hut would be in itself a very remarkable and promiscuous ethnological collection; but, unfortunately, it is very difficult for any one to obtain objects of this sort at all, as the natives are extremely reluctant to part with the most trifling thing that is credited with the possession of magic properties.

Liquids, poured out in front of the entrance of a house or courtyard, are supposed to act as a spell upon the master or any one who may inadvertently step across the place while it is still damp. Illness,

as I have had occasion to remark, is nearly always presumed to be the result of magic or malevolence. My own profession, and the general character of my occupation, as well as my success from time to time in relieving certain cases of sickness, caused me to be regarded in the Marutse kingdom as a magician, and at least had the satisfactory result of ensuring me more respect than white men generally get. The nostrums used for medical purposes were known only by the king, his confidential doctors, and the executioner, who did not fail to extort a large price for their commodities.

Before any inhuman measure on which the king had set his mind could be carried in the council, it was frequently found unavoidable to have several sittings; but if any of the members were ascertained to be persistently obstructive, measures were soon found for getting rid of them, and they were perpetually being accused of high treason or some other crime, and thus removed out of the way. Sepopo's propensity for human sacrifices was by no means in accordance with the usual practice of the country, and it was only by coercing his secret council that he succeeded in perpetrating his superstitious barbarities.

In this way it was that while New Sesheke was being built, Sepopo brought it about that a resolution should be passed by the secret tribunal to the effect that in order to save the new town from the fate of the old, the son of one of the chiefs should be killed; but that his toes and fingers should first be cut off, and preserved as a charm in a war-drum.

In spite of the secrecy which was enjoined, the



rumour of the resolution came to one of the chiefs, who communicated it privately to many of his friends. This was about the end of September, when Blockley was the only white man left in Sesheke. Night after night groups of men were to be seen stealthily making their way past his quarters to the woods; they were the servants of the chiefs, carrying away the young boys whither they hoped to have them out of the tyrant's reach, and some little time elapsed before either the king or his executioner was aware of the steps that were being taken to frustrate the bloody order.

The appointed day arrived. Mashoku's emissaries were sent to ascertain from which of the chieftains' enclosures a victim might most readily be procured, but one by one they returned and reported that not a child was to be found. At last, however, one of the men brought word that he had seen a solitary boy playing outside his father's fence. Apprised of this, the king immediately sent directions to the father to go out at once and procure some grass and reeds for a hut that he was building, and then charged Mashoku to lose no time. As soon as he had satisfied himself that the man had left his home, Mashoku sent his messenger to fetch the child to the royal courtyard, where, although the place was full of people, a perfect silence prevailed. The king was in a terribly bad temper, and no one dared to breathe a word. The executioner's assistant made his way to the abode of the chief, and was greeted by the mistress of the house with a friendly "rumela;" he then proceeded to tell her that the kosana, her husband, was just setting out in his canoe, and that he had sent him to say he wished

his little son to go with him. The mother acquiesced, and the boy was delighted to accompany the man, who of course took him off to the royal courtyard, where a sign from Mashoku announced their arrival to the moody king. Sepopo started to his feet, and accompanied by his band, made his way towards the river, the child being led behind him. Bewildered as the poor little victim was, he was somewhat reassured by the direction they were taking; but all at once he was alarmed at the shrieks of a chieftain's wife, whose house they were passing, and who, knowing the purpose on which they were bent, cried out in horror.

At the river the whole party, numbering nearly seventy, embarked and crossed to the opposite side. The myrimbas were left behind, but the large drums were taken over. Shortly after landing the king seated himself on a little stool; he made the executioner, a few of his own personal attendants, and the members of his secret council form an inner circle; beyond them he placed the drummers; and, outside these, he ordered the rest of the company to group themselves, so as to conceal from the town the deed that was being perpetrated. The poor boy by this time had almost fainted from fear; but when, at a nod from the king, the executioners seized him, he began to scream aloud with terror. The drummers were ordered to play with all their might, so that the piteous shrieks should not be heard; several assistants were then summoned to hold the child, so that resistance was impossible, and the two doctors set themselves deliberately to work to amputate finger after finger, and toe after toe.

No drumming could drown the heart-rending cries of the sufferer. The people of Sesheke could hear him, in the midst of his torture, calling out, "Ra, ra, kame, ra, ra!" (Father, O my father!) and "umu umu bulaya" (they are killing me!); but though a large crowd was thus made aware of what was going on, no one dared to raise a hand to rescue the miserable sufferer.

When the doctors had finished their cruel operation, the hapless boy was strangled, and knocked on the head with a *kiri*. The whole party then returned to their boats, which were pushed off into mid-stream, where, as if by accident, they were formed into a circle; but, in reality, with the design of concealing the corpse as it was dropped into the water. Meanwhile the weeping mother had made her way down to the bank, and regardless alike of the crocodiles and of the displeasure of the tyrant, waded into the stream and demanded her son—her darling *Mushemani*. But to *Sepopo* a mother's grief was nothing; he landed quite unconcerned, and proceeded with his *myrmidons* to enjoy his pots of *butshuala*, while the doctors stored away the dismembered toes and fingers in a war-drum.

This narrative I give as related to me in its general outline on my second return to Sesheke by two of the resident chiefs, the details being filled in by *Blockley*, whose quarters were just opposite to the scene of the murder.

Before crossing the *Zambesi* I had been told about the industrial skill of *Sepopo's* people, and had been given to understand that amongst the southern tribes the *Mashonas* particularly excelled. Prevented as I was from visiting the country, I

had no opportunity of forming an opinion that is conclusive; but, judging from various specimens that I saw, I am inclined to believe that there are some of the Marutse tribes, that in certain branches of industry surpass even the Mashonas.

Amongst cooking-utensils, those that are made of clay form an important class. Many of them are in the shape of vases, some ornamented round the neck with patterns of a lighter or a darker colour, others polished so that they seemed to be entirely covered with glaze; the lower parts were never ornamented, nor did I see any with handles. The clay vessels that are used as corn-bins are immensely large, and most frequently urn-shaped; they are made more roughly than the cooking-vessels, and always of unbaked clay; they are shut in at the top by a lid made also of clay, and in front, close to the ground, they have a semi-circular opening about as wide as one's hand, protected by an interior slide which may be raised and lowered by means of horizontal handles; occasionally they are made so large that it requires as many as sixteen men to lift them, and, when moved, they are carried on poles. For the most part clay utensils are manufactured by women, and are used in the preparation of kaffir-corn beer, for holding water and milk, and for ordinary culinary purposes.

Utensils of wood are most commonly made by men, particularly by the men of the Mabundas; they are burnt all over inside with red-hot irons, a process which is so skilfully performed that it gives them the appearance of ebony; many of them are ornamented with raised carvings, running in symmetrical patterns round the edge and neck; and

some of them have perforated bosses, which serve the purpose of handles. All of them are provided with carved lids.

The variety of wooden vessels is as large as that of the earthenware, and their shapes quite as diversified. The dishes used for minced meats are good specimens of their kind, and exhibit some of the best carving of the Mabundas. As a general rule wooden pots are either conical or cylindrical in shape, rounded inside at the bottom, and are used for holding meal, beans, small fruits, and beer. As an intermediate production between the pots and the dishes, there are bowls with lips or spouts.

Wooden dishes are either oval or round, those to which I have just alluded are oval, and are hollowed into the form of a boat, and are repeatedly to be seen with a horizontal rim of fretwork; they are perfectly black, and without handles. Except in the houses of the upper classes they are rarely to be met with, and the most elaborately worked of any that I saw belonged to the king; but although all the oval dishes are large, I noticed a good many amongst the Matabele that were double or treble the size of any of Sepopo's; all of them had handles at the end, and they were usually kept for serving heavy joints to a number of guests. Not unfrequently they are ornamented with a kind of arabesque carving, raised about half an inch above the surface, a mode of decorating their work in which I believe that the Mashonas carry off the palm.

Of round dishes there are a good many varieties; all of them appeared to have bosses projecting more or less, to serve as handles, and they were nearly



always curved at the bottom, though in some rare cases they had a small flat surface at the bottom about the size of a crown-piece; the edges are generally notched. No household is ever without them, as they are especially serviceable for holding milk and oil, and all substances of a fatty nature.

The dried shells of nearly all the gourds are universally utilized as vessels, and on account of their light weight, there is no purpose to which they are so generally applied as that of carrying water, both for domestic use and for travelling. In variety of natural form, as well as in their artificial adaptations to use, they exhibit a still greater diversity than either the clay or the wooden wares. For common purposes they are polished to yellow, various shades of brown and brick red, and are often covered with a network of grass or bast; but those that are reserved for rare or more important occasions, are generally branded with well-executed devices. The Mabundas are notoriously skilful in this kind of work, particularly in figures. Amongst the designs thus burnt in I saw arabesques that were sometimes very elaborate, figures of men, animals, birds, reptiles, fishes, and insects; representations of huts, oars, weapons, and implements of many kinds; pictures of the sun and moon, besides scenes of hunting or of fighting, of which two especially attracted my attention, depicting with considerable minuteness the capture of a besieged town, and showing the stone breastworks that have now ceased to be erected as defences in warfare.

It must be confessed that on the whole the designs were executed with a certain amount of skill, and, considered as the production of savages,

indicated a kind of artistic power; though I could not pretend to compare them in this respect with the carvings of the Bushmen. Occupying, as they do, a prominent place in the industrial products of the central Zambesi, these carved calabashes must be allowed to indicate a decided advance upon anything of the kind that is to be seen on the southern side of the river. The gourds chosen for the purpose are partly grown in the maize-fields, and partly close round the huts. The smallest-sized gourds were made into snuff-boxes, but not so frequently as among the Bechuanas.

I observed also some very handsome spoons, and some large ladles, made from a peculiar kind of gourd that grows thick at one end; not a few of these were ornamented with devices elaborated with much patience; their general colour was yellow, brown, or chocolate. Not all their spoons are made from gourds, as I saw some made of wood, two feet long, and used for serving out meal-pap or stewed fruit; many of those used for meals are also wood; and altogether I am disposed to think that throughout the savage tribes of Africa none would be found to use wooden utensils more neatly finished off than the spoons of the Mabundas. I may add, that in addition to other wooden productions, I saw some well-made mortars for pounding corn, and some sieves, dexterously put together with broad wood-shavings, to be used for sifting meal.

The Marutse-Mabunda people likewise do a good deal of good basket-work. Perhaps the simplest specimen of this would be found in the circular corn-bags, made of grass or baobab rind,

about two feet long and not quite so wide ; another sort of bag, hardly more elaborate in its make, is woven from reeds, from the stalks of plants, or from fan-palm leaves ; these are of larger dimensions, and are really sacks for carrying dried fish and the heavier descriptions of fruit. Most of the tribes are skilful in making bags of thick bast, and in putting together very rapidly a kind of sweep-net. A basket that is of very easy manufacture is made from pieces of a bark very much resembling our red birch, sewn together with bast. It is nothing more than a tube closed at one end, and having a piece of wood thrust through the other, or a strap attached to form a handle. It is generally used at the ingathering of fruit. Basket-making of a superior character is exemplified in the makuluani baskets, which are manufactured from the lancet-shaped leaflets of the fan-palm ; these are very strongly made, and with their close-fitting covers and firm texture, are sufficiently solid to serve the purpose of boxes or chests ; so various are they in form, that it is rare to see two alike. The Matabele who have settled in the Barotse valley weave grass and straw into basket-work, so fine and compact that it is quite watertight, and can be used for drinking-cups.

The best specimens of this kind of handicraft are found in the makenke baskets made by the tribes in the Barotse, in spite of the material out of which they are formed being somewhat unmanageable. This material is the root-fibre of the mosura, a tree not unlike a maple. There are two kinds of them, one without any covering, and generally of uniform shape and size ; the other with a close-fitting lid, and found in endless diversity of form and dimen-

sions. As works of skill, there is not much to choose between them; they always have elaborate patterns woven into them with fibres that have either been burnt black or dyed of a darker colour than the rest. Except in the Barotse, they are very scarce, and in Sesheke there is the greatest difficulty in obtaining one at all.

Knives of the kind used by men in their daily occupations, and for ordinary domestic purposes, are worn without any sheath, and consist of a thin pointed iron blade, often bent round into a sickle shape, with a handle made of the skin of snakes or lizards. Weapons of offence are assegais of various kinds, daggers, hatchets, knives, and kiris; those of defence being shields and sticks.

There is a large variety of assegais, all of them exhibiting good form and workmanship, and carefully adapted to the different uses for which they are designed. Altogether they struck me as the best specimens that I had seen in South Africa, and they are far superior to those of either the Bechuanas or Makalakas. Amongst the stronger and more uncommon of the assegais are those belonging to the chieftains, and serving as insignia of their office; they vary from five feet to six and a half feet in length, a third part of which is iron; the shafts are the most substantial that are made north of the Zambesi, and are generally carved or ornamented with indented lines or circles.

The assegai that is used for hand-to-hand fights is a most formidable weapon, especially as wielded by the Matabele. It has a kind of gutter running along the blade; the neck is formed of embossed rings; the shaft is short and strong, and weighted

at the end with an iron band as thick as one's finger. When it is to be hurled as a javelin, an assegai has a different character; it is much lighter, and has a longer shaft, the length being frequently as much as seven feet; the blade is quite plain, and the neck altogether slighter.

For hunting purposes there are assegais of a good many different sizes; the necks of these are furnished with either single or double barbs, and the blades are sometimes harpoon-shaped, and sometimes like an ordinary spear-head. They may be divided into two leading groups, one being such as are used for killing gazelles and the smaller mammalia; the other including those adapted to buffaloes, lions, zebras, panthers, and wild game generally.

Of all the various sorts of assegais, perhaps the longest is the crocodile spear, of which the most remarkable feature is the head, which carries four barbs, two close to the blade, and the other two, which are bent upward, just where the neck joins the shaft. There are also two special javelins adapted for killing otters; the blades of these are narrow, but very sharp, and averaging about six inches in length. The water-lizard assegai corresponds with the war assegai in every respect, except that its blade is only half as long. Not unlike this is the weapon used for spearing fish, only it has a point much more rounded; all the upward bent barbs, and those projecting outwards from the sides, exhibit very clever workmanship, and every one of the many kinds seems to answer its purpose well.

In its construction no assegai is more simple than that used in hippopotamus-hunting; the shaft of this is made of soft wood, and from two to three feet



long. The elephant assegai is entirely of iron, becoming thicker and broader at its lower end, and covered in the middle with a piece of leather. There is a very rude sort of assegai which is often buried in pits, point uppermost, and succeeds occasionally very well as a stratagem for trapping water-antelopes.

Before concluding my summary of thrusting weapons, I must not omit to mention the Marutse-Mabunda daggers. They are distinguished from those of the Bamangwatos, which are by no means despicable weapons, and from those of the Matabele, which are singularly formidable, by the tastefulness of their workmanship. They are remarkable, too, for their perforated sheaths, which, like the handles, are covered with ebony-like carvings; the blades are of iron, and generally of inferior quality to those of either assegais or hatchets.

The sticks which are employed as missiles are from a yard to a yard and a half long; they are double, as thick at one end as they are at the other, the lighter extremity being in the usual way about as thick as one's finger.

Hatchets are made of different shapes by different tribes; not only are they better than those of the southerly tribes as regards form, lightness, and choice of material, but they possess a decided advantage in being firmly set in their sockets, which the tomahawks of the Bechuanas, Kaffirs, Makalakas, and Matabele seldom or never are. The handles are cut out of strong well-seasoned wood, with ornamental patterns burnt in. The weapon generally is so light, that it seems like a toy in the hands of a man, though it can perform very effectual service in close encounters.

Such knives as are used for particular purposes, like wood-carving, and those that are worn as weapons of defence, are longer in the blade, and altogether more carefully made than the common domestic knives; slightly curved at the end, they are made very strong at the back, and are often found highly ornamented, the handles, into which they are well secured, being usually flat, and occasionally elaborately carved.

The kiris, just as they were elsewhere, were short round sticks, with a knob at one end. Amongst the Marutse they were made either of some hard kind of wood or of rhinoceros horn. Those of wood are the more common. The knobs are about as large as a man's fist, and are not unfrequently scooped out. Ordinarily, the stick part is about two feet long, and from one inch to two inches thick; it is more often than not highly polished; its extremity is sometimes sharpened, sometimes rounded, and examples are met with from time to time in which the end is finished off by an iron ferule.

No weapon of defence is so important as the shield. The Marutse, however, do not excel in its manufacture, like the tribes farther south; what they use is generally made of black and white cow-hide, and is upon the whole very like the shield of the Bechuanas, though larger than that of the Zulus or Masarwas.

As the last in my list of weapons, I may refer to the long sticks that are used for defensive purposes; many of these run from six to eight feet in length, their usual thickness being only about an inch; both ends terminate in a ferule of twisted iron.

At the time of my brief sojourn in the district, the

number of guns that had been introduced into the country from the south and west amounted to 500 flint muskets, 1500 ordinary percussion muskets, eighty percussion elephant-guns, 150 rifles, thirty double-barrelled guns of various sorts, ten breech-loaders, and three revolvers. After I left, the great bulk of these were thrown into the Zambesi by the people in revolt, and as they were not replaced, I do not suppose that the entire number of firearms in the kingdom would exceed 1100 or 1200 at the most.

In the manufacture of such clothing as they wear, the Marutse tribes fail to exhibit anything like the same skill as in other branches of handicraft. The shape of the various articles of their attire is not bad, but they have not the knack, elsewhere common, of arranging a number of skins so that a garment has the appearance of being formed out of one single fur; nor do they ever think of mending any holes or rents with pieces of skin that correspond in kind or colour with the surrounding parts. The Bechuana sorts his skins with much care, according to their colour, size, or length of hair, and only uses those of one species of animal for the same garment; among the Marutse, on the other hand, we find all kinds of fur patched promiscuously together without any regard to symmetry. Their mantles, too, are not finished off by being ornamented with claws or tails like those of the Bechuana. In the matter of sewing, the tribes north and south of the river may be said to be about on a par; it is done by means of an awl and the finest animal sinews that can be procured.

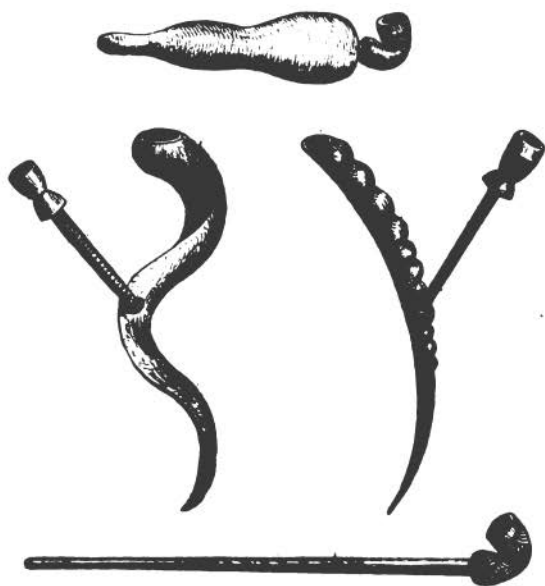
Such skins as have to be prepared for making into aprons, sandals, straps, or bags, are thoroughly

damped, and kept rolled up for some time; the hair is then scraped off with the hand, or a blunt knife; each skin is then turned face downwards to the ground, where it is fixed firmly with wooden pegs; with the help of a wedge-shaped piece of iron, or a scraper made on purpose and called a "pala," or, in cases where the hide is very thick, with a sort of brush made of ten or twenty nails some five or six inches long, every particle of flesh or sinew is cleared away, after which some oily substance is rubbed thoroughly in upon both sides. The process is finally completed by the men, who, in time to a tune, apply the friction of their hands till the skin is quite dry and supple.

The handkerchiefs and sheets that I have mentioned must rank amongst the best specimens of the industrial skill of the country; without being in any degree coarse, the texture is substantial, and dark stripes are often woven with very good effect upon a lighter ground.

For agricultural work there is hardly any other implement except the mattock, which however is a much more efficient tool than is generally met with to the south. The hatchet employed for cutting wood is very similar in shape to the battle-axe; it is made of very good iron, and is sometimes ornamented with raised patterns; the handle is quite straight, and about two feet long. In hollowing out canoes and wooden bowls, and in preparing planks, the people use hatchets of various sizes, nearly all of them made in the same shape as the "pala." Their hammers are made of iron of superior quality, and are better than any used by the Bechuanas. The chisels, both the hard chisels

for working metal, and those for soft materials, are of many different sizes, and are either curved or straight; their nails are both round and square. For boring and drilling they use gimlets very like our own, these as well as their screws being all manufactured by a file. Their tongs and pincers seem of a very primitive character, nevertheless, they answer their purpose sufficiently well; the



MARUTSE-MABUNDA PIPES.

anvils at which the smiths work are all of the rudest construction.

I observed three different kinds of oars in use, the long, the short, and the hunting-oars. The last are the exclusive property of the king, and in common with some of the others, form part of the tribute. The long oars are over ten feet, the short about six feet long, and are made of stout straight stems; at



their paddle ends the short are usually broader than the long, and have their extremities run out to a point instead of being cut straight off; both these kinds are occasionally carved or branded with ornamental designs, although not so often as the hunting-oars. These hunting-oars have a forked end, and are bound together by an iron clamp across them, to



PIPES FOR SMOKING DACHA.

keep them from splitting; they are generally about ten feet long; the principal time for using them is during floods, when they are brought out for letshwe and puku chasing.

Tobacco-pipes are of two kinds, the one that is least elaborate being of more common use in the west of the country, the other in the south. The

former is not unlike a Turkish pipe, consisting of a straight stem about a yard long, of the thickness of a man's thumb, occasionally carved, attached to a small clay bowl, that is likewise generally decorated with carved devices. The second form differs from the first solely in having a calabash for a stem, the smaller end of which constitutes the mouthpiece. A native rarely forgets his pipe, even on his shortest journeys, especially if he is travelling with a white man, and carries his tobacco in a little cotton or leather bag that is tied to his mantle or waistbelt. For longer journeys the dacha-pipe is an indispensable companion; the water reservoirs of these exhibit an infinite variety of form. Dacha is composed of the dried leaves of a kind of hemp, which is planted round nearly all the South African huts; when smoked through water it is slightly intoxicating in its effects. The pipes consist of three parts; the bowl, the stem, and the horn containing the water, the broad end of the horn forming the mouthpiece by which the smoke is inhaled. An inclination to cough is induced by the inhalation, and the more violent the tendency the greater the enjoyment.

Although snuff-boxes of home manufacture, as well as those introduced by white men, are found throughout South Africa, I nowhere saw such a variety as amongst the Marutse. The materials utilized for this purpose are almost too diversified to enumerate; ivory, hippopotamus tusks, the bones of animals and birds, stag's horn, rhinoceros horn, claws, snakes' skins, leather, wood, reeds, gourd shells, and any fruit husks that were either globular or oval; besides all these, not a few metal boxes were to be met with that were of foreign make,

and had been brought into the country by Europeans.

The boxes made of ivory most frequently have small circular patterns burnt in, and they are attached to the mantle or bracelet by a string of beads, a piece of bast, or a strap; they were, as far as I could judge, used exclusively by the upper classes. The most like them were the boxes made of rhinoceros horn. Both kinds have only one small aperture at the top, while those of the Bechuanas have a second opening at the bottom.

Of all the kinds, that which struck me as most simple is made of reeds and the bones of birds; it is the sort commonly used by boys and young girls; but another form, hardly less simple, is that in ordinary use amongst the Makalakas, made of the horns of animals, either wild or domestic, and nearly always more or less carved; undoubtedly, however, the kind which is most frequently to be seen consists merely of fruit-shells, and of which four or five at once are often attached by a strap to the mantle, all of them polished carefully into a shining black, or a dark violet or plum colour. The most elaborate carvings appear to be lavished on the wooden boxes, which are worn by the Mamboë and Manansas, but the poorer classes amongst these often carry their snuff in little cotton or leather bags.

Indispensable as I have said the dacha-pipe is to the native on his longer journeys, and his tobacco-pipe when he leaves home at all, yet no necessity of life is so absolutely requisite to him as his snuff-box, and whether at work or at leisure, at home or abroad, sleeping or waking, he never fails to have it within reach.

Besides snuff-boxes, amulets and cases for charms are continually worn as ornaments, the materials of which they are composed being of the most heterogeneous character, and in addition to the variety already enumerated, comprising teeth, scales, tortoise-shell, husks, seeds, feathers, grass, and tallow.

Amongst metal ornaments, besides rings, bracelets, and anklets, I saw a good many earrings of iron, copper, and brass; gold I never saw. The iron and copper articles were partly produced from the native smelting-furnaces, and partly composed of the wire introduced by Europeans; all the brass things were made of imported metal. Foreign jewellery was rarely worn in its original form, but the material was almost invariably melted down, and reproduced in a design to suit the taste of the country. Nothing in this way is in greater requisition than the anklets, of which the queens and the wives of men of rank wear from two to eight on each leg. The poorer classes have their bracelets and anklets generally made of iron, and do not wear so many of them. It is comparatively rare to see any made of copper. Ordinarily only one or two rings are worn on each foot, but the wives of the koshi and kosanas are not unfrequently to be seen with four. As the king makes a rule of buying all the best and strongest imported wire for himself, the subjects have to be satisfied with the inferior qualities; the result is that all the good jewellery is found near Sesheke and in the Barotse, and amongst the tributary Makalakas and Matongas, and its quality degenerates altogether in the more remote east and north-east countries, where it is seldom anything better than what is produced from the

native iron. The little earrings, whether of iron, brass, or copper, hardly differ at all from those of the Bechuanas.

Not a few ornaments are made of bone and ivory; amongst these again bracelets and anklets predominate. All rings in ivory are turned upon a lathe, and made precisely to fit the part on which they are to be worn; their finish is little short of faultless, and even when left plain, without any carvings, they are really elegant examples of workmanship. I obtained a few of them as curiosities, but only with great difficulty. Ivory is also worked up into little oblong cases, bars, and disks, that are fastened to the hair by bast strings passed through the holes with which they are perforated. Hair-pins in great variety are made from bone and hippopotamus ivory, and trinkets of all sizes are cut out of the tips of large horns and the thicker substance of the horns of the gazelle; they are either twisted into the hair, or strung together to form bracelets. The delicate long-toothed combs of the Marutse are a striking illustration of their skill, and amongst the finest specimens of wood-carving in all South Africa.

Slaves make their bracelets and other ornaments, whether for the neck or feet, from the untanned skins of gnus, zebras, and antelopes, with the hair outside; the Masarwas also make head-bands from the manes of zebras. Hair of all kinds, and the bristles of many animals, are worked up into tufts, fringes, bosses, balls, and pads, which are fastened to straps and bound round the chin for dancing; many of them are, however, used like the trinkets, for the decoration of the hair. Plumes of two

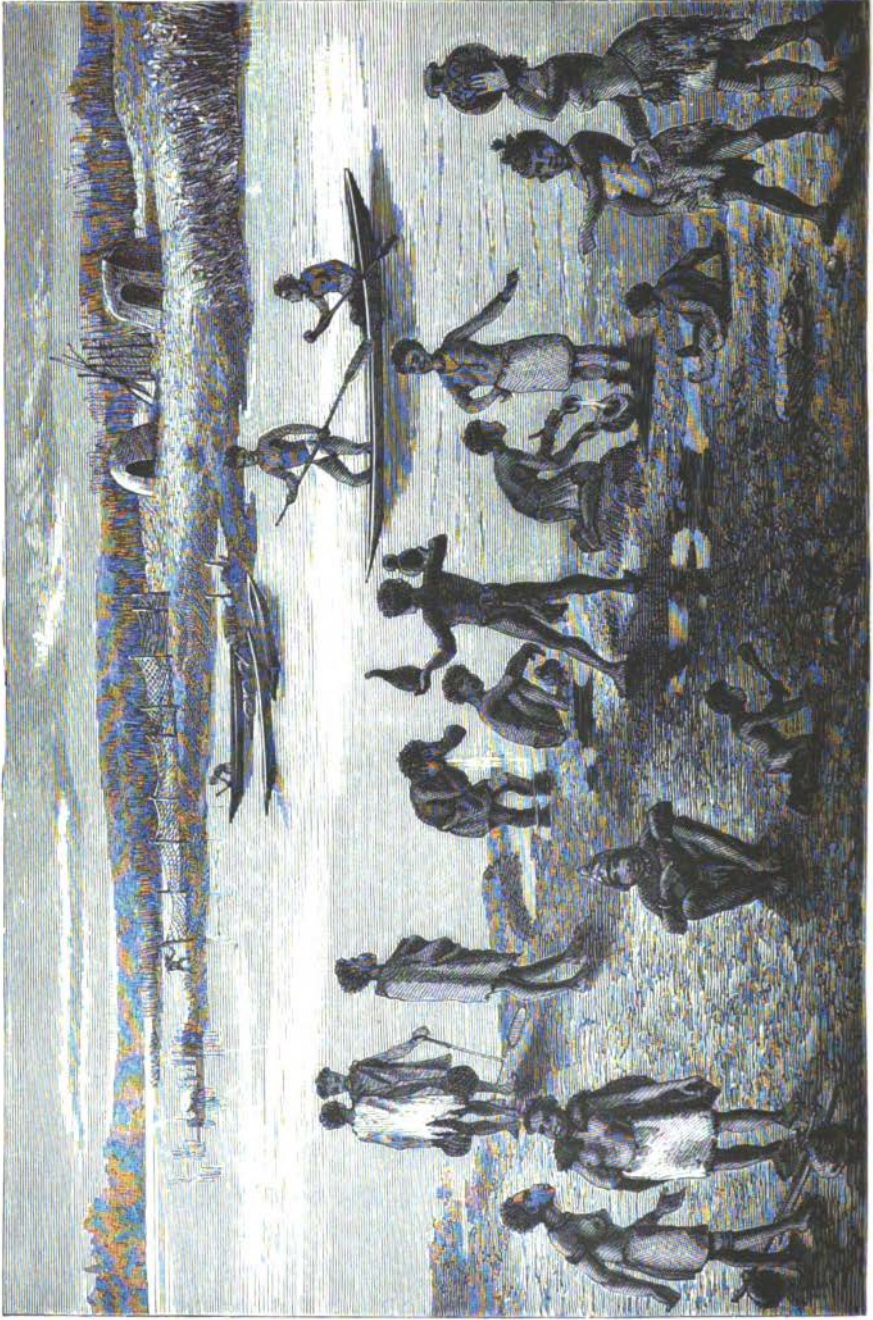


or three handsome feathers are often fastened on the head, especially on such occasions as a visit to the royal residence, the festival dances, or expeditions either for hunting or for war. Amongst the Matabele people these plumes are a remarkably conspicuous feature, and I succeeded in procuring one which was considerably larger than the head of the man who had been accustomed to wear it.

Another art in which the Marutse excel is that of weaving grass, wood-fibre, bast, or straw, into the neatest of bracelets, in a way even superior to the Makalakas, who have the repute of being very adroit in work of this kind. The boys who do the greater part of this weaving are very particular in their choice of material, and will only gather certain kinds of grass at the right season, which, after being dyed most carefully yellow or crimson to suit their taste, they make up with great patience into elaborate designs; it is in this respect that their work is superior to that of the Makalakas, who although they are dexterous enough in manipulating the fibre, are comparatively indifferent to the quality of the substance they are weaving.

Threaded so as to be worn as bracelets, or fastened together in pairs so as to fit the back of the head, claws of birds and of many animals are used as ornaments, and I have known three small tortoise-shells placed in a row along the top of the skull. The little shells brought by the Portuguese, small round tarsus and carpus bones polished black, seeds, and small fruits with hard rinds, are further examples of the almost endless variety of decorations in which the Marutse-Mabundas delight.





Although several of the ornaments that have been introduced by the traders pass as currency, nothing in this respect can compare with beads, of which different tribes exhibit a preference for certain colours. Hereabouts the violet, the yellow, and the pink were reckoned as of no value at all; those which were most highly appreciated were the light and dark blue, after which rank the vermilion, Indian red, white, black, and green. The whole of these are of the kind of small beads about one-twentieth of an inch in diameter. Amongst the medium-sized beads, about one-fifth of an inch long, those seem to be most sought after which are variegated, or have white spots on a dark ground, but sulphur-coloured and green are likewise in good request. To every tribe alike the shape of the beads is quite a matter of indifference.

No matter how ill a traveller in the Marutse district may be, nor how many bearers he may require, if only he has a good stock of blue beads he may always be sure of commanding the best attention and of securing the amplest services; his beads will prove an attraction irresistible to sovereign and subject, to man, woman, and child, to freeman and bondsman alike.

It may fairly be claimed for the Marutse that they have decidedly better taste in the use of beads as ornaments than any of the tribes south of the Zambezi. They avoid crowding them on to their lower extremities, like the Bakuenas and Bamangwatos, or huddling them round their necks and arms, like the Makalakas; but they string them, and arrange them with considerable grace on different parts of their body.

Nearly all the tribes bestowed great pains on the arrangement of their hair. Some of them combed it out regularly; others, the Mankoë for instance, whose hair was extra long, kept it powdered in a way that helped to set off their well-formed figures to advantage, and many plaited it into little tufts containing three or four tresses each; but I did not observe that any of them covered it with manganese, like the Bechuanas, or twisted it into a coronetted tier like the Zulus.

A good deal of ingenuity is exhibited in making playthings of clay for the young. Very often these take the shape of kishi dancers in various attitudes, or of hunters, or of animals, particularly those with horns, or of elephants and hippopotamuses. The clay selected for the purpose is dark in colour, and the puppets vary from two to five inches in length. Toys are likewise made of wood, especially by the Mabundas, spoons and sticks ornamented with figures being great favourites with the children.

Mats form another item in the native industry, and are used for different purposes, according to the material of which they are made—it may be of rushes, grass, straw, or reeds. They are always neatly finished off, and frequently have darker bands or borders of some sort woven into the pattern; in colour they are usually a bright yellow, and the ornamental part black or red.

Bolsters are carved of wood, and however primitive they might be in design, I saw many of which the details were very elaborate in execution. The stools in common use are simply short round blocks of wood, about ten or twelve inches high, and five or six inches broad, slightly curved at the top;



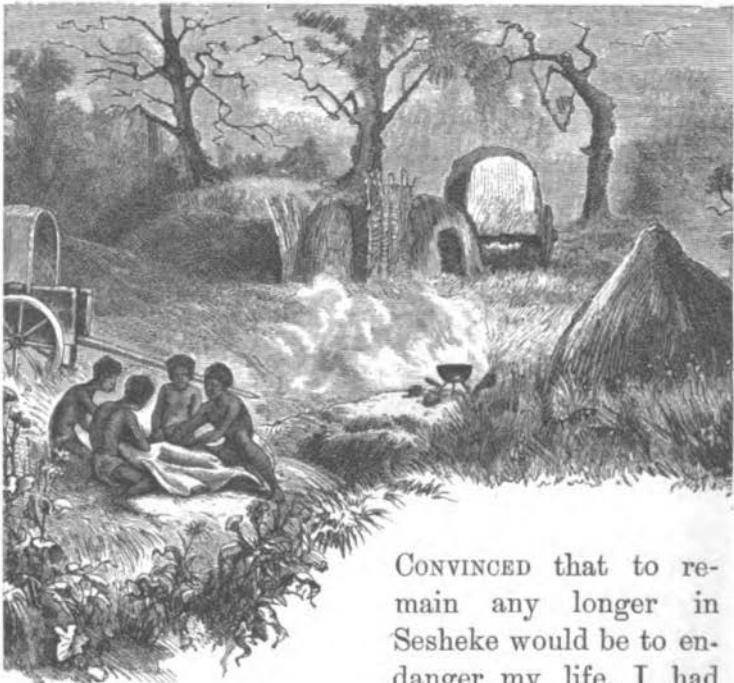
but some of these were very laboriously carved, and stood upon carefully cut fluted pedestals. Wherever a man of rank goes it is part of his dignity to be followed by an attendant carrying his stool.

My list of the Marutse handicraft would hardly be complete if I omitted to mention the fly-flappers. These are made in two parts, the handle and the whisk; the handles are either wood, reed, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, or buffalo hide; or occasionally they are formed of the horns of a gazelle or a rhinoceros; the whisks are composed of the long hair of the withers or tails of animals, of manes or feathers, no material being more common than the tails of bullocks, gnus, and jackals. The brush is fastened either inside or outside the handle, with bast, grass, horsehair, or sinew; and in most cases the handle is carved, though sometimes it is decorated instead with rings of horsehair or bands of snake-skin.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## IN THE LESHUMO VALLEY.

Departure from Sesheke—Refractory boatmen—An effectual remedy—Beetles in the Leshumo Valley—The chief Moia—A phenomenon—A party of invalids—Sepopo's bailiffs—Kapella's flight—A heavy storm—Discontent in the Marutse kingdom—Departure for Panda ma Tenka.



CAMP IN THE LESHUMO VALLEY.

CONVINCED that to remain any longer in Sesheke would be to endanger my life, I had consented, but with extreme reluctance, to take my departure. The

boatmen who were conveying me knew perfectly well that I was going away from Sepopo for good, and did not allow many hours to pass before they began to show that they did not care what became of me, and insisted on drawing up at a place where there was no better accommodation than a couple of miserable huts, that had been put up for the use of the fishermen who periodically visited the lagoons. I made my servants carry me on shore, and sent them out to get some fish. They only procured five, of which I gave them four, and had the other broiled for myself.

After dinner I discovered that the boatmen had made up their minds to go no farther that day, although nothing could be more unhealthy or less suitable for a night encampment than the spot where they had pulled up. The two huts were on a reedy island just opposite a swamp; and, to make matters worse, I found that as my boat had been the last to arrive, they had both been appropriated by the crews that had landed before me, so that I was obliged to wait while my servants erected me another. This took them about two hours and a half; and when with the help of the boatmen they had put my baggage inside, they found that they had made it so small that it was with the utmost difficulty that they squeezed me in afterwards and laid me upon my boxes. It was so low that my face actually touched the roof, which was made of the grass that had been washed ashore by the last year's floods, and, being still damp, emitted a most unpleasant smell, which, combined with the exhalations from the swamp, made the atmosphere intolerably oppressive. Sleep

under the circumstances was quite impossible, and I lay brooding sadly over my frustrated plans and my final disappointment. The snorting of the hippopotamuses in the water, and the cry of the herons, were the only sounds that broke the stillness.

Before midnight some small dark clouds arose, and gradually overspread the heavens, till not a star was to be seen. To my exhausted system the sultriness became more than ever trying, and the hours wore away without affording me the least refreshment.

Soon after sunrise we resumed our journey down the stream, but the slovenly and care-for-naught way in which the boatmen handled the baggage, and the general tone of their behaviour, warned me what I had to expect. The more I hurried them, the slower they went, and after a while, finding that a slight breeze was getting up, they pulled up all of a sudden at a sandbank, and declared that they would not proceed another inch.

I promised them beads, I threatened them with punishment from Sepopo, my servants blustered and stormed; but it was all to no purpose, the men only laughed; some of them went away and laid themselves down to sleep on the sand; others remained where they were, and appeared to chuckle over my weakness, enjoying the helplessness of my condition. This was a state of things that I was not disposed to allow. The remedy was not far to find. I was quite aware that the Marutse people were acquainted with very few guns better than the old musket. Taking my seat at the bow of my boat, I began handling my breechloader. After letting it flash for a few minutes in the suu, I took aim at a reed-

stalk standing just between two groups of the refractory boatmen, who, whether they were really asleep or not, in a moment started to their feet. Not many minutes afterwards I fired again, hitting the mark I had selected with due precision. My third shot grazed the stump of the reed I had already broken. The little expedient I had adopted answered admirably, every one of the fellows seemed instant-



WANA WENA, THE NEW KING OF THE MARUTSE.

neously to return to his senses; the boats began to glide off into the water as it were by some secret magic, and we were very soon on our way again. The boatmen begged me not to fire any more; they did not like the noise; they would pull hard, and would bring me very quickly where I could shoot plenty of "polocholo" (game). Within three hours I landed at Makumba's baobab.

The sky was now quite clear, and the refreshing



breeze that blew down from the hills over the Impalera Island acted on me like a stimulant. I took my gun and brought down some of the baobab fruit that was hanging over me, and whilst the crews were unloading the boats, my own people made their way to the woods to get more fruit.

For crossing the Chobe on the 15th I was obliged to pay three times the ordinary amount of passage money. This extortion was practised on me simply because it was known that I was leaving the kingdom.

Having a great dread of passing the night in the marshy Chobe district, I sent my servants forward at once with a portion of my baggage to the Leshumo valley, where Blockley had placed two waggons at my disposal until Westbeech should arrive. For myself I required a little rest, but quite intended to follow them before the evening. I engaged a number of Masupias to conduct me and carry on the rest of the luggage to the place of rendezvous, but just as we were on the point of starting a violent storm came on, and compelled me after all to remain where I was; I was consequently obliged to spend the night in the miserable hut where Bauren, who had died at Panda ma Tenka a few days since, had first been taken ill. In the morning I began my slow and painful march, and found myself necessitated to take a whole day in accomplishing a distance which is ordinarily traversed in a few hours. Almost every hundred yards I was obliged to stop and rest, while the perspiration poured from my body, and as a consequence of my exertions I had to lie by completely all the next day.

As I felt myself tolerably well recruited on the

17th, I was very anxious to go out and do a little botanizing in the immediate neighbourhood of our waggons; the rain, however, came down so continuously, that I had no chance of indulging my wishes. For the last few days I had been expecting Westbeeck, and his non-arrival was giving me some uneasiness, as my small stock of tea, sugar, and salt had come to an end; accordingly it was a pleasant surprise to me when my servants returned from one of their rambles and brought a good supply of honey.

During the night which I had been forced to spend on the bank of the Chobe, my forehead and my hands had been stung all over by some very venomous mosquitoes, and the places now came into pustules, of which I carried the scars for months. I had much to harass me and to contribute to my discomfort, but amidst all my grievances I had the satisfaction of being attended by trustworthy and industrious servants; I could only regret that they were not to be induced to take my breechloader and procure some game from the woods; their assegais were quite unfit for the purpose of killing gazelles, elephants, or buffaloes, which were the animals that chiefly haunted the locality. Only two nights before our arrival a large herd of elephants had passed quite close to the spot where the waggons were stationed.

With the assistance of my people, I took a little walk on the 19th, and collected some plants and insects. For pressing my botanical specimens I used the only two books that I had saved, and as these were octavo volumes instead of quarto, many of the plants had to be divided under the prospect of being

joined together again at some future time; I was careful to keep a special note-book, in which, besides other particulars, I recorded the different names by which the plants were called by the Masupias, the Manansas, and the Matongas respectively. Of such funguses as I could neither press nor dry I took sketches, an employment that gave me occupation on a number of sleepless nights. My entomological curiosities had to be stored away in a wide-mouthed pickle-jar that Westbeech had given me, having thoughtfully filled it with slips of writing-paper, which he knew would be useful; the insects were killed by plunging the jar several times into boiling water in my coffee-pot.

The beetles that seemed to me to be most abundant were the ground-beetles (*Cicindela*, *Mantichora granulata*, *Carabidæ*), *scarabæidæ*, leaf-beetles, weevils, and sand-beetles (*Psammodes*). Of this last genus there are such countless varieties that they excite the astonishment of even the phlegmatic Dutch farmers; they have thick hard tails, which they raise every few seconds, and give a tap to the ground or floor on which they are crawling; this habit has made the Dutchmen say that they are knocking, or calling for one another. I was glad to find the *Mantichora* and the *Anthia thoracica*, which are very interesting; they live in holes already made in the ground, or in cavities scraped out by themselves, often so deep that it was quite a wonder how they could be pierced in the loose sand; their industry seemed to keep them at work all day long, and they had a habit of rearing themselves up on their long legs, as though they were making a survey of what was going on all round. Another habit they

have—well known to the Dutch, but of which I, as a novice, had an experience far from pleasant some years previously—whenever they are captured they discharge a very offensive fluid from their body; and I can testify that it is ill-luck for the entomologist if this flies into his face and eyes.

On the next day Westbeeck's servant Diamond, accompanied by some Manansas, arrived at the waggon. They had all been out on a hunting-excursion.

I felt myself again a little better, and would not lose the opportunity of going out for a few miles. I was particularly anxious to obtain some birds' skins; but although I had the best assistance of my people, I was quite unequal to follow a bird to any distance, so that I only succeeded in bagging a black swallow-tailed shrike. My exertions, however, were rewarded in another way, as I made a good collection both of plants and insects. During my stay in the Leshumo Valley I added nearly 3000 botanical and about 500 entomological specimens to my collection. During my walk I came upon several smelting-furnaces, made of the smallest of bricks; they were about six feet long and three feet wide, and had, I conjectured, been put up fifty or sixty years before by the Marutse vassals, who had resided on this side of the Zambesi before the settlement of the free-booting kingdom of the Matabele Zulus.

A day or two afterwards some Masupias came from Impalera bringing corn for sale, and Diamond, as a contribution from his hunting-expedition, brought me some buffalo-beef; he seemed inclined to grumble at the alacrity the buffalo-bulls displayed in getting out of his way, and said that the density of the

summer foliage made it very hard to get at them. We were thus well supplied for the time, but I had been so long debarred from taking animal food, that the buffalo-meat did not at all agree with my digestion. My servants, however, were all delighted at the change in their accustomed bill of fare.

I had indulged the hope that I should find the higher ground adjacent to the little Leshumo river much more healthy than the mouth of the Chobe. My disappointment was consequently great to find, that morning after morning the whole valley was full of fog, which after rain was always especially dense. The result was that I felt deplorably ill all the early part of every day; and although I revived somewhat later on as the fog lifted a little, I remained so extremely sensitive to the least breath of wind, that even in these hottest months of January and February, I always had to wear two coats whilst I was engaged in writing or botanizing.

On the 23rd I received a visit from a company of Marutse men, who rather surprised me by saying that they had come from the south. The party consisted of a chieftain named Moia and several adherents. Moia was the brother of Kapella, Sepopo's commander-in-chief, and had been condemned to death by Sepopo about a year before. Some liquid had been poured in front of the king's residence, and as the king was feeling more than usually unwell, he came at once to the conclusion that he had been bewitched, and Moia's enemies had taken advantage of the circumstance to charge him with the deed, the consequence being that in order to escape being sentenced to be burnt or



poisoned he had to fly the country. He had betaken himself to Shoshong, where Khame had received him most kindly and allowed him to remain; but discovering after a while that the fugitive was being consumed with the desire to get back to his home, the king resolved to send him to Sepopo, with an autograph letter demonstrating Moia's entire innocence of the crime that had been laid to his charge. For my own part I was convinced that Sepopo would never be persuaded, and I advised the chief to beware how he placed himself within the tyrant's reach; but the longing to return to his wife and children was too intense to allow him to listen to any voice of caution, and he continued his homeward way.

By this time I was so destitute of provisions that I was obliged to send two of my servants to the Zambesi, and get them to bring me some of the Masupia people from whom I might purchase a supply of kaffir-corn and maize, and I requested them if possible to buy me a goat. Unfortunately the servants missed their way, and I had to send two others instead of them, so that there was a delay of four-and-twenty hours before the Masupia dealers arrived. When they came, they brought besides the corn a number of interesting curiosities, amongst which was the horn of an enormous rhinoceros.

A celestial phenomenon occurred on the following evening, so remarkable that I think it ought to be recorded. It was almost sunset; in the west and south there was a narrow strip of blue sky, whilst in the east, where a storm was rising, there were repeated flashes of lightning. When only a small

section of the sun's disk was visible, a strange fiery glow arose about  $45^{\circ}$  above the eastern horizon, and seemed entirely to overpower the central portion of the arch of a rainbow opposite, leaving only the extremities to be seen down in the east-north-east and south-east; as the sun disappeared, the glow faded gradually away, but so remarkably that every tint in the rainbow seemed to be absorbed in the prevailing colour, and the entire arch was a gorgeous red. In the course of the next few minutes the glow reappeared, but this time only to rise about  $10^{\circ}$  above the horizon. The entire spectacle was not of long duration; the brilliancy became gradually dim, and in the course of about a quarter of an hour, the valley was shrouded in the obscurity of night.

Two of my own servants and some of Diamond's party were here attacked by influenza, but the complaint was soon relieved by the administration of emetics. The weather was unfavourable, and brought on several relapses of my own fever, which, although I managed in various ways to alleviate them, invariably left me extremely weak and incapable of any exertion. A short time afterwards several of Diamond's people began to sicken with typhus.

All through this dreary time, the occasional hunting-excursions were all we had to look to in the way of excitement. April, the Basuto, had the good-luck to kill a buffalo-bull, and when the flesh was brought to the camp there was a regular banquet in the evening, accompanied by singing and dancing; even the invalid negroes sucked some fragments of the half-cooked meat which they were quite unable to swallow. Diamond likewise went

out, but returned on the 2nd of February without bringing any material contribution to our stores; he had come upon a herd of elephants, but they had startled him so completely by their rush, that he did not recover himself in time to get a shot at them.

When it was announced to me that that part of Westbeeche's ivory had arrived at Impalera, I was much cheered by the expectation that Westbeeche himself would immediately follow. My means of purchasing corn were now so nearly exhausted that I could not help growing more and more anxious.

On the 7th I was equally surprised and distressed by the arrival of a party of about thirty Masupias, who proved to be bailiffs on the hunt for Moia and Kapella. Moia had carried Khame's letter to Sesheke, where his appearance caused a great sensation, as the return of a condemned fugitive was a thing quite unprecedented. The particulars of what ensued I afterwards learnt from Westbeeche, who told me that he had been summoned to the royal enclosure, which he found in great commotion. The king had just received Khame's letter written in Sechuana, professed himself to be highly gratified by the contents, and had sent for Westbeeche to write a reply, in which he gave his assurance that Moia should have a free pardon. But that very night he sent Mashoku a list of twelve names of chiefs who were to be executed forthwith, amongst them Inkabella, Maranzian, Kapella, and Moia.

This was too much even for Mashoku. Alarmed at the prospect of such wholesale slaughter, the executioner immediately let Kapella know what was in store for him, and without the loss of a moment the commander-in-chief aroused his two

wives, his brother, who was sleeping in an adjoining hut, his young son, and three of his most trustworthy servants, and took to flight. On the way to the river-bank Kapella had called upon West-beech, and informed him of the desperate step he was driven to take; and he, ever a friend in need, had supplied him with ammunition and a number of necessaries for the journey.

Taking possession of the first two canoes they could find, the fugitives hurried down the stream, and while it was still dark found themselves twenty miles away from Sesheke; here they landed, sent their boats adrift, and proceeded on foot towards the Masupia settlement above Impalera. This was under the jurisdiction of a brother of Makumba's, a staunch ally of Sepopo's; but Kapella hoped to reach the place while the natives were still in bed, and to make use of their boats to cross the Chobe. It was a most difficult journey; the passage through the reeds was in some places dangerous in the extreme, and Kapella would never have risked it but in the greatest emergency. However, nothing went amiss, and the party all arrived safely before dawn; but early as it was, some of the Masupia fishermen were already on the move. Terrified at the sight of two armed chiefs, and probably recognizing who they were, they water-logged their canoes, and ran off to raise an alarm in the town. This was Kapella's opportunity; quick as thought he had the canoes dragged to land, emptied them of the water, and made use of them to ferry his party to the opposite shore.

The chieftain, on hearing what had occurred, took no immediate action. He was aware that Kapella

was a wonderful shot, and this rather indisposed him to take any precipitate measures to arrest him. He came to the decision that a council of the village should be called, and during the hours of deliberation the fugitives were getting safely far away, so that when the bailiffs arrived at our quarters they had no chance of overtaking them, and after ransacking the woods for a short time they gave up the pursuit and took themselves off.

Diamond's next hunting-expedition proved a great success; and he shot a fine buffalo. He made his servants put him up a grass hut close to the place where the carcass was lying, that it might be guarded from the attacks of any beasts of prey; but not only had the old sportsman now lost much of his former zest, but he had contracted rather too great a love for brandy, so that although he distinctly heard the beasts gnawing at the prey, he did not rouse himself to go to the rescue. The consequence was that in the morning it was found that the carcass had been considerably mangled by lions, the entrails especially having furnished the materials for their feast. We were, however, all glad to see the hind-quarters, quite free from mutilation, conveyed safely to our camp.

A few evenings afterwards Diamond came to me in great haste, and told me that two Marutse men had just come in search of Kapella and Moia, with strict orders from Sepopo to kill them at once if they could find them. I did not wait to see the men, but sent out peremptory instructions that they were to be off about their business, or they would have to rue their delay. My vexation was very great when I afterwards ascertained that Diamond,



through his ignorance of the Serotse dialect, had quite misunderstood their errand. It turned out that instead of being bailiffs acting on behalf of Sepopo, they were two of Kapella's own servants, whom their master had sent to beg for some food.

The 12th was quite a day of bustle; both in the morning and in the afternoon several troops of Masupias arrived from Impalera with ivory, and one of Westbeech's servants passed through on his way to Panda ma Tenka to fetch bullocks for the waggons. That night I slept better than usual; the feeling that Westbeech was really on his way towards me revived my drooping spirits, and I was inclined next morning to rise at an early hour, and as soon as Narri had dressed me, I took my seat upon the box of the waggon, enjoying the morning air, which although probably by no means healthy, certainly seemed very refreshing. As Narri was preparing the kaffir-corn coffee, he drew my attention to the sound of voices a long way down the valley. I inquired of the other servants what it meant, and after listening for a few seconds they unanimously affirmed that it was Westbeech's cavalcade, carrying their burdens of ivory and singing as they marched.

As I sat pondering, only occasionally saying a word to Narri, my attention was suddenly arrested by the dusky form of a man advancing towards the camp, and within fifty yards of us. He was quite unarmed. I hardly believed my eyes, and yet I felt that I could not be mistaken. The man undoubtedly was Kapella, no longer the powerful commander, but a sad and dejected fugitive. I was too weak to alight from

the waggon and go to meet him, but he was immediately at my side. "Help me, help me, intate (friend)," he cried; "I am hungry; my wife, my child, my brother are starving in the woods!" Probably he would have said more, but his keen ear caught the sound of the Masupias singing almost close at hand, and he paused; his face, ordinarily beaming with good nature, became distorted with terror. The excitement of the moment seemed to give me renewed strength. I can hardly tell how I did it, but I leaned back, and catching hold of a sack containing about a bushel of corn that was lying in the waggon, I lifted it into Kapella's arms. He smiled, and made a hasty gesture of thanks; and before the Masupias had come in sight he had made his way into the long grass towards his retreat.

One of the heaviest storms that I ever remember in South Africa occurred a few days afterwards. It came on suddenly, and so violently that my servants were obliged to throw sand and earth upon the fires, that the wind should not carry the flames into the dry grass; and the downpour of rain was so great, that I had to use all my wraps and extra clothing to protect my collections. The top of the waggon swayed to and fro in the gale; and cumbrous as the vehicle was, it rattled and shook as if it were the plaything of the hurricane. One of the grass-huts was completely overturned, and several others in which my people had sought shelter had their sides blown in, and it was only owing to the lightness of the material of which they were constructed, that no injury was done to life or limb. When the storm had subsided in the evening, they found that it was necessary to build

two entirely new huts, one for themselves and one for my baggage, so that the waggons which we had been occupying should be left free for Westbeech's ivory.

Westbeech's long-anticipated arrival took place on the 16th. He complained very much of Sepopo's behaviour to him after my departure, and avowed his intention of never going so far as Sesheke again, but of disposing of his goods in the valley of the Chobe. He gave me all the latest news, and said that the disposition to revolt, and the determination to dethrone the king, were fast gaining ground among the chiefs. A recent proceeding on Sepopo's part had done much to accelerate the growth of the general disaffection. In his rage at Kapella's flight, he had not only, as usual, vented his temper on his attendants by laying about him with his kiri, but he had openly declared his intention of preparing a charm which should have such an effect upon the senses of the fugitives that they would be sure to make their way back to Sesheke; once there, they should be handed over to Mashoku. Accordingly he gave orders that an ox should be slaughtered, that the fat from the region of the heart should be affixed to the end of some cleft-sticks, and that the sticks should be planted in front of the doors of the huts of the runaways. It was the first time that Sepopo had ever prepared any incantations, or even mentioned his system of charms in public, and the eyes of his people were only now opened to the detestable humbug which was the chief feature of his character.

Nor was it only his own subjects that had become thoroughly dissatisfied with his proceedings. The

Portuguese traders had failed to get payment for the goods they had supplied, and had been put off time after time with equivocal excuses.

It was further reported, that most likely Jan Mahura, with his brother, would find his way next day to the Leshumo valley. He had just received a payment, after five years, for his services as interpreter, and felt only too certain that his life was now quite insecure beyond the Zambesi.

Westbeech had still left a small portion of his property in Sesheke, under the charge of Fabi, his half-caste cook, who could not accompany him, because Asserat, the wife Sepopo had given him, refused to go to the south. But the bulk of Westbeech's ivory, weighing altogether 11,080 lbs., had now arrived at the Leshumo valley.

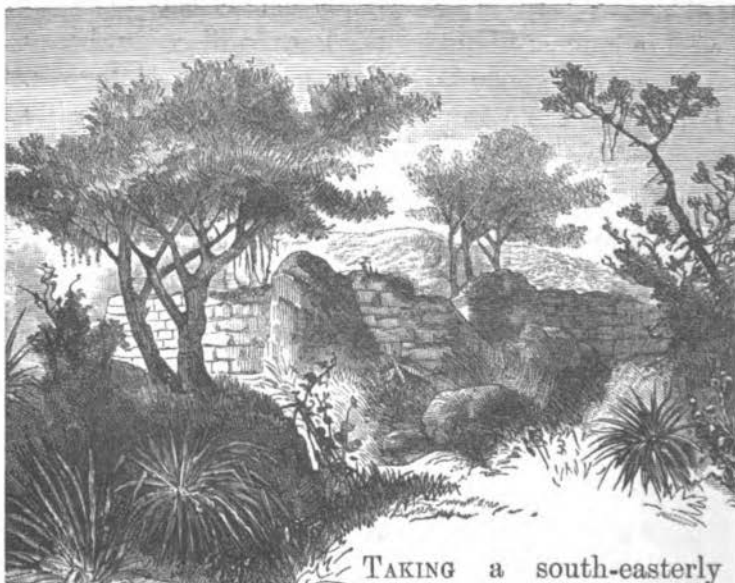
On the 17th my servant Elephant was taken ill with inflammation under the knee, a disorder that is very common among the Masupias and Matongas. It is called "tshi kana mirumbe," and may generally be cured by the application of bean-flour poultices.

Two days later the waggons were packed. The bullocks arrived at midnight, and we started without delay for Panda ma Tenka.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THROUGH THE MAKALAKA AND WEST MATABELE COUNTRIES.

Start southwards—Vlakvarks—An adventurer—The Tamasanka pools—The Libanani glade—Animal life on the plateau—The Maytengue—An uneasy conscience—Menon the Makalaka chief—A spy—Menon's administration of justice—Pilfering propensities and dirtiness of the Makalakas—Morula-trees—A Matabele warrior—An angry encounter—Ruins on the Rocky Shasha—Scenery on the Rhamakoban river—A deserted gold-field—History of the Matabele kingdom—More ruins—Lions on the Tati—Westbeech and Lo Bengula—The leopard in Pit Jacobs' house—Journey continued.



RUINS OF ROCKY SHASHA.

TAKING a south-easterly route, we drove on to Schneeman's Pan, where we halted for the rest of



the day. Throughout the early morning, nothing could be more agreeable than the odour of the white cinque-foiled blossoms of the mopondo shrubs. In the evening we started off again, and travelled all night and some part of the next day until we came to the edge of the Gashuma Flat. Here we were obliged to pause for a time, because the recent rains had transformed the meadows into perfect swamps. The grass, known by the natives as matumbe, was in many places six or seven feet high, so that we did not see a great quantity of game. Whilst we were halting, we were overtaken by six Marutse who had hastened after us to bring some buffalo horns of mine that Westbeech had accidentally left behind at Sesheke, as well as an elephant's tusk weighing 25 lbs. They followed us as far as Panda ma Tenka, under the excuse that they wanted to get some lucifer-matches for Sepopo, but their real motive was to ascertain whether Kapella had joined our party.

Ever since I had become aware of Kapella's circumstances I had endeavoured to keep him supplied with corn from my own and Westbeech's store, and he had left the Leshumo valley, going on ahead of us towards the Gashuma Flat, where we again fell in with him and with Moia. Amongst their attendants I recognized one of the boatmen who had behaved so badly to me after starting from Sesheke.

As not a single head of game had been shot by one of our party for some days, the arrival of a goat, which Bradshaw sent us from Panda ma Tenka, was a very agreeable surprise. Another night's journey took us beyond the tsetse district,

and after putting up the heavy waggons beside one of the Panda ma Tenka affluents, we proceeded in advance to the settlement itself. It was sad to see how fever had reduced both Bradshaw and my former servant Pit to the merest skeletons.

Soon after our arrival Westbeech made me the unwelcome communication that the tsetse-fly had committed such havoc amongst his bullocks that he was absolutely unable to fulfil the contract he had made when he purchased my team. He could not take my waggon to the south, and had no alternative but to ask me to transfer my packages to one of those in which he was conveying his own ivory. The removal of my property occupied me some time on the 27th.

We here met an ivory-dealer who had just come from Shoshong. He told us that Khame was still using all his influence to check the importation of brandy, and with regard to myself he observed that the people of Shoshong would be much surprised to see me back again, as they had been quite sure that I should never return to the south.

After clearing out my waggon, I spent the rest of the day in trying to make good any deficiencies in my collections. I bought 1300 beetles from Bradshaw, for which I gave him 20*l.*, and paid him in ivory for forty bird-skins besides; Walsh also for some of my ivory let me have sixty-three more bird-skins.

On the following afternoon we left the valley. Westbeech showed me every possible consideration on the way to Shoshong, but naturally I could not feel anything like the same independence as when travelling in my own waggon; there were many

places in which we only halted a few hours where I should have been glad to stay on indefinitely, and I saw enough of the West Matabele country to satisfy me that an explorer might find things of interest in it to occupy him for a year at least.

During our passage along the valley our dogs started two vlakvarks. White men seized their guns, black men followed with their assegais, and a hot chase lasted for twenty minutes before the creatures were brought down. Although it has more formidable tusks than any other of its species, in comparison with the European wild boar, the vlakvark is a feeble, spiritless creature; its skin is extremely thin, and nothing gives it so remarkable an appearance as its conspicuous white whiskers.

I did not get much sleep on the first night after the transfer of my boxes; they had been so shaken about in their day's journey that I could not lie down to rest until I had properly rearranged them. Next morning while passing over the last of the grassy glades that are so frequent between the Zambesi district and the sandy pool plateau, I observed that herds of ostriches had been along the game-tracks. Had I been independent I should certainly have stayed a day or two and made a deliberate investigation of some of the habits of these birds by following up their traces into the woods; but here, as along the rest of the way, although I took every available opportunity of seeing what I could, and devoted much of the night to recording what I had seen by day, I was constantly deploring the rapid pace at which we had to travel.

Before reaching Henry's Pan on the 3rd of

February, I noticed that a herd of at least twenty giraffes had preceded us on our road. As we approached the Tamasetze pools we were met by a horseman whom we recognized as a trader named Webster, who had formerly been an associate of Anderson, an ivory-dealer that I have already mentioned. Anderson had now gone back, and Webster, as he informed us, was here in the neighbourhood of Tamasetze hunting ostriches, being encamped almost close by with two others, one of whom, named Mayer, I had met at one of the Klamaklenyana springs whilst travelling northwards; the other I will simply designate as Z. This Z., who professed that he had once been a trader, had now come into this district under rather peculiar circumstances. The Zoological Society of London had written out to Cape Town for a young white rhinoceros, for which they offered the sum of 500*l.*, and attracted by the liberal bidding, Z. had resolved to try his chance of securing the prize.

His first proceeding was to provide himself with a supply of barter goods which he reckoned he could dispose of at a profit of some 500 per cent., including a very considerable proportion of "fire-water," for which he felt certain the demand would be great. He was quite aware that the likeliest place in which to obtain a rhinoceros such as he wanted was in the Mashona country; but he had been guilty of some offence in Matabele-land, so that he was afraid to apply to the king for permission to re-enter his dominions. Accordingly he betook himself to Shoshong, but as it came to Khame's knowledge that he was bringing brandy for sale, he was

forthwith ordered to return to the south. However, he was unwilling to be diverted from his purpose, and went to Khame and gave him a distinct promise that he would carry back all the spirit and dispose of it to the Damara emigrants on the Limpopo. Khame, not apprehending the *ruse* that was to be played, expressed himself satisfied. Z. started off towards the Limpopo, but was back again so quickly that his return awakened some suspicion; however, by pointing to his empty waggons, and declaring that he had found a readier sale than he anticipated, he succeeded in making the king believe that it was all fair. The truth was he had only concealed his casks in the woods.

Receiving the king's permission to proceed, Z. now started on his venture. He lost no time in picking up his contraband goods, and made his way north-west through West Matabele and Makalakaland towards the sandy pool plateau, giving out to the Zulus that he was Captain Y., and that he was anxious to obtain permission to visit the Victoria Falls. He sent messengers to Lo Bengula, the Zulu king at Gubuluwayo, to that effect, but spending several months afterwards on the pool plateau, he lost the four horses he had brought with him; however he succeeded in disposing of all his goods except four kegs of spirits of wine.

Meanwhile Khame had heard of his proceedings through some travelling Bamangwatos, and from the Masarwas and Madenassanas, who resided near the plateau, and Z., aware that his smuggling had been discovered, was in a state of great alarm lest he should be prohibited from returning to the south; for reasons already stated, he was even more afraid



of falling into the hands of Lo Bengula, and as he was obliged to abandon his scheme of getting the rhinoceros, he hailed our arrival as a circumstance that might be turned to his advantage.

Poor Mayer was terribly altered since I saw him last; the ravages of fever in a few weeks had pulled him down so much that I hardly knew him. Several of Z.'s servants were also suffering from weakness which the fever had brought on, and he wished me to prescribe for them. I could only tell him that I had not a grain of medicine left, having given the last which I had bought of Bradshaw to Pit and Jan Mahura's son; at the same time I instructed him that he would materially benefit the men's muscles if he would make them rub their ankles with some of his brandy. It was then he told me that he had no brandy left, having sold everything except some spirits of wine. That, I replied, would answer the purpose just as well.

But Z. had no idea of employing his spirits of wine for any such beneficent object; he diluted his alcohol as freely as he dared with water, and took an early opportunity of selling it to my fellow-travellers, principally to Westbeech, for 33*l*. The atrocious stuff completely overpowered Westbeech, and Z. took advantage of his condition to induce him to purchase his team, thereby ensuring that it should not fall into Khame's hands.

I am only too ready to draw a veil over the proceedings of the rest of that sojourn at Tamasetze; they are even now painful in the retrospect; suffice it to say, that they ended in an arrangement by which Z. was to be conveyed to the south as West-

beech's guest. He seemed to rejoice in the recollection that although his expedition had not brought him any vast profit, at least it had entailed no serious loss.

Leaving Tamasetze on the 7th, we went on past the Tamafofa and Yoruah pools towards the most northerly of the Klamaklenyana springs, where a road branched off to the south-east to the Makalaka country. The deplorable effects of Z.'s alcohol extended beyond our stay at Tamasetze, and the man who drove the waggon in which I was riding remained so drunk that several times the vehicle was in danger of being overturned, and more than once I was obliged to take the reins, thus exposing myself in a way which in my condition of health proved very bad.

At the Yoruah pools Bradshaw had a relapse; Diamond and a waggon-driver fell ill; my own servant, Elephant, had an attack of dysentery, and two more of Westbeech's people showed symptoms of fever; in consequence of such an amount of sickness we halted for nearly two days, an interval of which I took all the advantage I could to add to my store of natural curiosities. We did not reach the springs until the 12th, and started again the same evening. Game was very scarce on the plateau, obviously owing to the fact that the hollows in the woods were so full of rain-water that the animals had no occasion to resort to the springs near the roads.

As the result of my premature exposure I had a severe shivering fit next night, and to add to my misfortune our tipsy driver failed to get out of the way of a bough that protruded across the road, and the concussion was so severe that all the coleoptera

that I had collected during the last five days were damaged, and many of them quite destroyed.

We had a toilsome march next day through a dense sandy underwood. In the night a herd of rhinoceroses and some elephants crossed our path, and shortly afterwards we came to a glade called Tamasanka, containing some pools that never dry up. The water in them was clear, but Westbeeck told me that if kept in a vessel for two or three days it always begins to thicken. I had no opportunity of proving the fact for myself.

In the afternoon I for the first time saw a widow-bird (*Vidua paradisica*), a species of finch which is very common on the west coast; I also found fly-catchers, pyroles, small speckled-green woodpeckers, and the *Vidua regia*. As a general rule birds abounded more in the open parts of the pool plateau than in the densely wooded district where the ponds lay in small glades.

For the two succeeding days the track was so thickly overgrown with grass that we had some difficulty in determining our proper route. The servants, in investigating the path, were highly delighted at finding the half-eaten carcass of a giraffe that had probably been killed by lions.

On the 16th we came to a region which is almost a precise counterpart of the Maque plain, being covered with mapani-trees and abounding in pools full of fish. The natives call it the Libanani, and it forms the south-eastern extremity of the plateau. It now belongs to the eastern Bamangwatos and the Matabele; but in Moselikatze's time it belonged exclusively to the Matabele, being the most westerly part of their territory; its outlying parts, however,

were so continually ravaged by lions, that no safety could be secured for cattle, which consequently had all to be withdrawn. The woods are thick only at the edge of the ponds, which I imagine are all in the line of what was the bed of a river, that in all likelihood has now been dry for centuries.

From the open character of the adjacent country the Libanani glade has a special charm for sportsmen. It abounds in many varieties of game, from the duykerbock to the elephant, and here, as in other parts of the plateau, the ornithologist will find a most interesting field for study in the waders and swimming-birds. Both by day and by night, too, birds of prey are perpetually to be observed, and in the moist places, where the soil is carpeted with flowers, sun-birds and bee-eaters may be seen in swarms, while in the boughs that overhang the water, the bright blue *Alcedo cristata*, the *Halcyon Swainsonii* and the black-and-white *Ceryle rudis* are perpetually sporting. I must also include in my list the giant heron (*Ardea Goliath*), and the beautiful little *Netta-pus Madagascariensis*. This is of the goose tribe; it is from twelve to fourteen inches long; its head, neck, and back are of a glossy dark green; underneath it is white, except the breast and sides, which are of a reddish brown; its face and throat are also white, and it has a bright green spot on either side of its neck.

Attractive as the diversity of animal life makes the Libanani, there are two reasons why it is very undesirable to make a lengthened stay there; in the first place the pools at the end of summer exhale a very malarious atmosphere, and in the second, it is infested with yellow cobras, which, in the way to

which I have elsewhere referred, lie in wait in the trees overhanging the game tracks. Westbeech told me that in dry winters the ponds contain so little water that the fish in them, of which the glanis is the most common species, can be easily caught with the hands. It was here that for the first time for many months I heard the howl of the silver jackal (*Canis mesomelas*). I found that many of the plants were identical with those that grew in the salt-lake basin, and was consequently confirmed in my opinion that the Libanani is one of the lowest parts of the whole pool-plateau district. I noticed also some handsome palm-bushes, the first I had seen since I left the vicinity of the Zambesi.

Winter was said to be the best time for game, and this was confirmed by the small amount of success that some of our party had in going out to shoot for the replenishment of our larder; but even at this period of the year I noticed the tracks of a considerable number of animals across our path, amongst them those of the black rhinoceros.

A long drive on the 18th brought us into the valley of the Nata, which we should subsequently have to cross. The river here had all the characteristics of a sandy spruit, opening at intervals into pools, the banks being overgrown with grass six or seven feet high, and containing a number of hollows, which after floods are left full of water, corresponding in this respect with many South African streams, particularly those included in the Limpopo system.

Our road next lay through a dense mapani-wood. Four years previously, Westbeech had been the first traveller to use this route by the Nata and Maytengue rivers to the Matabele country, and I accordingly



gave the track the name of the "Westbeech road." In the evening we came to a grass plain almost entirely enclosed by woods, where the Maytengue river in its course from the Makalaka lands is said to lose itself in the soil.

The Maytengue appears to diminish both in breadth and depth towards its mouth, and its banks are literally riddled with pitfalls. We crossed a great many deep but narrow dry rain-channels, hundreds of which find their way to the river, but flow for so short a time that they hardly make any appreciable difference to the stream, which consequently dwindles away in the lower part of its wide sandy bed; the longer section of its course runs through the fine hill-country occupied by Menon's Makalakas.

Throughout the whole of the next day we followed the right hand bank of the stream. Bradshaw had an attack of dysentery, and Westbeech was so far from well that I insisted upon his coming for a time under my immediate charge. Ever since we left Panda ma Tenka the weather had been very trying, the days, and especially the afternoons, being extremely sultry, the nights bitterly cold.

Just before we crossed the Maytengue on the 21st, my attention was called to a tall hollow mapani-tree, beneath which a Makalaka chief had been buried. The people had a superstition that their "morimo," or unseen god, resided in the tree, and as they passed by were in the habit of dropping their bracelets into the hollow trunk. They had the same belief about one of the caves in the hills, and carried presents every year to the spot.

The country became more elevated as we proceeded, and some hills of granite rose in front of us,

though not lofty enough to shut out the view of the real Makalaka heights in the background. On arriving at the first of these hills, Westbeeche, with Bradshaw, walked off to obtain an interview with Menon; he was anxious to get the chief to provide him an escort as far as Gubuluwayo the capital, where he wanted to see a friend of his, named Philipps, who was staying with Lo Bengula, and to induce him to go on with him to Shoshong, and assist him in settling his accounts. The high esteem in which Westbeeche was held by the Makalakas ensured him a kind reception from Menon, who not only granted the request that was made, but lost no time in paying a return visit.

Ever since we had entered the Maytengue valley, Z. had been in a perpetual fidget. Whether we were on the move or at rest his uneasiness continued just the same; he was always on the look-out, and there seemed no end to his fancies. He had never been a favourite with any of our party, and Westbeeche openly avowed his disapproval of all his business transactions; finding, therefore, that there was no one on the road who cared for his society, he would try and seek refuge with me, confined as I was to my waggon. But even here his nervousness did not desert him: as he sat beside me he would continually ask whether I did not hear a noise in the woods, or had not seen some one disappearing in the bushes. At night, too, when we were all round the camp-fire I generally found that he took his place at my side, although he was never still long together, but kept creeping away to peer into the darkness. I remonstrated with him for his strange behaviour, without succeeding for a long time in getting any-

thing out of him ; after a while, however, he told me that on a previous visit, as he and his servants were returning single file from an elephant-hunt, a gun had accidentally gone off and killed one of Menon's people, and he now feared that he might be recognized and accused of the deed. Understanding that we were here encamping close to Menon's residence, his alarm became more intense than ever, and he kept most cautiously in the rear of the waggons, not suffering his face to be seen until the chief's visit was over.

Menon was a gaunt-looking man of about fifty years of age, and an arrant hypocrite. All his attendants had countenances as ignoble as his own. It is in order that the tribe may be distinguished from their brethren north of the Zambesi that I have designated them as Menon's Makalakas. Together with their southern compatriots they were subjugated by the Matabele Zulus in 1837. Up to that time they had been peaceful agriculturists and cattle-breeders ; but now they do very little in the way of rural pursuits, and have become the most notorious thieves and the greatest rascals in South Africa, a change entirely to be attributed to the demoralizing and vicious influence of their oppressors.

The six attendants of the chief squatted round our fire, and Menon, wrapped in a mangy mantle of wild cats' skins, remained standing. He scanned every one so carefully, that it was quite apparent he was looking for some one in particular, and an expression of dissatisfaction rested on his face as he closed his scrutiny. He spoke of the death of his servant, saying that he had heard all about the affair from a man who had been in company with the victim,

adding that he had been assured by one of his spies that the perpetrator of the deed was a white man, who had joined our party at the Nata river. Disappointed at not identifying the individual he wanted, Menon began to vent his annoyance by demanding toll from Walsh and myself, under the pretext that we had entered his territory for the first time. Westbeech, who was the only one among us who understood the Makalaka dialect, told us to be quiet and to take no notice of the chief, and then proceeded to give him such a lecture on the duty of hospitality, that he very soon altered his tone, and promised that he would send us a goat, adding that he was sorry that he was unable to give us a cow, as the Matabele had stolen all his cattle. We acknowledged his politeness by making him a present of powder and shot, which he accepted as graciously as he could.

After he was gone, one of his attendants, a mean-looking creature, lingered behind with our servants near the fire; the behaviour of the fellow was peculiar, and I kept my eye on him. He was pretending to warm himself, but it was easy to see that he was looking behind the waggons. All at once he stirred the fire into a blaze. He had caught sight of Z., who, not observing that a stranger was amongst our party, had returned from his retreat in the rear. He inquired nervously of me whether Menon had asked any questions about him, and when I replied that he had alluded to the death of the Makalaka, he jumped up and swore that Menon was a great liar. At this moment Menon's man, who most probably had heard what passed, got up and walked quietly away.

“Look,” I said to Z., “that fellow is one of Menon’s spies !”

Z. clenched his fist and made a movement as if he would run after him, but his courage failed him, and he remained where he was.

When we retired at night to our waggons, it was manifest that Z. was still very uneasy, and by the glances he threw in all directions he showed that he was apprehensive of some sudden attack.

Of the men who came with Menon, two were armed with assegais, and four carried kiris. Some of the Makalakas have muskets.

The Makalaka women wear short leather petticoats, covered with white and violet beads ; they are fairly expert in various kinds of handicraft, but the specimens I saw were on the whole inferior to the work of the Bechuanas.

It appeared to me that the Maytengue valley has all the elements of a future El Dorado. There is excellent pasturage on the wooded downs, and for the naturalist it is a region full of delight ; the great drawback to its being properly explored is the unsatisfactory character of the natives.

When Westbeech, accompanied by a servant on horseback and a few Makalakas on foot, set out on his visit to Gubuluwayo, the rest of us proceeded on our way, but only for about three miles. We halted under a morula-tree, staying for the double purpose of purchasing corn and melons, and receiving the goat that Menon had promised us. We soon came upon a great assembly of Makalakas, and at first imagined that some festival was being celebrated. We were not long, however, in being informed that Menon was about to hold an assize, and



that Z. was forthwith to be summoned to take his trial. And so it proved; Z. was sent for, and as the cause was to be tried in Sechuana, Jan Mahura was appointed to act as interpreter. The trial was of short duration, and Z. was adjudged guilty. Menon's sentence was somewhat remarkable; it was to the effect that it did not matter whether the white man had really shot the Makalaka or not; it did not matter whether the gun had or had not gone off accidentally; the white man must make compensation, both to the dead man's relatives and to himself, the dead man's master.

Great was Z.'s alarm; his face turned crimson; he trembled with agitation; he began to assert his innocence with such volubility that Jan Mahura in vain tried to keep pace with him. At last, finding that the defendant was only damaging his own case, the interpreter took up the matter independently, and argued with such good effect, that in spite of the outcry of the relations of the deceased, Menon ruled that a fine should be inflicted, consisting of a coloured woollen shirt, a blanket, and seven pocket-handkerchiefs, instead of the musket and ammunition and the lot of woollen goods he had intended to demand. He insisted, moreover, that the shirt should fall to his own lot as arbitrator; and as soon as he received it, he doubled it up and was walking away quite content. But the relations were not to be pacified quite so easily; they flung the blanket and the handkerchiefs down before Z.'s feet, and abusing him vehemently as a murderer, made such an outcry that Menon was obliged to come back. Jan Mahura's tact again proved adequate to the occasion. He whispered to Z. that he should offer blanket and

handkerchiefs all to the chief, and so secure him as an ally. Menon accepted the contribution, sent all the complainants quickly to the right about, and thus put an end to the whole affair.

The Makalakas appear to have very much the same aptitude for pilfering as the Masupias have for conjuring, and I was told of a circumstance which may serve to illustrate their thievish propensities. An ivory-trader purchased a tusk of a party of them and stowed it away in his waggon; another party soon afterwards brought a second tusk, but they asked a price for it so much higher that the trader hesitated; they urged him to have it weighed, and in the middle of the weighing process another lot of Makalakas arrived bringing a third tusk. Meantime, the first tusk was being deftly abstracted from the waggon. The men represented that they were in a great hurry, and induced the trader to buy the two tusks together. Having got their payment, the sellers made their way off quickly into the woods. The trader carried off his new purchase to compare what he had just bought with the tusk he had left in the waggon, and his chagrin may be better imagined than described when he found that the ivory had disappeared, and that after paying for three tusks he was only in possession of two.

As ivory can only be sold by clandestine means, when the natives want to dispose of any of the contraband article they generally come to a traveller in a party, and while some of them carry on the negotiations, the others watch their opportunity for laying their hands upon anything and everything within reach. It may almost be affirmed that nothing is safe except it has been tied or screwed to

the panels of the waggon. Their dishonesty, as I have said, is ingrained, so thoroughly has it been instilled into them or forced upon them by the Matabele. During any conversation with them it is advisable to keep them at a distance, and to take care that at least one servant is left on each side of the waggon, and that even he is prohibited from talking with them. When, however, they find themselves baffled, and obliged to retire without securing any plunder, or when any of them has been detected in a theft, they will go back to their people, and declare that it is of no use trying to rob the white man, because he has "a good medicine;" meaning that he possesses a charm which enables him to see what is going on in one place while he is engaged in another.

In addition to their other disgusting qualities all the Makalakas south of the Zambesi, especially those under Matabele rule, are indescribably dirty. With the exception of those who have been in service under white men, I believe the majority of them have not washed for years, and I saw women wearing strings upon strings of beads, several pounds in weight, of which the undermost layers were literally sticking to their skins.

Since their subjugation to the Matabele, their mode of building their huts has very much degenerated, and most of their little villages are not much better than collections of ruins. Some few of them may be said to be fairly industrious; but almost the sole remaining virtue at all conspicuous in this sunken people is their extreme modesty and decorum, which is hardly equalled in any other of the South African tribes.

Above the underwood through which we passed in the afternoon rose a great number of granite hills, varying from twenty to seventy feet in height, and either pyramidal or conical in form. The further we advanced along the bank of the Maytengue, the finer the scenery became. From time to time we passed some more of the morula-trees that I have mentioned; each family in a village is allotted one or more of these, according to the population of the place, for its own special use; they are usually enclosed by a fence placed about three yards away from the stem, the object of which is to save the wild fruit from being devoured by animals as it falls. The pulp of the fruit is made into a beverage which has very much the character of cider, and the kernel, if I am rightly informed, is occasionally pounded and used as meal.

Our road several times brought us quite close to the Maytengue, and the country in the valley was often very charming. On the way I chanced to be a witness of a very affecting meeting between a negro and his aged mother; and various incidents were related to me by Diamond and others that all tended to confirm my belief that many a native has really refined feelings lurking in his breast which are only waiting for civilization to draw forth.

Our afternoon camp was made in the vicinity of several villages, of which the residents told us that a few days previously Menon had received a visit from a troop of Matabele soldiers, who had come to demand boys as recruits for their last-formed regiment. Menon had refused to comply, and it was only too likely, they said, that the refusal would cost him his life, as although the Makalakas are

fairly supplied with guns, their villages are so small and scattered, that they are soon overpowered by such a force as the Matabele can bring against them. It was by mere force exercised in this way, and by carrying off the young lads violently from their parents, that in 1837 Moselikatze with a complement of only forty warriors began to found a kingdom which at present has an aggregate of about 20,000 fighting-men.

On the following day our route lay amongst the numerous granite hills, every few hundred yards opening a new and pleasant prospect to our view. At our first halting-place we fell in with a sub-chieftain named Henry, who was an old acquaintance of Westbeech's, and out of regard to him provided sorghum, maize, and melons for the benefit of Bradshaw, who remained far from well. Henry had his people under very good control, and as long as we were near him we felt pretty secure against any great annoyance; during our halt, however, we were surprised by the sudden appearance of one of those scourges of the district, a Matabele warrior, who came blustering up and shouting, "Hulloa, white men! you have some of Sepopo's people there. Give them up, or pay for them. If you don't, one by one I'll kill them all." He had his gun in one hand, and in the other he brandished his kiri, which once very nearly touched my face. I was inclined to be angry, but controlled my temper, and warned the swaggering idiot off in a way that made all the Makalakas roar with laughter. Finding that he could make no impression upon me, he went to Bradshaw and Walsh, who merely laid their hands upon their rifles, an action which the fellow pre-



tended that he was to take as a challenge, whereupon he began to storm more furiously than ever; but when they advanced towards him and showed that they were in earnest, he lost no time in beating a retreat, to the unbounded amusement of the lookers-on.

The next drive took us through fresh mountain scenery, the heights being clothed with the candelabra-euphorbias as I had seen them on the Bamangwato hills. The fields that we passed were of considerable extent; the farmsteads were large and well enclosed; the dwelling-houses situated in their most prominent parts. At intervals of about every eighty yards in the enclosure was a simple wooden pitfall. The whole of the Makalaka villages, however, were but a mere wreck of what they had been before the Matabele invaded the Matoppo mountains.

The village that we had last passed was called Kasheme, and before the day was gone we came to another named Bosi-mapani. The settlements hereabouts were very numerous, and the next morning we arrived at another, where, although we halted and unyoked our teams half a mile away from the residences, we were soon visited by a number of the people, who wanted to sell us provisions. Bradshaw, after bargaining with a party of the Makalakas, bought a goat and a sheep, but it happened at the moment that all our servants were engaged at the waggons, and that there was no one at hand to drive the purchase home to our encampment. After a while one man was procured, but before he could get near them, the animals had all scampered off. The cunning Makalakas had set their shepherd-boys to

sound their pipes close by, and as soon as the goat and the sheep heard the accustomed note they galloped away, each to its separate herd. Our man succeeded in overtaking and capturing one of the sheep, but the other two creatures got clean away. It was in vain that we threatened to report the dealers to Lo Bengula. They took our threats in the calmest way, and walked off to their homes, contriving, before they went, to get possession of Westbeech's pocket-knife. It is scarcely necessary to say, that neither the goat nor the sheep was ever recovered.

By the 25th we had diverged somewhat from the Maytengue. Most of the granite hills were now on our left; but we could see others still more important rising on the southern horizon in front of us.

The visits that from time to time continued to be made to us by Matabele soldiers were a perpetual source of uneasiness to Z.; he appeared to dread them much more than the Makalakas, and the mere sight of any Zulu made him creep back as rapidly and as stealthily as he could to his waggon. None of them ever recognized him, but it happened once during a noonday halt, that he came into collision with two of them in a way that almost cost him his life. Distinguishable at once as Matabele by their feather head-dresses, and by their aprons of wild cats' tails, two young fellows came to the waggon begging for a "lapiana" (a piece of calico). Z.'s little dog flew at them, growling and barking, and one of them in his annoyance was about to give the animal a tremendous blow with his kiri, which probably would have dashed its brains out. Z. came rushing forward, flushed with rage, to protect his dog, and shook his fist in the face of the in-

truders. It was just the excuse for a fight which the Matabele wanted; a regular scrimmage ensued, and two to one as they were, a kiri would inevitably very soon have descended on Z.'s head if Bradshaw and I had not interfered in time. We held our guns in our hands, but when the young rascals saw that we did not raise them, they struck their kiris upon the ground and broke out into a storm of abuse, which they were still continuing, when an old Matabele, his rank as a warrior indicated by his leather circlet covered by hair, made his appearance on the scene. Hearing what had transpired, he caught hold of a good stout bough of a tree, and laid it vigorously about the shoulders of the offenders. He treated them exactly like naughty little boys, and they, like little boys, crept back in disgrace, keeping their grumbling to themselves.

In the course of the afternoon we came to a village named Kambusa. It consisted only of about fifteen huts, and belonged to a man of the name of Tantje, whom Westbeech knew very well, so that we had no fear of meeting with any annoyance in it. Tantje's residence had two enclosures, one of stakes round his hut, and another of thornbushes outside his fields. This was the last of the Makalaka villages we had to pass; five-and-twenty years ago they extended another hundred miles to the south, but now we were close to the boundary of the province, and before the evening we had crossed the existing frontier.

Upon the shore of the little river Ashangena, about 600 yards away from the road, Diamond drew my attention to a bush, beneath which he informed me that Mr. Frank Oates, an Englishman, had been

buried. He had been hunting in the district, and had taken fever and died. His death had really occurred in the Makalaka country, but it was necessary to bring him to be buried at the frontier. His brother, Mr. William Oates, in 1874 erected a gravestone over the spot.

We had two small streams to cross before we came to the Matliutse, which crossed our path transversely. During the last stage of our journey through Makalaka-land we had crossed no fewer than seventeen rain-streams, all of them flowing into the Maytengue, and yet forming, I believe, not more than a tenth part of the affluents of that river. The scenery was as fine as any I saw during my hurried journey through the country. The soil was chiefly granite, thickly veined with quartz, and in many places marked with dark slate-coloured mica, the strata being variously horizontal, vertical, or oblique, generally towards the top of the hills slanting downwards at an angle of seventy degrees to the south-west. I saw nothing more interesting than the picturesque masses of granite that crowned the slopes of the hills; so strange and fantastic were their forms that I could not resist entering them upon my chart with names corresponding to what seemed to be their shapes. One on the Matliutse I called "the cap;" another on the next spruit, "the two sparrows;" another, "the club;" and a fourth, to the right of the road, the most striking of all, I named "the pyramid." The scenery gave me some idea how charming the country must be in the highlands in the upper parts of the Matliutse, Shasha, Tati, and Rhamakoban, which are all of them affluents of the Limpopo.

As I crossed the two Shasha rivers next day it became perfectly clear to my mind that the Shaneng must flow either into the Matliutse or one of its tributaries. The district seemed full of game, but not to the same extent as in former years. The animals of which I saw most were pallahs, zulu-hartebeests, harrisbocks, and zebras.

In the evening we halted on the right-hand shore of the rocky Shasha, a stream that has derived its name from the character of its bed. I took the opportunity of getting out a little distance towards the east, where, on one of the granite mounds, I found some ruins that had played their part in the history of central South Africa. The hill was isolated, and not so high as those near it, and it had been fortified by a wall composed of blocks of granite laid one upon another, without being fixed by cement of any kind. The wall was about 140 feet long, and enclosed a space of ground as nearly as possible on the top of the hill, being built on the natural crags in such a way that the artificial rampart it formed hardly rose in some parts many inches from the ground, whilst in other places it was six feet high; in thickness it varied from twelve to eighteen inches. It had an entrance facing the north, and there it projected so as to make a kind of avenue. The blocks of which it was made were flat, and varying in size from four to ten inches in length, three to six inches in width, and two to ten inches in depth, the flat sides being irregular trapeziums. My impression was that the occupants of this limited fortress—whether permanent or temporary there was nothing to decide—had also erected a superior palisade of wood or bushes above



the top of the masonry; but as we were bound to recommence our journey in about two hours and a half, I had no opportunity of making a deliberate survey, or of commencing any excavations which might throw more light upon the subject. We had only time that evening to go a little farther, and the gathering twilight brought us to a halt on the left-hand shore of the river, which we crossed.

After traversing as many as twelve tributaries of the rocky Shasha, we crossed the sandy Shasha, which is connected with its fellow-stream, finding the scenery at the point where we quitted the river as beautiful as any in the whole West Matabele country. The abundance and variety of plants were truly marvellous; and on the slopes where the stems of the euphorbias were mouldering, I found numerous scolopendra, two kinds of scorpions, some lizards, and many sorts of insects. Since I had entered the Makalaka country I had had no return of fever; and although I was still very weak, I persevered in my naturalist's pursuits, finding that the enjoyment refreshed me and more than compensated for a little extra fatigue. In many places the river was sandy, but not unfrequently the bed was of granite, that formed a sort of basin, or opened in a channel, by which the water threaded its way to the south, to lose itself in the marshes of the valley. The next stream at which we arrived was the Tati, and its bed was not only sandy, but so deep, and the banks so steep, that we had very considerable difficulty in getting across.

Two days later we found ourselves pushing our way along the right-hand bank of the Rhamakoban,

crossing fourteen of its little tributaries, besides three of the Tati, the whole of which after heavy rain are sure to be full of water. The district about the Rhamakoban is noted amongst elephant-hunters for its great abundance of game; giraffes, zebras, grey pallahs, harrisbocks, gnus, hyænas, and bustards are frequently to be seen, lions, ostriches, and rhinoceroses being by no means rare. We were making our way forward with the best speed we could, because Bradshaw, who was in charge during Westbeech's absence, had announced that his stock of corn, meal, tea, sugar, and salt was running short, and that it was necessary that we should reach the next settlement to procure fresh supplies.

After crossing eight of its right-hand tributaries we kept along the valley of the Rhamakoban until we turned into another valley, which led us under the highlands back again to the bank of the Tati. On our way I noticed some more of the remarkable rocks, and gave to one of them the name of "the tablets," and to another that of "the white boundary stone," close to which our road was joined by the road leading to the central Matabele-land. All this time we were passing a number of mapani-trees, constituting almost a forest, occasionally broken by extensive glades.

At the place where we again came upon the Tati, we saw on the slope of two low hills several buildings in the European style; only two of these, however, were occupied, one by Pit Jacobs, the elephant-hunter, the other by a Scotch ivory-trader named Brown. A few years back there had been no lack of life in the place; gold-diggers had congregated from all parts of the world in search of the

precious metal, but the discovery that only quartz gold, and not alluvial, was to be obtained, damped their ardour and soon thinned their ranks. Various companies were formed to carry on the work, but they were ultimately obliged to abandon it on account of the insufficiency of machinery. The real cause of the failure was the distance from the coast, every piece of machinery, however simple its character, costing five or six times its own value for its transport up the country.

As a general rule not more than seven ounces of gold were found in a ton of quartz, though I was told that exceptional cases had been known where the ton had yielded twenty-four ounces. As well as carrying on his own business, Mr. Brown was now acting as agent for the companies in liquidation, as some of their property was still undisposed of. I saw the remains of the steam-engine by which the quartz had been pounded still standing in the Tati valley, a short distance below the settlement; the rock containing the gold had been brought from a spot some way inland, but when the pits, although they were by no means deep, once became filled with water, there was no second engine to empty them, and consequently the whole work was brought to a standstill.

Mr. Brown was away from home at the time of our arrival, having gone to Gubuluwayo to be married by Mr. Thompson, the resident missionary, to Miss Jacobs; his managing clerk, however, received us very courteously, and we were invited to take up our quarters in the place until West-beech's return.

Besides these two residents, I was not a little

surprised to find that the Lotriets, whom I had met at Henry's Pan, had settled at Tati, and were living in some grass-huts.

All waggons on their way from the Bamangwato country to the Matabele are bound to stop at Tati for a change of bullocks, and most of the traders keep extra teams of their own there to avoid unnecessary delay. The Matabele had at one time possessed immense herds of cattle, plundered for the most part from their neighbours, but the Roi-water plague, which had been brought in from the south, had made such frightful ravages among them that the king had ordained and enforced the measure to check any further spread of the disease.

There is always a guard of Matabele troops stationed at Tati, who are supposed to have surveillance over the countries to the south-east; but as far as I could make out their chief business consisted in annoying every white man who arrived, and in arresting all Makalakas on their way back from the diamond-fields, and after administering a severe flogging, seizing their guns and ammunition in the name of the king.

At this time the Matabele kingdom was only second in power to any of the native tribes south of the Zambesi, and now, since the subjugation of the southern Zulus, it must rank as absolutely the most powerful of all. It is considerably more than 300 miles long, and from 250 to 300 miles broad. According to Mr. Mackenzie, Moselikatze, the founder of this extensive kingdom, was the son of Matshobane, a Zulu captain in Natal; he was taken prisoner by Chaka, the most powerful of the Zulu chiefs, who subsequently, when he

found out the courage of his captive, gave him the command of one of his marauding expeditions; but Moselikatze, instead of returning with his booty, carried it off to the heart of what is now the Transvaal country, subdued the Bakhatlas, Baharutse, and other Bechuana tribes, and finally



BOER'S WIFE DEFENDING HER WAGGON AGAINST KAFIRS.

settled in the highlands round the Marico and its tributaries. Here he was attacked by the Griqua chief, Berend-Berend, whom he defeated and killed. All this, however, was but the beginning of a series of engagements. Two Zulu armies in succession were sent after him as a recreant, one by Chaka,



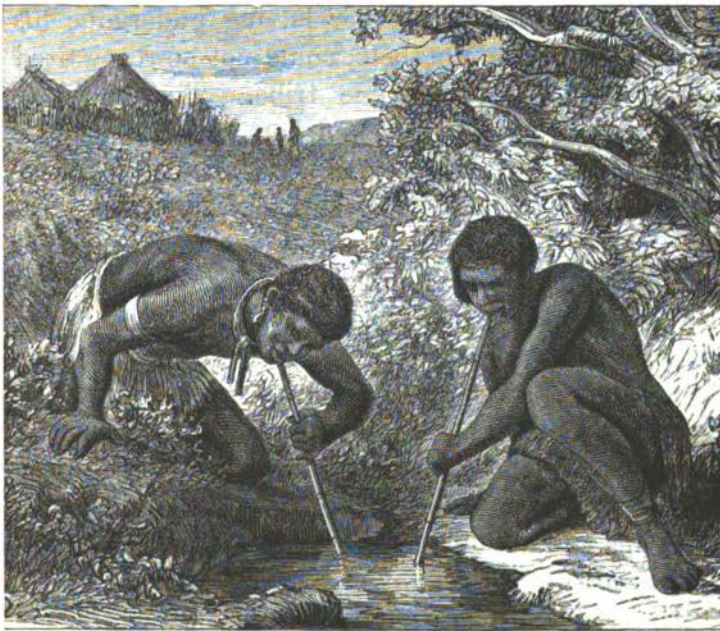
and the other by his successor Dingan, but both failed to dislodge him. His next assailants were the Boers, who were most anxious to get rid of such a dangerous neighbour, and to drive him from the beautiful Marico country, which they coveted for themselves. To accomplish their aim they sent out a considerable force in 1836, and attacking the Zulu at the foot of one of the hills, completely defeated him. Moselikatze gathered together the little remnant of his force, including only forty "ring-heads" (full grown warriors), and quitted the district, making his way to the north, and laying waste the whole country as he proceeded. It was his plan to found a new settlement on the other side of the Zambesi; but the tsetse-fly did what it seemed forbidden to human hand to do, and checked his career. He was in consequence obliged to fall back, and began to attack first the Makalaka villages, and then to carry his ravages on to the Manansas and others. His mode of dealing with these agricultural settlements was to set fire to them in the middle of the night, to kill the men as they rushed out of their burning huts, and to carry off the women and children, as well as the cattle. In this way his power began again to increase, until after a while South Africa had a new Zulu empire. All the stolen boys were brought up as soldiers, and such as were capable of bearing arms were at once incorporated into the army; the women were given to the warriors, the cattle being deemed the king's special property, and serving to maintain his ever increasing regiments. Whenever Moselikatze observed any signs of his warriors treating the women better than their cattle he came to the conclusion

that the men were growing effeminate, and at once gave peremptory orders for the dangerous women to be slaughtered. During his annual marauding expeditions into the neighbourhood, thousands of helpless creatures lost their lives, for besides the men, all people incapable of work, young children, and babies, and some of the women, were relentlessly massacred.

From my own observation, and from what I gathered from Mr. Mackenzie, Westbeech, and the traders, I should describe the Matabele Zulu government as a military despotism, with supreme control over every man and beast, and every acre of land in the country. Each division of the army is under the command of an "induna" or chief, with several sub-chiefs holding commission as officers. The rank and file fulfil their commanders' orders with blind obedience, but the superior and inferior chiefs are always at rivalry, and if they fail to win the approbation of the king by their feats of bravery, they try and curry favour with him by carrying him tales of slander against each other. The king keeps several executioners, who perpetrate their deeds under cover of night; and as the kaffir-corn beer which is served out with the meat at supper rarely fails to induce a sound sleep, the opportunity is readily found for what is known as "the king's knife" to do its work.

Mr. Mackenzie told me of an instance that will serve as an illustration of what I have been saying. The bravest man in Moselikatze's army was Monyebe, one of the superior chiefs, who in acknowledgment of his services had been rewarded by the king with a number of presents. This so far aroused the jealousy

of the other chiefs that they conspired to accuse him to the king of witchcraft and treachery. Moselikatze allowed himself to listen to their slander, and without giving Monyebe a chance of exonerating himself, kept the accusation a thorough secret from him, and gave permission to the chiefs to kill him. Next



MASARWAS DRINKING.

morning nothing more remained of the king's favourite than a few ashes smouldering at the door of his hut.

When Mr. Mackenzie visited Matabele-land in 1863, he found very few real Zulu soldiers; the flower of the army consisted of Bechuanas, who as boys had either been stolen or exacted as tribute by Moselikatze during his residence in the Transvaal, the younger regiments being principally

composed of Makalaka and Mashona lads recently enlisted.

In times of peace the boys are sent out to take care of the cattle, but on their return home they are always carefully instructed in the use of weapons. This constant exercise makes them so strong and muscular that a Masarwa straight from the Kalahari Bushveldt, and another having undergone his training with the Matabele, could not be recognized as belonging to the same tribe. The Matabele warriors live in barracks, and domestic life is quite unknown; only in very exceptional cases is it allowable for any one but a chief to treat his wife otherwise than as a slave, though it must be allowed that there is hardly any appreciable difference between the two conditions. The king does not prevent people of other tribes from practising their own religious and superstitious ceremonies, subject to the general prohibition that no subject of his may be a Christian. The ivory-traders followed the missionaries into the country; they found a ready sale for guns and ammunition, but the natives were little disposed to purchase any articles of clothing.

Every year before starting on their expeditions of plunder the Matabele perform their *Pina ea Morimo*, or religious war-dance. The warriors assemble on the parade-ground in full military costume, their heads, breasts, and loins being adorned with coverings made of black ostrich feathers. A black bull is led forward and baited till it is angry; it is then chased by the soldiers, until, covered with blood, it sinks lame and exhausted to the ground; a few practised strokes then sever the muscles; the flesh is stripped off in cutlets and held for a few minutes before a

fire, and the men proceed eagerly to devour the half roasted meat, convinced that in swallowing it in this semi-raw condition they are acquiring the strength and courage that will equip them for their undertaking.

The European settlement on the Tati was surrounded by low hills, partly formed of ferruginous mica, quartz, and granite, some being isolated mounds, whilst others were portions of the slope of the river-valley. I made excursions to them in all directions, although I was warned to be on my guard against the lions that haunted the neighbourhood.

On arriving at the settlement I found that Pit Jacobs, like Mr. Brown, was away from home. He had gone elephant-hunting with one of his sons.

I went to the hills next day and saw numbers of pits, some fifty feet deep, that had been made by the diggers in their search for gold; and on one hill to the north, contiguous to the slope of the Tati valley, I found another ruin, consisting of the remains of a wall that formed a rampart round the hill-top, joined on to a second wall three times its size that ran round the next hill a little lower down. It was over three feet thick, and, like what I had previously seen, made of stones, blocks of iron mica, piled together without cement. On the inside it could be seen how the erection was made of oblong lumps of various dimensions, but outside, probably with some view to symmetry and decoration, there had been inserted double rows of stone hewn into a kind of tile, and placed obliquely one row at right angles to the other. Each inclosure had an entrance facing the north, that of the largest being protected by the wall on the right projecting out-



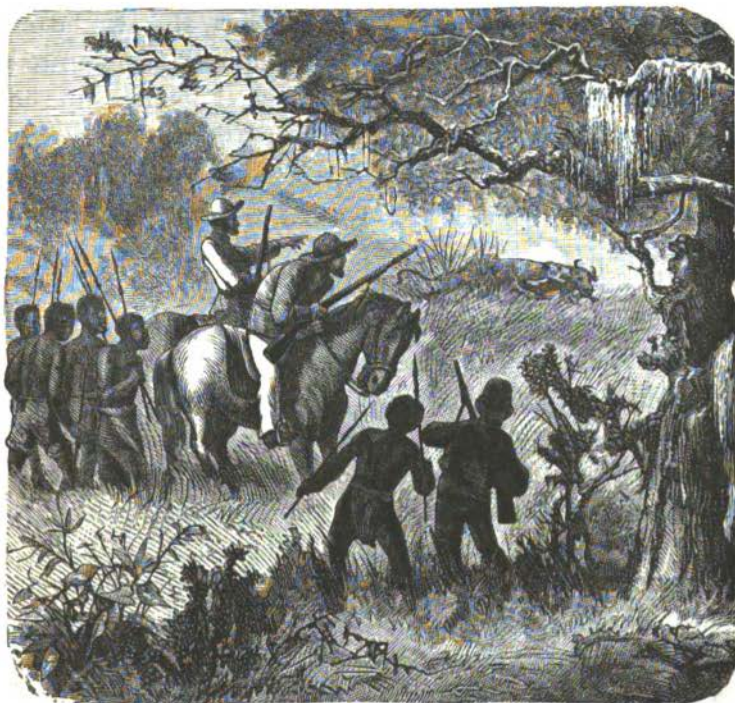
wards, whilst on the left it curved inwards towards the centre. Altogether the resemblance between these ruins and those we had seen before on the Shasha was very striking; to my mind they conveyed the impression that the walls might originally have been put up with some reference to the gold that was being found in the locality; but I look for a future visit, in which I may be able to make such investigations as may settle whether they were erected by the Mashonas in the east or by the people of Monopotapa.

Hearing on my return that Pit Jacobs had come home, I called and stayed some hours with him. It could hardly be otherwise than with intense interest that I listened to the recounting of the many episodes in the experience of five-and-twenty years of a man who had acquired the reputation of being the second-best elephant-hunter in all South Africa.

Numerous as lions are in other parts, I never heard of them being so bold as they notoriously are in the neighbourhood of the Tati station. The gold-diggers suffered greatly from their depredations, and they had been known to get inside kraals enclosed by a thorn-fence six feet high, and the same thickness at its base. Brown and Pit Jacobs had often seen them prowling in the night in the space between their houses, and one morning, while the mining operations were going on, a native labourer on entering the coal-cellar to get fuel for the engine, was pounced upon by a lion, that would certainly have torn him to pieces if it had not been that it was old and its teeth blunt. On another occasion a lioness had been shot at midday; and within the last few days Mr. Brown's horse had been dragged from the

stable, which was well protected by a strong fence, except on the side facing the house. These are facts that illustrate the persistent daring of the lions in the locality, and of which an example now came within my own experience.

I had occasion to make some purchases, and on the



LIONESS ATTACKING CATTLE ON THE TATI RIVER.

morning of the 2nd of April called at the office of Mr. Brown's foreman. Whilst we were transacting our business, a negro came rushing in with the intelligence that lions were among the cattle. No time was to be lost in giving chase. I hurried with what speed I could down to our camp, nearly a

quarter of a mile away, to get my Snider and some cartridges, and communicated the news to Bradshaw, who entered into the spirit of the thing at once, and seized his double-barrelled muzzle-loader, a weapon with which he had often done wonders. We quickly made up a party of about twenty, including besides ourselves a lot of half-armed negroes, Pit Jacobs' son, and the half-caste hunter Africa, the two latter being on horseback. Leaving the hill surmounted with the ruins on our left, we worked our way up the river-valley, which was here from 200 to 300 yards wide, to a spot close to the river where there was a mass of mimosas. On our way the negroes told us that the lions, only the day before, had attacked some cattle down at a watering-place that had been dug in the sand at the river-side, not very distant from where we were ; a lioness had seized a cow by the heel in a very unusual way, and had dragged it to the ground. Acting upon this information, we turned our course in that direction, and in a short time arrived at a mimosa, upon which we were told that the terrified herdsmen had taken refuge on the previous day. We discovered the herdsman's dog still lingering near the tree, and guided by its barking, we followed on to a glade, where, we caught sight of the head of a cow above the long grass, and in another moment ascertained that it was being mangled by a great lioness. Without a word of warning, before we were aware of his intention, Africa fired. No luckier shot was ever aimed. The bullet hit the brute in the back, and shattered the vertebral column ; it rolled over in the grass behind its prey. The dog, which was famous among the Tati people for its courage, and which

already had been disturbing the lioness at its meal, now darted forward, and seizing it by the ear drew back the head, while the negroes pummelled away at its sides. The ill-fated cow was not quite dead, although the lioness had begun to gnaw at its entrails; we put the poor thing at once out of its misery. Africa was kind enough to make me a present of the skin of the lioness.

Since I met Africa on the Chobe, Khame had banished him from the Bamangwato country on account of his poaching propensities with regard to elephants and ostriches; he had now come to Tati, and hoped to induce Lo Bengula to accept payment from him and allow him to hunt ostriches on his land.

Until the 7th my time was fully occupied in making a geological investigation of the neighbourhood, and in making records of some of the interesting adventures of Pit Jacobs, Bradshaw, and another Boer hunter, who had just arrived. One day Africa received a visit from his son, who brought him some puku-meat; he cautioned us to be more than ever on our guard against lions, saying that at his own encampment, only a few miles away, he hardly ever passed a night without being disturbed by them. Another ivory-dealer arrived next day from the south, by way of Shoshong; he seemed to be a keen man of business, but nothing more; like other people, he complained of the number of lions in the neighbourhood, and mentioned that water was scarce between this place and Shoshong.

Westbeech arrived from Gubuluwayo on the following day. He was accompanied by his friend Philipps, and by F., an ivory-trader. Mr. Brown and his young bride returned likewise at the same

time. Westbeeck brought a document attested by Lo Bengula's mark, granting permission for elephant-hunting on his western territory in consideration of the payment of a salted carcase of a horse. Mr. Brown and the trader both told me several things that entertained me about Lo Bengula. The king had a very corpulent sister, who exercised a very considerable influence over him. On being asked one day why she did not get married, she replied that she was too fat to walk, and as her brother was the only person in the country who kept a waggon, she thought it was far better for her to remain where she was, and not to entertain any idea of having a husband.

It is my own impression about Westbeeck that he never turned to such good account as he might the favour he enjoyed with Lo Bengula; I think too that he yielded over much to Sepopo, and failed to manage Khame judiciously. In the course of his twelve years' residence amongst the various tribes he had mastered all their languages in a way that could not fail to give him a great advantage at the different courts. As a proof of his familiarity with Lo Bengula, I was told that during his last visit he and some friends (probably some of the ivory-traders, or the two missionaries who resided in the vicinity of the royal quarters) went to call upon the king just at the moment when the dish (which, by the way, I may mention was rarely washed) was brought in containing the dinner for the high table. Without waiting for any invitation, Westbeeck calmly proceeded to help himself, and to hand some of the food to his companions. The indunas, who were waiting in expectation, began to grumble;



“George,” they said, “is treating the king like a child.” “Yes,” replied Westbeeck; “I have been trusted by Moselikatze himself to drive his waggon and treat him as a child; and surely if I may do this with Moselikatze, I may do it with his son too; I am treating Lo Bengula as my child.” The answer seemed thoroughly to satisfy the chiefs, and they clapped their hands in applause.

I asked the Masupia servant whom Westbeeck had taken with him to Gubuluwayo, whether the Matabele women were handsome? “O, not at all,” was his answer; “they wear no aprons, and are not tattooed.” Their well-built forms and comely features had evidently made no impression upon the man.

Before closing my notes about Tati, I cannot help mentioning an incident that occurred in Pit Jacobs' house, in February, 1876. Jacobs himself, with two of his sons and his elder daughter, had gone on a hunting-excursion to South Matabele-land, leaving his wife, his younger daughter, just now married to Mr. Brown, his two little boys, and a Masarwa servant in the house. The house was what is locally known as a “hartebeest” building, its four walls consisting of laths plastered over with red brick earth, and covered in with a gabled roof made of rafters thatched with grass. Inside, of the same material as the walls, was a partition dividing the house into two apartments, of which the larger was the living-room, and the other the sleeping-chamber of the family. In the larger room, amongst other furniture, stood a sewing-machine that Mr. Brown had just bought as a present for his intended wife; in the other room, opposite the door, were two beds.

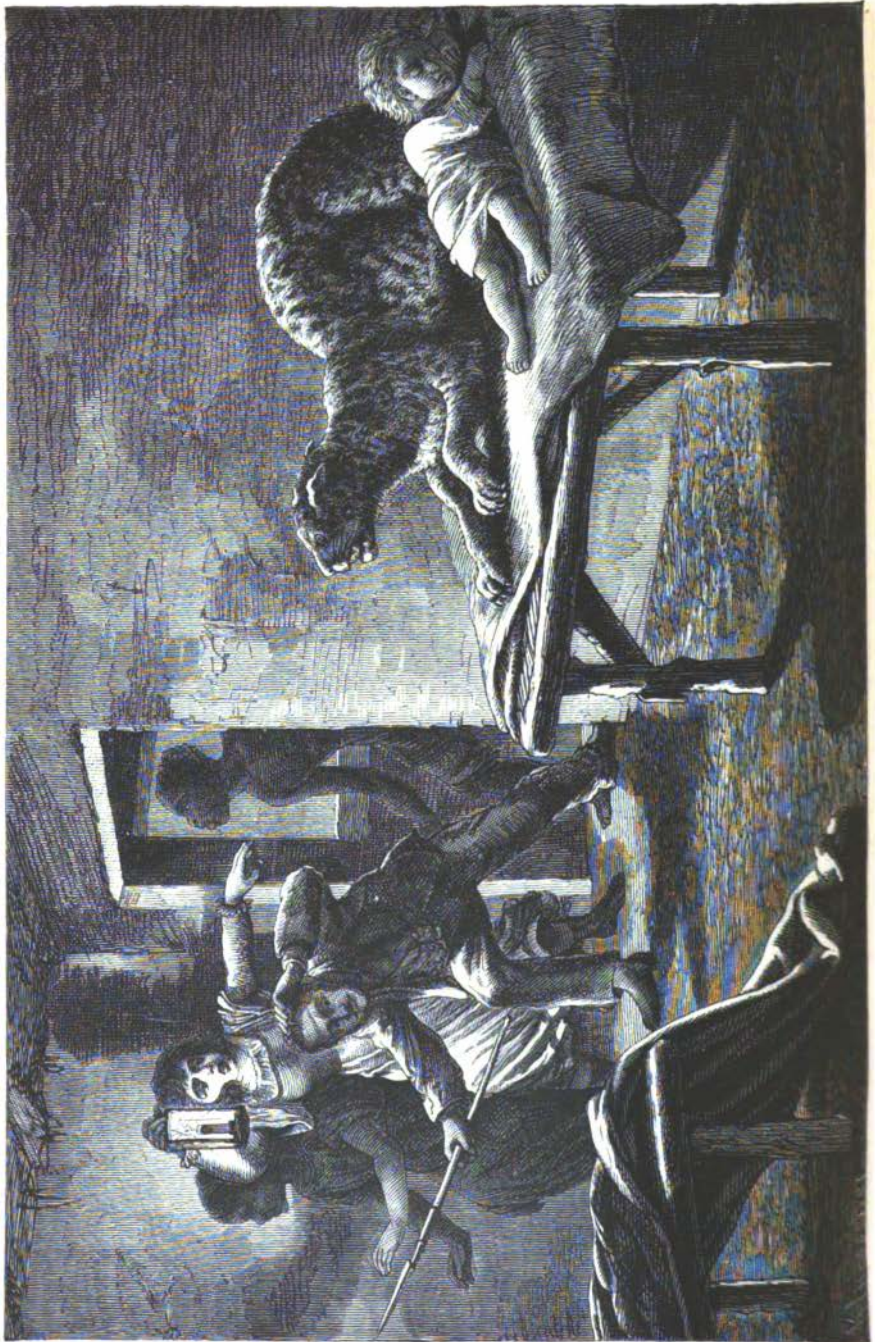
On this particular evening, the door of the house, which was made in two parts, had the upper division open; the window in front was likewise open, and a kitten was sitting on the sill. Mr. Brown had just called to pay an evening visit, and Mrs. Jacobs had gone to put the two boys to bed, laying herself down for a few minutes beside one of them.

Now the whole village was aware that a half-starved leopard was haunting the place, trying one cattle-kraal after another, and doing serious mischief amongst the poultry; every fence ought to have been well guarded, but somehow or other the leopard had gained an entrance into Jacobs' enclosure, and catching sight of the kitten in the open window, made a spring to seize it. The kitten, however, was not taken unawares, but leaping from the window-sill hid itself under the sewing-machine, and the leopard, missing its aim, bounded through the window right into the middle of the room, where the two lovers were sitting.

They called out in alarm, but were hardly more terrified than the brute itself, which, in order to escape, rushed into the bedroom, and under the bed where Mrs. Jacobs was lying. Catching sight of it, she cried out to know what it was, and in order to pacify her, Mr. Brown and her daughter replied that most likely it was a dog. Satisfied in her own mind that a dog would not have made them scream out in such alarm, and concluding that it was a hyæna, she started up, took the child by which she was lying in her arms, and ran into the living-room.

Finding that she had brought out only one of the little boys, Brown thought it was best to tell her the truth, which made her so agitated that she would





have gone back quite unprotected to the other bed, if she had not been prevented by force.

The immediate question now was how the brute could be disposed of. There was a loaded elephant-gun hanging up inside the partition, but in the commotion no one thought of it. Brown took hold of a kitchen-knife, but afterwards it was remembered that the Masarwa servant had an old assegai; the man was soon sent for; Brown took the spear; Miss Jacobs held the lantern; Mrs. Jacobs clung to her daughter, and the servant kept close behind. At the appearance of the light, the leopard was more terrified than ever, and the hubbub of voices, English, Dutch, and Sesarwa, only increased its alarm. Making a sudden spring it lighted on the bed, where the child was sleeping. The little fellow slumbered on peacefully, and knew nothing of what happened until the next morning.

With such an excited cluster of people at his elbow, it was not very surprising that Brown made a bad aim with his assegai; the point merely grazed the creature's skin, and in an instant it flew at his breast, so that he could feel its claws upon his neck; losing his balance he fell over; the women came tumbling on him, dragging the old Masarwa on the top of them all, the commotion putting the leopard into such a state of bewilderment that it never used a fang, but bounded forth, first into the other room, and then through the open portion of the door.

Thus relieved of their anxiety, and finding no harm done, they all laughed heartily, and congratulated each other at the happy issue of an adventure which might have had a tragical *dénouement*.



Leaving the Tati station on the 10th, we made our way through wooded hills till we came again to the sandy Shasha, which receives the Tati and many other tributaries of a similar character. Close to where we halted, at the mouth of a dried-up spruit, there was a small deep pool in the river-bed, containing crocodiles.

In the course of the next two days we crossed as many as fourteen spruits that were affluents of the Shasha, Matliutse, and Seribe rivers, our road all along being very bad, and obstructed with rocks.

One whole day we halted on the Matliutse, which now, instead of the Tati, forms part of the boundary between the Matabele and Bamangwato territories. Here there was an interesting double row of hills, some being conical, and some perfectly hexagonal in shape.

The heat now became extremely oppressive, and after crossing the Kutse-Khani and Lothlakane rivers, we halted by the bank of a third, named the Gokwe, where our animals were encouraged to drink freely on account of the dearth of water which we were led to expect during our next stage. After passing a hilly country we came on the following afternoon to the Serule, and caught sight of the chain of the Choppo mountains running south to south-west, their highest points being at the two extremities of the ridge.

On the 16th we entered the valley of the Palachwe, crossing the bed of the Lotsane the same day. It is my belief that these two rivers unite at the foot of the Choppo heights, and continue their course below the northern declivity. The Lotsane ford was one of the most troublesome on the whole way from

Matabele-land, and some years ago had a bad name amongst the hunters and ivory-traders, on account of its being haunted by a large number of lions that were reputed to be unusually audacious.

The drive of the next day brought us through some hilly country, where there were a good many rain-pools, only three of which, however, retained any water in the winter. The second of the series was called Lemone Pan, and both here, and at the next, we found Bamangwato cattle-stations. Much to Z.'s discomfort, a number of Matabele people had accompanied our caravan all the way from Tati.

At night we made our camp at the Chakane Pan, the last of the three rain-pools, where we were told that Sechele was at war with the Bakhatlas on his territory. As we were unable to kill any game, and the provisions that we had brought from Tati were beginning to run short, we slaughtered one of our reserve bullocks. After starting again we crossed the Tawani, and found ourselves in the course of the night on the bank of the sandy Mahalapsi river. Early in the morning we were at the foot of the Bamangwato hills and close to Shoshong.

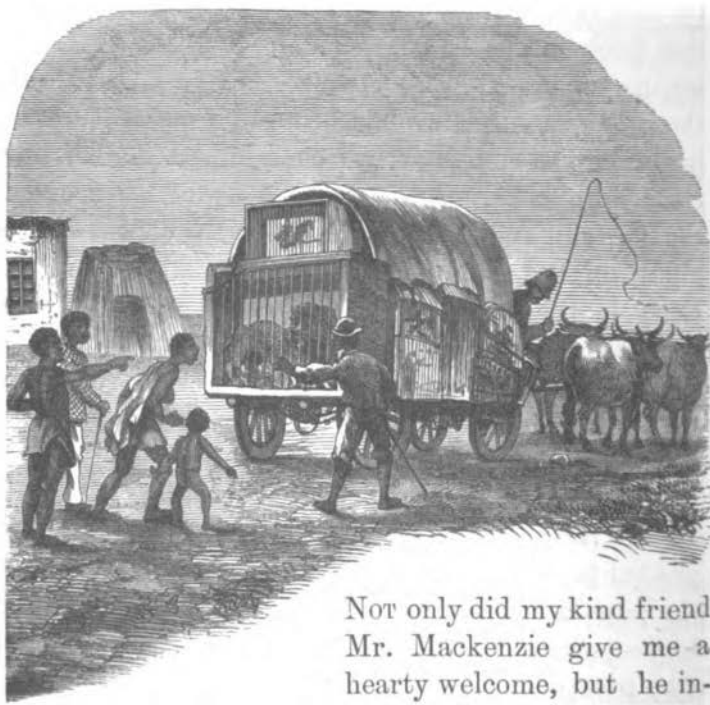
Being afraid to meet Khame, Z. parted company with us at this time, and turned towards the Damara emigrants on the Limpopo.

Hearing that the prolonged drought had scorched up all the grass, and that the Shoshon springs yielded hardly enough water to supply the needs of the population, a good many of our party resolved to rest where they were, and it was only a few of us who proceeded up the Francis Joseph Valley to the town, which was reached after an easy march.

## CHAPTER XV.

## FROM SHOSHONG TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Arrival at Shoshong—Z.'s chastisement—News from the colony—Departure from Shoshong—Conflict between the Bakhatlas and Bakuenas—Mochuri—A pair of young lions—A visit from Eberwald—Medical practice in Linokana—Joubert's Lake—A series of salt pans—Arrival in Kimberley.



RETURN TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Not only did my kind friend Mr. Mackenzie give me a hearty welcome, but he insisted upon my becoming his guest for as long a time as he remained in

Shoshong. I am sure that his hospitality, and that which I subsequently received from Mr. Jensen, did more than anything else towards re-establishing my shattered health. I remember that the first time I again tasted proper bread I felt as happy as a king.

On the very day of my arrival I went with Westbeeche to visit Khame. To Westbeeche's surprise the king immediately began to interrogate him about Z.; he had heard that he had been travelling with us, and we were forced to acknowledge that he had only left us early that morning. Khame lost no time in sending out a body of armed men to capture him; and when they returned in the evening unsuccessful, he despatched a troop of horsemen with orders to search the whole district as far as the Khame Saltpan.

The men brought in their prisoner in the morning; they had been attracted by the glimmer of a fire in the bushveldt, and alighting from their horses, they had laid their hands upon Z. before he had time to make use of his revolver. He professed to be extremely indignant at his arrest; but the king upbraided him severely for his violation of his orders, and sentenced him to pay a fine of 100*l.* It was in vain for Z. to protest, and to assert that he had not the means to raise such a sum. Khame replied that he was quite aware that Westbeeche had not yet paid him for the team and the waggon that he had bought of him, and that he should hand over the money to himself instead.

At the same sitting Khame publicly fined two traders' agents 10*l.* apiece for having been found tipsy outside their quarters on the outskirts of the town, telling them that if they were determined to

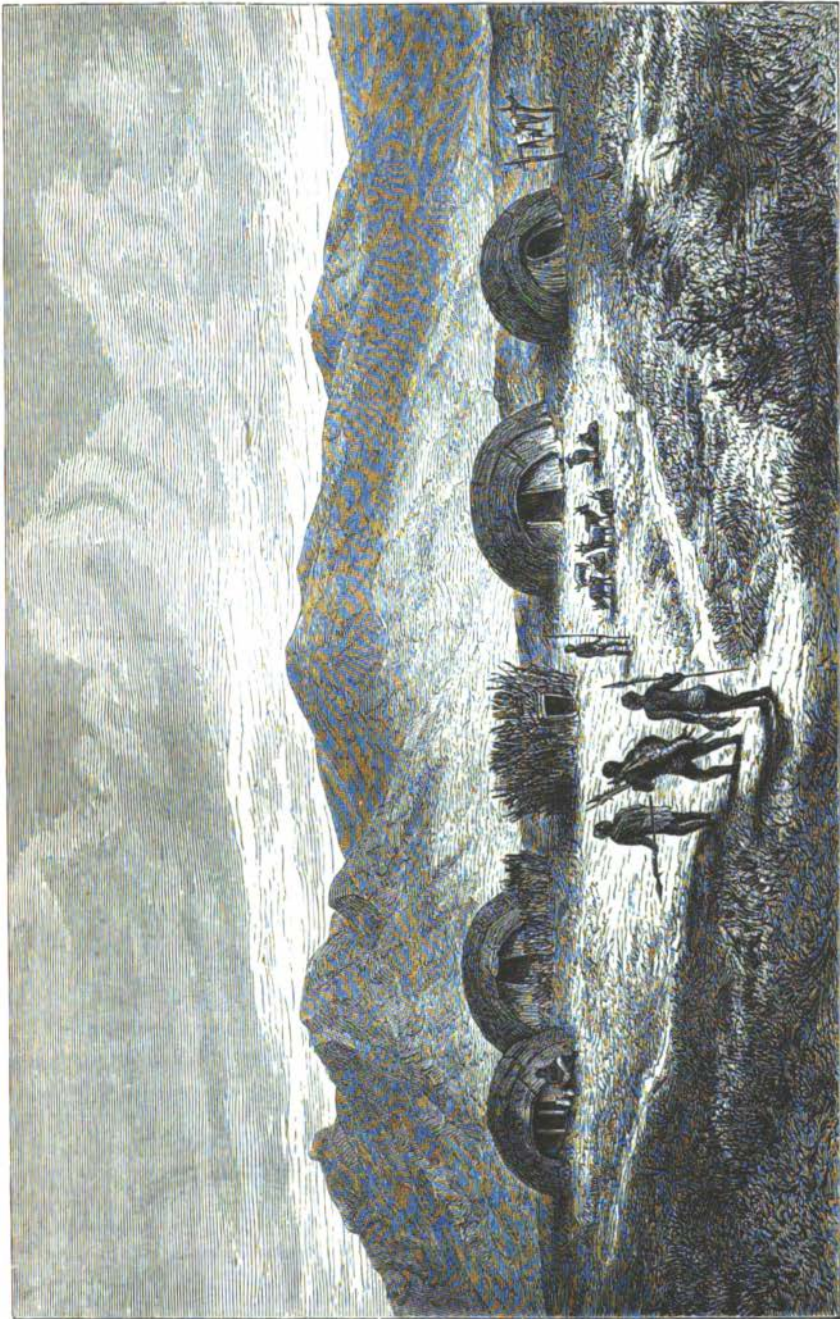
drink, they must confine themselves to their own houses or their own waggons; he for his part was quite resolved that they should not make an exhibition of themselves before his subjects.

The Matabele who had come with us were the bearers of a letter from Lo Bengula, inviting Khame to co-operate with the President of the Transvaal Republic in preventing the advance of the Damara emigrants.

My late travelling-companions only stayed at Shoshong two or three days, and then started for the south, leaving me with Mr. Mackenzie. Before his departure, Westbeech cleared out the ivory from a waggon of which he was not in immediate want, and placed the vehicle at my disposal. On the 25th and 26th I was feeling considerably better, and found much amusement in inspecting all the collections I had made. There was a Captain G. staying in the place, on his way back from a hunting-tour on the Limpopo, who expressed himself highly delighted with what I showed him. In the evening I wrote my journal, except when Mr. Mackenzie kept me in conversation, and supplied me with additional particulars about the Bamangwatos. It was a great satisfaction to me to find that I could now converse with Khame in Sechuana, without the aid of an interpreter.

Three weeks passed away without anything transpiring particularly to record, until the 13th of May, when the native postman brought the news that war had broken out in the Transvaal between the Boers and Sekokuni. During my leisure time I undertook, at Khame's request, to prescribe for some of his people who were ill; Mr. Mackenzie





Vol. II.

KOBANNA HOMESTEAD NEAR MAMUSA.



kindly provided the drugs that were requisite. On the 15th I despatched a letter to Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, containing a report of the slavery in the Marutse empire.

Almost daily at this time we received accounts of the atrocities that were being committed by the Bakuenas and Bakhatlas, the two rival tribes that were at war upon Sechele's territory. Towards the end of the month the girls' boguera was commenced at Shoshong, but Khame assured me it was for the last time.

At the beginning of June Mr. Mackenzie began to prepare for his move to Kuruman, whither he had been summoned to found a large training-college. I did what I could to assist him in his packing, but I was still so weak that I could not be of much service; indeed, during the hot weather I was so exhausted by visiting my patients, that I was obliged to ask the king to allow me the use of a horse.

We heard here that Matsheng and some other Bechuana chiefs had settled upon the right bank of the Limpopo without recognizing the authority of the Transvaal Republic, so that the Limpopo could hardly now be said to be the actual northern boundary of the country; and on the 13th we received the further intelligence that the Bakhatlas had been worsted in their attack upon Molopolole, the Bakuena capital, having been unable to make a stand against their opponents' breech-loaders.

It was on the 17th that we started from Shoshong with a caravan of seven waggons. Besides Mr. Mackenzie and myself, there were Mr. Mackenzie's

colleague, Mr. Hephurn, and Mr. Thompson and Mr. Helm, the two missionaries from Matabele-land, who were going to attend a conference at Molopolole.

At Khame's Saltpan we were honoured by a farewell visit from the king himself, who said he could not resist coming once more to shake hands with Mr. Mackenzie, the friend to whom he owed so much. When he arrived he found several waggons belonging to a trader who asked permission to pass through his country, but recognizing him as a man who had been disposing of some brandy to his people about a year ago, he peremptorily refused to comply with his request, and sent him back immediately to the south.

The deficiency of water made our journey to the Limpopo extremely toilsome. Instead of crossing the Sirorume as usual, we made a circuit to avoid the arid and sandy woods upon its bank. We halted at the mouth of the Notuany for three days, and whilst there I made the acquaintance of Captain Grandy, the African explorer, then on his way to Matabele-land. He died some time afterwards of fever.

The track that we followed up the Limpopo valley bore every indication of not having been used for years; it was painfully bad, being everywhere either blockaded by stones or covered with deep sand. On the 1st of July we halted, and stayed the next day as well, at one of the pools on the Notuany, that I have elsewhere described as being fed by springs as well as by the overflow of the river, and consequently contain water long after the stream itself is dry. This pool was about 150 yards long, and about twenty yards wide, and full of fish.

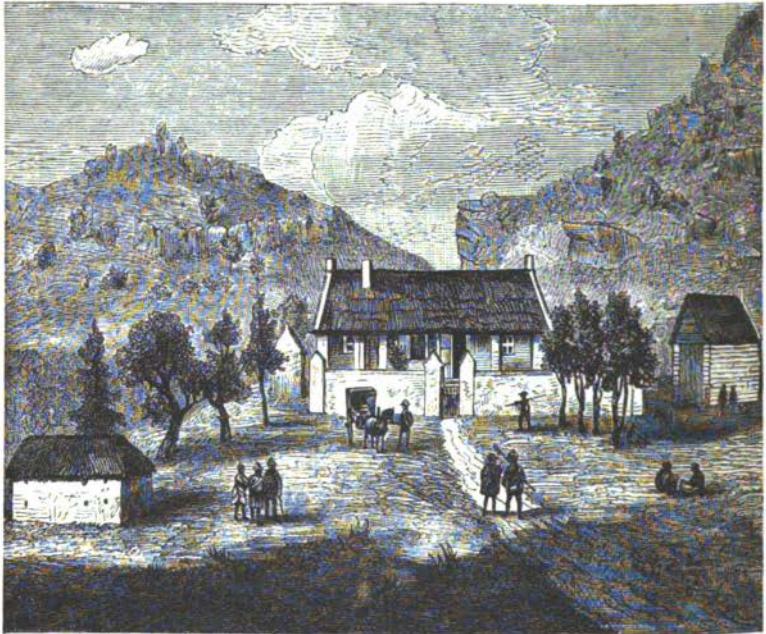
One of the wheels of the waggon in which Mr. Mackenzie was travelling having broken, we had to wait while Mr. Hepburn went forward to Mochuri, the next town on our route, belonging to the western Bakhatlas, to procure a new one from the traders there. The damage being made good, we all proceeded to Mochuri, where we learnt the full particulars of the late engagement—the remnant of the Bakhatla defeated force having returned there on the preceding day. They had succeeded so far as to approach Molopolole unawares. They had killed sixteen Kalahari herdsmen, and had made themselves masters of all their cattle. They had defied all the efforts of the residents to recover their herds, and it was only at last, when they found themselves face to face with the breech-loaders which the Bakuenas had procured from the traders, that they were obliged to retreat and abandon their booty. Ten of them had fallen on the spot; four of the wounded had made their way home; but numbers of them, in spite of Sechele, the Bakuena king, being a Christian, were overtaken and massacred according to the custom of the tribe. They had, they avowed, been goaded on to make their attack because the Bakuenas had pillaged their cattle-stations, and cut off the hands and feet of many of the women.

Formerly the Bakhatlas had resided in the Transvaal; but after the occupation of the Boers, most of them left, and settled under two separate chiefs in Sechele's territory, becoming known respectively as the eastern and western Bakhatlas. Sechele had now demanded the same tribute from them as he exacted from the Makhosi and the Batlokas, and it



was their refusal to pay this that had brought them into their present contention.

Mochuri struck me as one of the cleanest Bechuana towns that I ever saw. It is situated in a depression between two hills, being surrounded by a high thorn-fence, and having all the enclosures about its farmsteads well cemented and neatly preserved. Until



MISSION HOUSE IN MOLOPOOLE.

1876 the Bakhatlas were the only central Bechuana tribe that cultivated tobacco and used it as an article of commerce. Besides being agriculturists, they spend a good deal of their time in tanning leather. Nearly all of them speak Dutch.

Here I had to part with Mr. Mackenzie and the other missionaries. It was with a heavy heart that

I said good-bye. They had to turn off for about thirty miles to the east to go to Mololopole; I had to continue my way south towards Chwene-Chwene. As a farewell kindness, Mr. Mackenzie induced the chief to let me have a couple of young lions.

After leaving the valley of the Notuany I had to cross a wide plain, where the soil was salt, and consequently the growth of grass was very scanty. I did not stay longer than was absolutely necessary at Chwene-Chwene, as it was suffering so much from drought that holes thirty feet deep had to be dug in the rocky beds of the spruits before any water could be obtained. While we were halting next upon the northern slope of the Dwars Mountains, we incautiously allowed my two little lions to make their escape. It took us two hours to catch them; nor could we put them back into their cage again without getting our hands scratched and bitten considerably.

Instead of proceeding south-west from Brackfontein through Buisport, I turned due south across the bushveldt to Linokana, noticing on the way that the little Morupa stream quite lost itself in the shallow depressions of its bed, so that it is only after heavy rain that it makes its way over the grass plains to the Great Marico.

Mr. Jensen welcomed me most cordially when I arrived at Linokana on the 8th. I was also highly delighted to have a visit from my old friend Eberwald, who had come all the way from the Leydenburg gold-fields on purpose to see me. He was of great assistance to me while I remained in the place, and proceeded with me on my way south. He

did his best to acknowledge the hospitality that he received from Mr. Jensen by working for him in his garden.

Moilo, the chief, was dead, and had been succeeded by his nephew, who came from Moshaneng. His name was Kopani. He was a Baharutse chief, subordinate to the Transvaal government. The war was still going on in the east, the whites decidedly getting the worst of it. In the Marico district, as elsewhere, there had been a conscription of men, cattle, and waggons, much to the dissatisfaction of the agriculturists.

I had a roomy cage made for my two lions, but unfortunately just as it was finished the female died.

Mr. Mackenzie joined me again unexpectedly on the 5th of August. He was on his way to Kuruman, and was accompanied by Mr. Williams, who had come from Molopolole to consult me about his health. Next day I paid my four servants—To, Narri, Burilli, and Chukuru—their wages, telling them they might now go back to the Zambesi; and in the prospect of again securing their services, I gave them something more than was really their due. As two of them were Matongas, I had taken the opportunity, while they were with me, of turning my slight knowledge of the Senansa and Sesuto-Serotse dialects to account, to acquire something of the Setonga.

Mr. Wehrmann, a missionary who resided amongst the eastern Bakhatlas, informed me that their town Melorane was a few miles to the west of the Great Marico. The chief of the western Bakhatlas was a son of Rhamananis, named Linsh.

In order to get sufficient money to carry me back to the diamond fields I had to resort to medical practice. Amongst my patients was a trader, who had been thrown out of a waggon through West-beech's bad driving, and had been a good deal hurt. Another patient was the Dutch minister, De Vries, and by curing him I made a number of friends in the neighbourhood, where he was much beloved.

About this time I received a very courteous answer from Lord Derby in reply to the letter which I had sent him from Shoshong. A few days afterwards I took my departure from Linokana; and choosing the nearest route to Mamusa, went past Oisthuizen's Farm, and along the southern portion of the west frontier of the Marico district. The stony condition of the road made the whole journey very toilsome.

Whilst rambling about in the neighbourhood of Dornplace Farm on the Molapo, I came to a rocky lake, named Joubert's Lake, after the owner of the farm. It is probably the smallest of all the lakes in South Africa, and lies in a deep hollow, about a hundred yards long by fifty yards wide; less than twenty yards from the shore it was 800 feet deep, and the farmer informed me that in the rainy season the water rose some four or five feet higher than it was when I saw it; he likewise expressed his belief that the lake was in communication with the Molapo, which flows at no great distance, and on a lower level. I formed an opinion that the lower rocks are of hard grey limestone, and that at the bottom there are caves and grottoes by which the lake is fed. The shores, which were both steep and rocky, were all alive with large bright-

brown rock-rabbits, rock-pigeons, and starlings, as well as with innumerable bees. Mr. Joubert related to me some interesting hunting-adventures, and gave graphic descriptions of three very exciting lion-hunts. In former times lions, especially of the maneless breed, seem to have been very numerous on the Molapo. In common with other farmers, Mr. Joubert expressed great dissatisfaction with the Transvaal Republic. He held the post of field-cornet, and tried to induce me to employ any influence I might have in urging the British Government to annex the Molapo valley. The complaints of the way in which justice was administered were very bitter; the farmers murmuring, moreover, that after the Republic had conceded to them the purchase of farms and land, it was impotent to protect them from the Barolongs, to whom the territory by ancient right belonged.

Starting off again on the 30th, I was not long in reaching Rietvley Farms, where several families resided, but I made no stay, leaving again the same afternoon for Poolfontein. This was formerly a farm, but is now a settlement of Barolongs, who migrated from the neighbourhood of Potchefstroom under their chief Matlabe, and are industrious agriculturists. Mr. Hansen was here working very hard on behalf of the Hermannsburg Mission, but the majority of the population were Wesleyans. A spring that I saw in the neighbourhood was issuing from one of the deep cavities in the hard limestone, and at no great distance from this I noticed a small rock-pool, on the surface of which was a little floating island of grass.

Hence to the Harts River, which we crossed about



a day's journey from Mamusa, our way led over the Quagga Flats. The grass was low and the soil dry, consequently the game, which is generally very abundant, had retreated to moister and better concealed districts. I found the underwood very dense in the shallow valley at the source of the Maretsane.

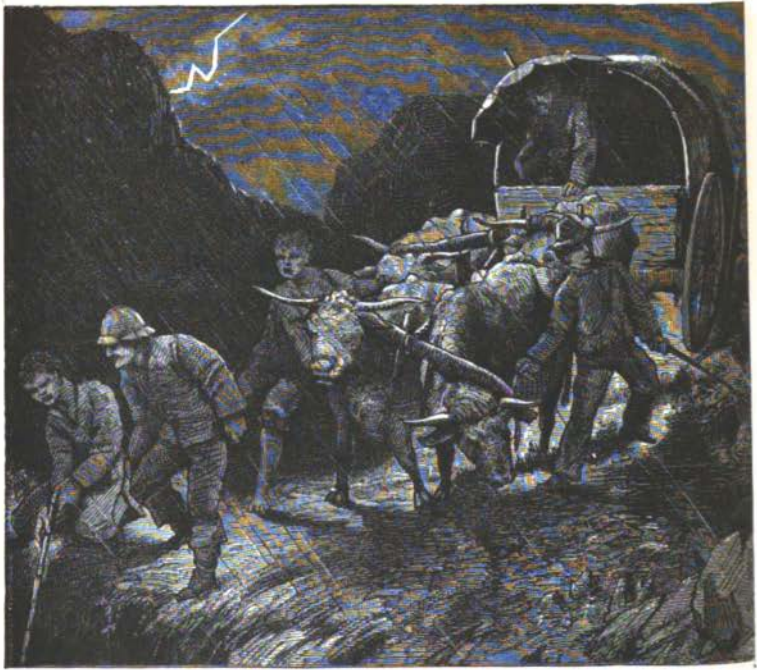
Water-birds were plentiful at a saltpan at which I arrived on the 1st of November, but unfortunately at this date I had so many indications of a return of fever, that neither here nor at the Calvert or Helmore lakes, was I in a condition to enjoy any sport.

Continuing my journey three days later, I paid a visit to the Harm Saltlake, where some Boers contrive to make a miserable livelihood by hunting and by selling salt.

The Mackenzie and the Livingstone saltpans lay in the next day's route, and after a drive of some hours over marshy soil, we came to a pond encircled by tall sedge, in the middle of which there seemed to be a rock-pool; as far as I know, it is the only one of the kind on the plain between the Harts and Molapo. As we approached we were almost deafened by the chorus of bird-cries that rose from its banks. We put up for the night in two deserted huts that had belonged to some Dutch hunters, who had left the tokens of their calling behind them in a great accumulation of the bones of the gnus and antelopes they had killed. I was sorry that there was no boat at hand in which I could make an investigation of the bottom of the pond. Besides the numerous swamp-birds and water-fowl, there was a great variety of finches in the sedge; and before night closed in, it was a remarkable sight to see the thousands of

swallows that came back from their day's flight across the boundless plains.

Crossing the Harts River on the 9th, we found it so swollen by the rain that the transit was somewhat dangerous, but we arrived safely at Mamusa on the next day, and at Houmansvley on the day



NIGHT JOURNEY.

after. Mr. Houman, the resident proprietor, gave me a courteous welcome, and I stayed with him until the 14th, when I continued my way south, till I came to Hallwater Farm, where there were a good many Korannas.

The nearer I approached the diamond-fields, the more disheartened and out of spirits I felt. I had

not 2*l.* in my possession, and I owed Mr. Jensen 120*l.*, a sum considerably more than I could realize by the sale of my waggon and team, which would fetch much less here than they would if I could have sold them in the Transvaal.

While I was in Christiana I was pleased to make the acquaintance of a trader named Sanders, who had been travelling in the tropical parts of the west coast.

On my way down the Vaal valley I had another attack of fever, which came on so violently, that when I arrived at Kimberley on the 26th, I was thoroughly ill.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## LAST VISIT TO THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

Resuming medical practice—My menagerie at Bultfontein—Exhibition at Kimberley—Visit to Wessel's Farm—Bushmen's carvings—Hunting hyenas and earth-pigs—The native question in South Africa—War in Cape Colony and Griqualand West—Major Lanyon and Colonel Warren—Departure for the coast.



FINGO BOY.

nine months had made me little better than a stranger in the place; and yet it was upon my practice alone that I had to rely for obtaining the means of discharging my obligations. Reluctant as

WHEN now for the fourth time I reached the diamond fields I was perfectly insolvent. It was impossible to conceal from myself the difficulty I should find in re-establishing my medical practice, as an absence of a year and

I was to leave my designs unaccomplished, I could not resist the desire that came over me to return home and recruit my broken health. The question of means, however, had to be entertained, and the idea occurred to me that perhaps a public exhibition of my collection of natural and ethnographical curiosities might yield me some profit, which I could apply to the expense of a homeward passage. My friend Herr Werner came to see me as soon as he heard of my arrival, and voluntarily advanced me money enough to make my exhibition scheme feasible.

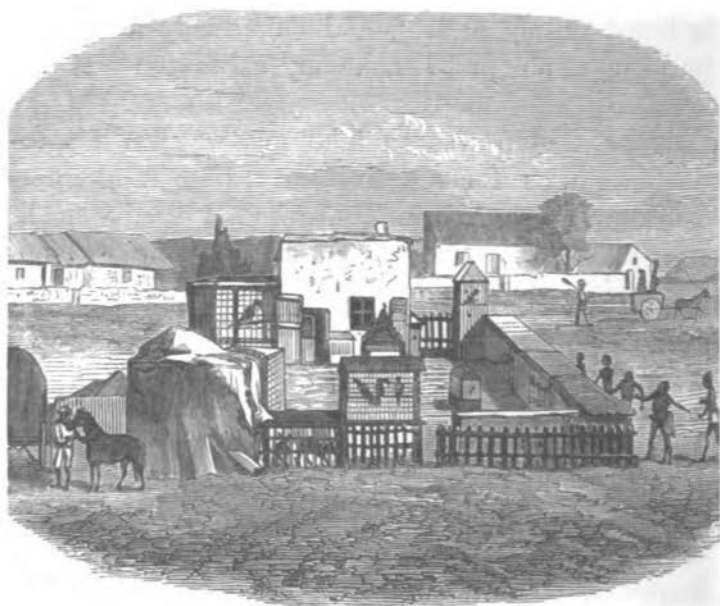
My next step was to take my waggon off to Bultfontein, as I could live for a time in greater retirement there than in Kimberley. I hired a small house close to my friend, who, although he was no longer rich, showed me every kindness during my illness. My residence was modest enough; it contained only one apartment, consisting of four bare clay walls; the floor was of the same material; but worst of all, the roof was of zinc, which made it insupportably hot in the summer. Such as it was, however, I made it serve as the temporary store of all my collections, and took up my quarters there with Eberwald, who remained in the place, acting as my assistant in preparing medicines for my patients, the number of which increased so rapidly that I could not fail to be cheered and encouraged to look forward to the future with something like equanimity.

In front of what I called my "house," and not far from it, stood an old erection, now roofless, and there I placed the great lion-cage that Eberwald and I had made, and all round I arranged a number of other cages of many kinds and sizes, containing the rest of



the animals and birds that I had brought with me. Strangers coming to the diamond-fields from the Colony, the Free State, or the Transvaal, rarely failed to come and make an inspection of my pets, nearly all of which were perfectly tame; and some of the visitors afterwards sent me several rare zoological specimens as additions to my stock.

So large did my professional practice grow in the



MY HOUSE IN BULTFONTEIN.

course of the following year, that all Eberwald's time was occupied in dispensing my medicines, so that he had no opportunity of attending to my menagerie; the consequence was that the charge of it had to be entrusted to two negroes, who neglected their duty abominably, and failed to keep the animals either clean or properly fed. I had taken pains to

have all the cages made as roomy as possible, but they rotted through exposure to the weather, and some few of the animals escaped and were killed, being probably eaten by the neighbouring blacks; but these were nothing in comparison with the number of those that died from negligence and mismanagement. By the time I left the place, more than two-thirds of the whole had disappeared. Round the cages that contained the smaller birds I planted ivy and several kinds of creepers, beneath which the little prisoners hopped about and twittered, well protected by a bower of natural foliage from the scorching sun.

I have no space in which to enter upon a detailed account of all the habits of the occupants of the various cages. It was a great pleasure to me to observe them for the best part of two years. My surviving lion was especially attached to me, and would always extend his paws to caress me whenever I approached his cage, and it was only out of regard to the nervousness of others that I did not venture occasionally to allow him his liberty. I refused an offer of 100*l.* for him when he was five months old, but by the time I lost him he had cost me double that sum. I had occasion to go to the Free State for a fortnight's visit, and during my absence his cage was allowed to remain so dirty, that when I returned the poor beast was suffering from an illness too far advanced to be arrested. Throughout its last days I always went to see it as often as I returned from my rounds, and it never failed to start to its feet with an alacrity that startled any visitor who was standing by, and even when it grew too weak to stand it would drag itself towards the

front bars of its den the instant it heard my voice. Though amongst my pets I had tame jackals that were constantly running away and coming back again, and affectionate little jumping-hares that allowed themselves to be fondled like babies, none of them could ever console me for the loss of "Prince," my young lion, the pride of my whole collection.

Besides what I have mentioned, my menagerie contained apes and baboons, hedgehogs, reed-rats, a caracal, a mangusta, black and white striped weasels, hyæna-wolves, mountain-hares, ground-squirrels, striped mice, blind mice, pangolins, several steinbocks, duykerbocks, springbocks, and a rock-rabbit; and amongst the birds I may enumerate three brown South African eagles, a crested eagle, two species of kites, red falcons, various kinds of sparrow-hawks, secretary-birds, brown and black vultures (*Gyps socialis*), two kinds of owls, parrots, black and white crows, grosbeaks and insectivorous song-birds, a hornbill, a pelican, a darter, and several varieties of wild geese and herons.

By the beginning of 1877 I had finished all my arrangements, and opened my exhibition of curiosities in the public hall at Kimberley. It proved financially a failure, and in spite of the co-operation of many kind friends, I found myself out of pocket by the transaction. In order, therefore, to meet my liabilities and to forward my project of returning for a time to Europe, I had to fall back upon my medical practice with more assiduity than ever.

Notwithstanding that the value of diamonds was still further depreciated, as a consequence of the prolonged drought the price of corn was much higher,

so that the cost of living was largely increased. It was a great satisfaction to me that I was able to purchase a horse. I was fortunate in buying a good sound animal, that did as much work as the whole three together that I had to keep in 1873.

Largely, however, as my business developed, and beneficial as it was in replenishing my pocket, the perpetual exertion told seriously on my health, and I was obliged to seize an opportunity of taking a holiday when most of my patients seemed unlikely to require any immediate attention. I made up my mind to visit Mr. Wessel at his neighbouring farm in the Free State, where I was received with the most liberal hospitality. While I was staying there I saw a number of those remarkable carvings on rocks done by the Bushmen, which had recently been inspected by Stow the geologist, and by Captain Warren.

Though the Bushman tribe is gradually dying out, they are still to be found in certain parts of Cape Colony, but remaining, even to the present time, as impervious as ever to the influences of civilization. Formerly they occupied the rocky caves in the slopes from the heights, both in the colony and in the Free State. They are probably the oldest inhabitants of South Africa; but now one branch of them seems to have blended with the Bantu families on the north, whilst another has become amalgamated with the Hottentots more to the east. They hunt the game which they spy out from their elevated resorts with the most primitive bows and arrows; but low as is the grade of their intellectual culture, they have the very wonderful art of decorating the rocky walls of their dwellings with

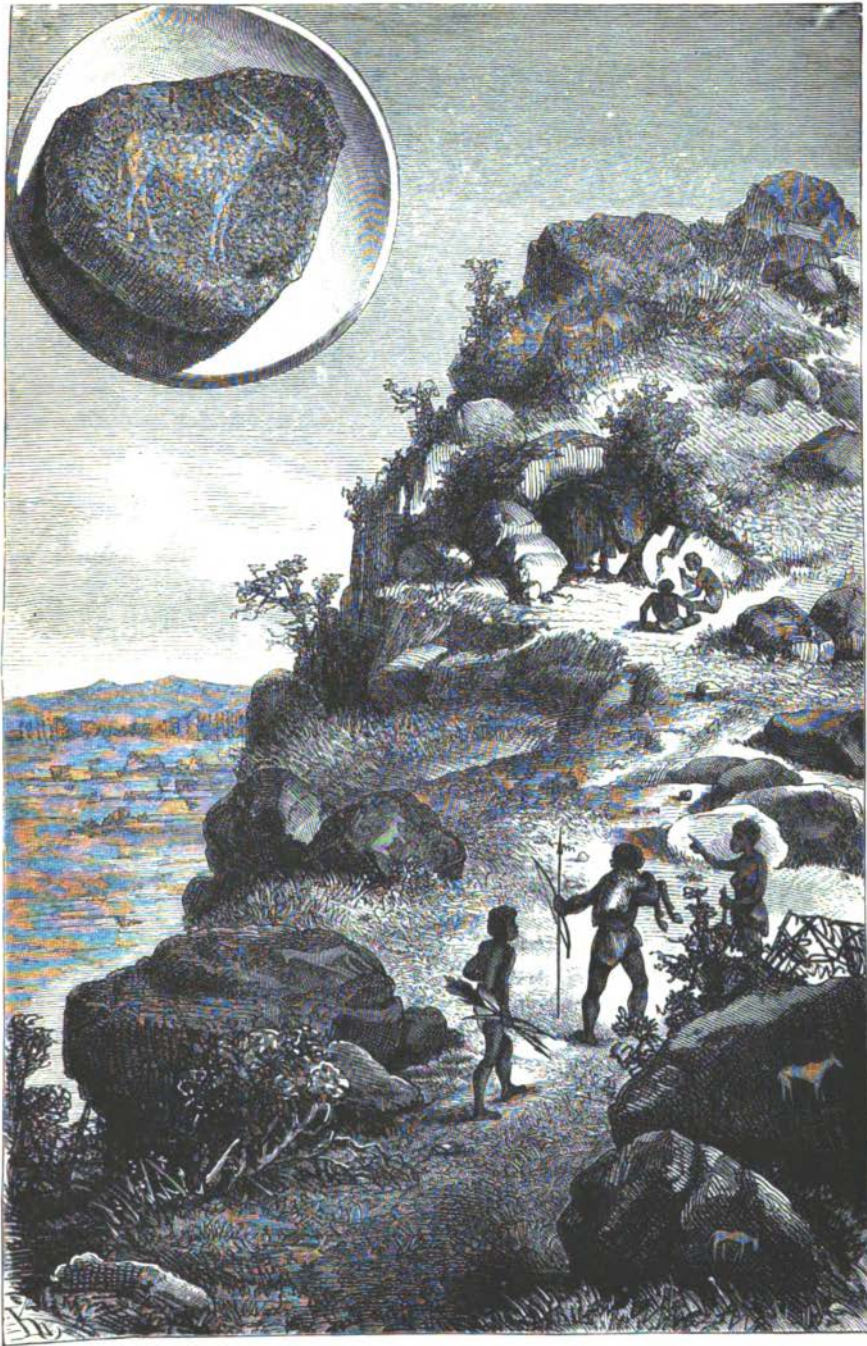
representations of quadrupeds, tortoises, lizards, snakes, fights, hunts, and the different heavenly bodies.

As the game became gradually destroyed by the European colonists, the Bushmen began to make raids upon the white men's cattle, the result of which was to pave the way for their own annihilation. The true Bushman, as distinguished from the many half-breeds, has a passionate love for his rocky home, and whether he enters service by a voluntary contract or under compulsion, he will take the first opportunity of stealing a sheep and making off to his beloved hills. Instances of periods of stipulated service being faithfully fulfilled are very rare.

But as I have already intimated, these people are not altogether of the low grade of humanity that at first sight they appear to be, and a traveller may penetrate far into Central Africa before finding another tribe so skilful in its manipulation of stone, and in the manufacture of vessels out of wood, bone, or ostriches' eggs; but most remarkable of all is the way in which, by the aid of the rudest tools, they have adorned their primitive homes with carvings that will long survive any productions of their contemporaries, the Bantus and Hottentots.

The drawings that are made inside the caves are chiefly upon sandstone in ochre of various colours. Stow, the geologist, has devoted a good deal of attention to them, and has taken many copies of the designs; and if ever it be my good fortune to recommence my South African researches, I hope to bring away some larger specimens than my want of proper tools enabled me now to obtain.







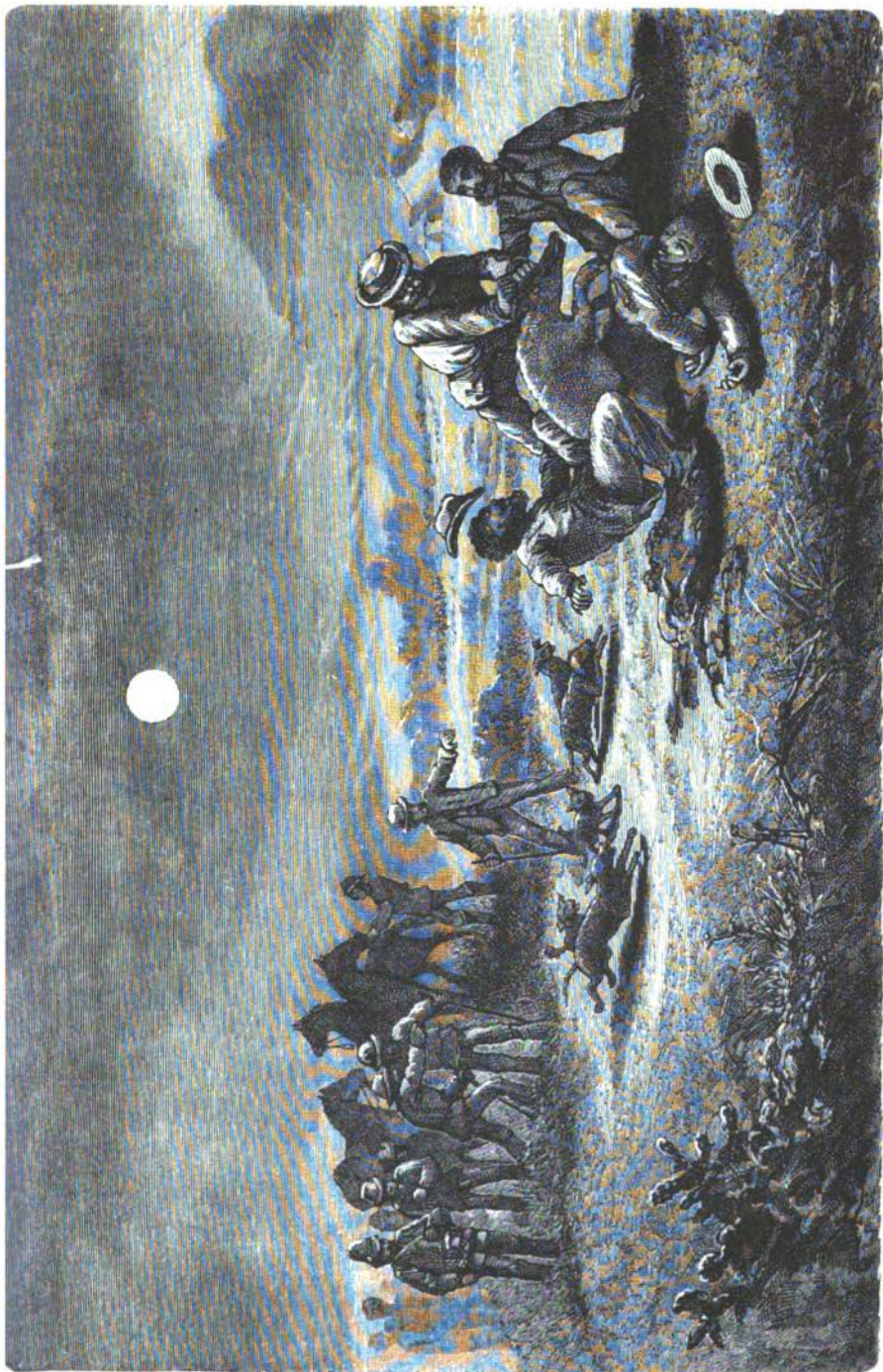
Besides the carvings that I collected, I succeeded in getting several of the curious tools, consisting simply of triangular pieces of flint, with which the outlines of the engravings are cut; these are likewise used for several domestic purposes. Another implement not uncommon among them was a heavy stone fastened to the thicker end of a pointed stick, sometimes 3 feet long, though occasionally not more than half that length, its use being either to dig up edible roots, or to make holes in search of water. Stones, it may be mentioned, are not unfrequently found on which the engraving had only been partially made, and where there has been an attempt to obliterate the design by the application of emery and another stone. In some cases the objects are indicated only by lines of shading, while in others they are chiselled entirely out of the rock. These last are the most striking of all, and I believe that the eighteen specimens that I brought home with me from Wessel's farm are unique in Europe. Amongst the subjects are the bust of a bushman, a woman carrying a load, an ostrich with a rider on its back, an ostrich meeting a rhinoceros, a jackal chasing a gazelle, but many of them are single figures of cows, gnus, and antelopes.

In the course of my sojourn at the farm I collected a large number of insects, birds, bird-skins, and plants, and before leaving my hospitable quarters I was invited by the neighbours to join them in some hunting-excursions. I went out twice, and on each occasion we were accompanied by a party of horsemen, a number of natives on foot, and by a pack of dogs. The object of the chase was to hunt hyænas and animals that live in holes in the earth, but, for

myself, I was desirous of obtaining some live porcupines, jumping-hares, and earth-pigs. The first expedition was made by day. Those of us who were on horseback surrounded a rocky crag, and sent the natives with the dogs to beat up the hill; our success, however, was most indifferent, as we discovered that the hyænas had been alarmed in time to make their escape.

The second excursion was by night over a district composed of grass plains studded with bushes and ant-hills, and bordered, especially on the east, by wooded crags. It was as beautiful a night as I ever remember, the moonlight being perfectly unclouded. I had been out inspecting the carvings for a long time that day, and contemplated taking a still longer ride on the morrow. I therefore left my own horse at home, and was mounted on one that my kind host had lent me, and that was well accustomed to the locality. The dogs, of which every farmer had contributed several to make up the pack, were put upon the scent, and we had hardly been galloping more than five minutes before we heard them baying at the foot of a hill a little distance to our right. We spurred on our steeds, but gave them their heads, as they could see better than we could the blocks of stone that lay on the ground among the bushwood. We soon came up to the struggling mass in the midst of which was an object that kept glittering as it rolled over and over in the moonlight. It proved to be a porcupine which the dogs were rending to pieces; in spite of the armament of quills with which nature has endowed it, the porcupine has a remarkably fragile skin, so that it is easily torn by any animal that once makes good its hold









upon it, and thus, although we dismounted without loss of time and beat off the hounds, we were too late to prevent the prey being lacerated, and it was in a very mangled condition that it fell to the lot of the fleet-footed Basutos.

Two more porcupines, a jumping-hare, and a South African skunk, all had a similar fate, and then the dogs took a circuitous route back again to the hills, and started an earth-pig (*Orycteropus capensis*). To escape its pursuers, the creature made an effort to burrow in the earth, and had partially succeeded, when we came up to it. Our men did their very best to secure it, but it rolled them over and over like so many balls, and got clean away.

The earth-pig is undeniably the strongest of all the edentata. Its body is long and round, and it has long powerful nails at the end of its claws, of which the sinews are remarkable for their strength; its fleshy wedge-shaped tail acts as a great support to its body, and though it sometimes uses it as a means of defence, it seems to be of most service when the creature is bounding away in flight. The tail likewise comes into requisition when, squatting on its hind quarters, it digs away at an ant-hill, for it is known to be one of the largest ant-eaters in South Africa. Its skin is tough and bristly, defying the fangs of the jackal, and it has a pair of long ears that are keenly alive to sound. The skin is used in the colony for making certain parts of harness. Other enemies to ants are the short-tailed pangolins, the hyæna-wolf, the mangusta, and the plover.

After our last failure we gave up our chase, and rode slowly home; but my friends were unwilling

that I should be disappointed in my wish to carry away with me some of their live birds and animals, and subsequently assisted me in procuring a nice collection, amongst them some weaver-birds, which, however, did not live long.

During one of my rambles about the farm, I caught sight of a cobra, five feet long, in a weaver-bird's nest. I was fortunate in killing it at my first shot, and found that it had destroyed several old birds and devoured a number of eggs.

The time of this last visit of mine to the diamond-fields was a period of vast importance to South Africa. Events were then taking place which, as far as my judgment goes, could not have otherwise than a wide influence upon the country generally, especially with regard to the solution of the native question; I allude to the conflicts between the colony and the tribes on the east, and those between Griqualand West and the tribes farther still in that direction, all which minor conflicts were the fore-runners of a great Zulu war. Another disturbing element was the annexation of the Transvaal by the British Government.

My views upon this subject generally were stated in a pamphlet which I put into circulation at the time; and as a great deal of what I then said has actually come to pass, I hope I may be excused if I here refer to that little publication, which was issued not simply at my own option, but by the desire of several influential men in South Africa, to weigh the comparative merits of the several aspects of this subject. "Recent events," I wrote, "clearly show that in South Africa, as in North America, England has taken greater hold upon the continent than any

other colonized nation. Her mode of action has been in many respects the same in either case, but the native element here differs so much from that in America that it was impossible for the same treatment to have a like effect. The European colonists were ruled by two very opposite prejudices; one party, overlooking the fact that the natives had been accustomed time out of mind to their burdens, regarded them as wrongfully oppressed; the other party deeming all negroes as of so inferior a race as to be scarcely human at all. Practical men who by long residence in the country had gained some insight into the native character, and who consequently took a more moderate view of the case, were in so great a minority, both with respect to numbers and position, that they were unable to exercise any influence."

When I wrote my pamphlet in 1875 I did not know to how great an extent my ideas corresponded with those of many experienced colonists, but ultimately these ideas seemed to gain such ground that they became the basis of public questions.

There are certain tribes of South Africa who in their intellectual development and adult powers of comprehension seem to me to be about equal to children of our own of six years of age; and there are tribes that, according to their varying degrees of culture, possess separate tribal characteristics just in the same way as may be noticed amongst the individual members of a civilized family. One tribe, for instance, will be remarkable for its good-nature, one for its industry, and another for its thievish propensities. No doubt these various traits, as far as they are independent of association,

may be accounted for in a great degree by the larger or smaller size of the brain.

The Hottentots, Griquas, and Korannas may perhaps not inaptly be compared to children that allow themselves to be attracted by anything that amuses them, and clutch at whatever takes their fancy. For this reason alone, in spite of anything they may acquire of the mechanical arts of reading and writing, they must be unfit to be admitted as yet to the privileges of a civilized race. It seems to me indispensable that before they can be held entitled to the ordinary rights of citizenship they must be cultivated to receive correct views about labour, capital, and wages, to appreciate better methods of husbandry and architecture, to take more pains about the cleanliness of their persons, and especially to recognize the moral principle that should guide their transactions alike amongst themselves and with the white men.

Hitherto the worst obstacle to civilization has been superstition ; nor can I believe that much will be accomplished towards the elevation of the natives until they are brought to understand that the supply of the necessaries of life is not dependent upon the influence of magicians, fetishes, and rain-doctors.

I ventured to point out to the Government that a different future awaited the South African negroes from that of the North American Indians, and that accordingly we ought to protect them from some of the abuses by which the latter were decimated. For one thing, there ought to be restrictions put upon the sale of brandy to the black population in the colony ; but more than this, there should



be an absolute prohibition of its introduction into any of the adjacent native independencies. The rulers of a few tribes are already rendering considerable assistance in this way by preventing the sale of alcohol in any form upon their territory; and I am glad to testify that in at least a part of Africa the measure has been beneficial both to white men and blacks. Beyond this, I pointed out that it was necessary, alike for the Government and for private individuals, to pay particular attention to the separate characters of the tribes and of the chiefs with whom they were holding intercourse; and I went so far as to point out that the application of several native rulers to be incorporated with the English colonies ought to be entertained with the utmost caution.

The cases of Mankuruane, the Batlapin ruler, of Sechele, the Bakuena king, and still more recently that of the Damara people, and that of Khame, the sovereign of the Bamangwatos, have proved much of what I stated in my pamphlet; and I am now more than ever satisfied that the portrayal I made of the Zulu character was in every respect accurate. Whatever opinion I may once have held, I have long ceased to think that after once quelling the Zulu power it is desirable for Great Britain to extend her colonial possessions in South Africa. I am convinced, on the other hand, that it would work far better for the interests of trade and for the ultimate opening up of the continent, if one or more commissioners, duly authorized, were maintained permanently at the separate independent native courts—arms and ammunition being, of course, excluded as articles of traffic.

There has hitherto been an erroneous impression in Europe that the English are greedy to devour all the land in South Africa on which they can lay their hands ; but the opponents and critics of their colonial policy do not seem to understand that in well nigh every case the cession of the territory has been made by voluntary surrender on the part of the native rulers. Before I undertook my third journey I entertained a very sanguine hope that there would be a highway of commerce opened into Central Africa, but my expectation all centred on the idea that this was impossible until the entire district between the Vaal and the Zambesi should be subjected to British rule. I see things now very differently, and am consequently gratified to know that in several instances Great Britain has declined to annex native territories, even although they have been ready to submit to her authority.

Just at the time when my pamphlet was written, several of the native princes were, it was said, on the point of making their spontaneous cession ; and it was my desire to warn the Government to act with caution in every transaction of the kind. I said : " Here is Mankuruane, the Batlapin king, with one tribe, and here is Montsua, the Barolong king, with another. They tell us that they want to be numbered among our subjects, but before their request is complied with they should be made to declare whether it is by their own wish or by that of their people that they seek to be reckoned as British subjects ; they should be forced to confess whether it was their friendship to the English or their fear and hatred of other white men that prompted them to make the proposal ; they should

be bound to declare whether it was not simply because they were threatened by some neighbouring chief that they sought English protection; or, again, they should be obliged to disclose the truth as to whether there was a rival chief in the territory whom it was sought to paralyze. Two years after they had been annexed the Damaras acknowledged that they had had no other motive in seeking incorporation under the British sceptre, except this last of getting rid of a rival chief. Further than this, I beg to suggest the necessity, even after the true origin of the proposal has been ascertained, of making strict investigation into the character of the chief and the grade of culture of the tribe, before any treaty of affiliation is concluded."

As I have already said the war with the colonial Kaffirs broke out during my last stay in the Diamond-fields, and Griqualand West became the scene of a like misfortune. In both wars the right cause had the victory. That the little colony of Griqualand West, with its insignificant number of white men, should have brought the conflict to so speedy and satisfactory a termination with such slight expense and trifling loss of life, was owing to two causes, first, that the governor was an experienced soldier, and secondly, that the Diamond-fields were occupied by a brave and true-hearted population. The history of the province during the last three years gives ample proof of this, and I refer especially to the war which it has had to maintain with the Griquas, Masarwas, and Batlapins, under their chiefs Mora, Donker-Maglas and others. These natives, who have hitherto turned a deaf ear to the beneficial precepts of the white man, being strengthened by the

addition of many foul elements, such as fugitive rebels from the colony, and runaway thieves and other criminals from the west, from Kuruman, and from the farther side of the Lange-Bergen, had suddenly fallen upon the neighbouring settlers, and after massacring them, had ransacked their houses. These crimes led to another war. The negro-robbers had taken into account that Griqualand West could receive no assistance from the colony, which was already occupied with the Kaffir war, and they had likewise reckoned that the thousands of natives who were employed in the Diamond-fields would mutiny at the same time, burn down the buildings, annihilate the population, and carry off the booty; whilst they, the originators of the war, would meanwhile be plundering the roadside hotels and stores, as well as laying waste the farms.

I was myself a witness of the position of the whites at that critical time. Fortunately the purifying process that had been going on at the Diamond-fields by the withdrawal of adventurers, had left few but true-hearted men behind, and Major Lanyon, who then represented the government, thoroughly understood the state of affairs. In Colonel Warren, who has since succeeded as governor, he had an associate who never shunned danger, and was always prepared for emergencies. Thus by what seemed almost like supernatural energy, Griqualand West was defended, women and children were saved from destruction, and the Europeans gained for themselves the respect without which it is impossible to live at peace and in harmony with the natives.

Major Lanyon issued an appeal in which he called upon all the residents in the central diggings to

combine to protect their new home from destruction; the result of this was that in a few days more than six hundred men had come forward, all capable of bearing arms, and ready to shed their blood for their people. About two hundred of these were volunteers, the rest were young men and diamond-



COLONEL WARREN.

diggers, who expressed a wish to be enrolled in the civilian corps. Horses were purchased without delay, and the men were drilled by day and by night, the military instruction being given by diggers, merchants, or any others who had been themselves trained. The corps was further reinforced by 400 Basutos. Setting out against the foe, they



surprised the natives in the midst of one of their marauding forays, and drove them back to the hills. What ensued was a sort of guerilla war. No sooner forced to surrender one of their stone barricades, than seeking another from which they were driven out as quickly, the natives at length had to yield; Colonel Warren had demonstrated that he had all the talents of a general, and the men enlisted from the diggings had proved that they well understood how to do their duty.

So successful had I been in my practice, that I began to indulge the hope that I could start for Europe in December, 1877; but when I came to reckon up the actual cost of conveying my numerous large packages and my cases of live-stock, I found it impossible to carry out my intention so soon. The carriage of all the collection that I had made on my two previous journeys had already been generously defrayed by Herr Napstek, of Prague, and the same kind friend now again sent me 20*l.*, and the Vienna Geographical Society remitted me 40*l.*, but this would be barely enough to convey a waggon and my animals as far as the coast. Under the circumstances I came to the conclusion that I would postpone my departure for another year, by which time I did not doubt that I should have saved enough to cover all the expenses of my passage, and to leave me a small reserve fund in addition; by carrying out this plan I should also be travelling through the Orange Free State and the east province of Cape Colony, at a season when the best pasturage could be secured for the bullocks.

I took an opportunity of sending on twenty-one

of my chests by a transport-waggon that went to Port Elizabeth, where the Austrian Vice-Consul, Herr Allenberg, stored them in his warehouses until my arrival; but it did not suit my purpose to travel by such a conveyance myself, because I wished on my way to stop wherever I pleased to make geological and palæontological observations, which could not be done if I were to be hampered by the proceedings of a driver who was not under my own control.

Matters, however, turned out better for me than I had anticipated. An unexpected and munificent gift of 1000 florins from the Emperor of Austria, 60*l.* from the Bohemian National Society, 200 florins from the "Svatabor Club," and a loan of 1000 florins from a kind lady patroness placed me in a position to start as soon as I was disposed, and I proceeded to quit the Diamond-fields six months before the date I had fixed.

A series of mischances that befell me on my way to Port Elizabeth made such unlooked-for inroads upon my resources, that I again found it necessary to stop, and betook myself once more to medical practice at Cradock. The success that attended me was so satisfactory that in August I was enabled to resume my journey. To drive my waggon I hired a man who had formerly been servant to a merchant whom I knew at Kimberley.

My party was now increased by the addition of three children, who were to accompany me to the south. Amongst my numerous patients and acquaintances none had shown me greater attention than my next-door neighbour at Bultfontein, and as an acknowledgment of his good offices, I agreed to

take one of his sons with me to look after my birds and other pets, and to be instructed as soon as possible in more important work. I promised that if the boy turned out well, I would try and take him on with me to be educated in Europe. In order that he should not occupy too much of my time, and interrupt me in my studies, a young Bechuana maid-servant was sent to take charge of him. The third of these young people was Philip Schneeman, about thirteen years of age, the son of a Dutchman whose family I had attended professionally for many weeks. Schneeman had already shown his gratitude to me by assisting me at every opportunity he could, and he now entrusted me with his eldest son upon the condition that in return for his services I should make him an educated man. The father was one of those unfortunate characters only too commonly to be met with in the Diamond-fields, who having come out with visions of wealth had met with nothing but trouble and disappointment; he considered he was doing the best for his boy in engaging him to me, but poor Philip, before he reached Cradock, had begun to pine so painfully for his home that I had no alternative but to send him back to his parents, who meanwhile had settled in the Bürgensdorf district. The other boy turned out so careless and mischievous that I was only too glad to send him away at the same time.

In concluding the narrative of my stay in the Diamond-fields I cannot help expressing my gratitude for the general courtesy of my patients, and returning my best thanks to many other residents for their kind advice, sympathy, and numerous acts of friendship. I would not omit

to acknowledge the favours I received from the editors of various newspapers, and I beg to thank Miss Matilda Proksch, of Leydenburg, for the revision of my articles inserted in the South African English journals.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THROUGH THE COLONY TO THE COAST.

Departure from Bultfontein—Philippolis—Ostrich-breeding—My first lecture—Fossils—A perilous crossing—The Zulu war—Mode of dealing with natives—Grahamstown—Arrival at Port Elizabeth—My baggage in danger—Last days in Cape Town—Summary of my collections—Return to Europe.



BELLA.

BESIDES being delayed in Cradock, I was compelled by various circumstances to spend a considerable time in Port Elizabeth, so that altogether my homeward journey was somewhat prolonged.

Shortly after leaving Bultfontein I had to cross the Modder River, the passage being attended with much difficulty. The river-bed is full of deep holes containing numerous fish, and the entire valley is really a channel worn by the rain in the soft soil,



the steep slopes on either side being clothed with trees and bushes that are the habitat of countless birds. The prettiest part of the stream is at its junction with the Riet River. As implied by its name (Modder or Mud River) many places on its bank are extremely miry, and so trying are these spots to bullocks, wearied by their long journeys, that not unfrequently they sink down and are unable to rise again.

I just touched at Jacobsdal, which I found much increased since my visit in 1872, and then went on towards the little town of Philippolis. On my way I passed the Riet River hotel. The old iron and canvas erection had been replaced by a substantial stone building, and I was quite astonished when the landlord recollected me, asking me whether I had not been there six years before with Mr. Michaelis and Mr. Rabinowitz.

While staying at Kalke Farm I found a good many oolitic fossils, which increased in number as I went southwards. The bare, monotonous aspect of the country made me aware that the district I was approaching had been suffering from prolonged drought; it might literally be said to be scorched up, not a single green blade of grass was to be seen, and one uniform shade of brown overspread the soil and rocks alike.

Through the courtesy of many of the residents, my stay in Philippolis was extremely pleasant. I made several excursions in company with Dr. Knobel and Dr. Igel, and obtained some additions to my collection. Amongst other things I secured some live birds, and a full-grown springbock doe. Mr. Schultze, a merchant, made me a present of a

beautiful quartz druse, which I had noticed in his drawing-room in 1872, but had not then the means of purchasing. The postmaster, Mr. Försterlein, also gave me a very interesting object, a talisman that had been given him by a Basuto doctor in acknowledgment of some service; it was a tablet of black wood about an inch and a half long, half as wide, and about a third of an inch thick, in which was set a piece of rock crystal. Some Basutos to whom Mr. Försterlein had happened to show it were anxious to buy it, one of them offering two cows in exchange.

After leaving Philippolis, I was for a few days Mr. Schultze's guest at his farm at Ottersport, where for the first time I had an opportunity of seeing tame ostriches. Now that the feather trade is on the decline, it is less expensive to keep the birds in this way than to hunt them wild; and they are bred in such numbers in South Africa, particularly in Cape Colony and the Free State, that in 1879 there were at least 100,000 of them. Directly it is out of the shell an ostrich chick is worth 5*l.*, a half-grown bird varies from 20*l.* to 50*l.*, and as much as 150*l.* has been paid for brooding-hens. Ostriches are generally bred in the localities where sheep and cattle-breeding has proved unremunerative.

The greatest difficulty that the ostrich farmer has to contend with is the parasite plague. From five to twenty-five per cent. of the birds each year die from being infested by tape-worms, which swarm in thousands and eat their way into the body; a great number of them are likewise attacked by palisade worms, occasionally a yard long, that gnaw into the muscles of the heart. Not unfrequently the

parasites take possession of the eggs before the shell is formed; and from an English newspaper that I recently received from the Cape I learnt that some ostriches' eggs had been found quite full of worms.

Having crossed the river at Mr. Ross's ford, I arrived at Colesberg. Here I had so hospitable a reception, that I did not like to refuse the request made by a number of my friends that I would deliver a lecture. It was the first that I had ever attempted, but the result was so satisfactory that I ventured to plead in this way for the opening up of Central Africa from the south in some of the other towns of the colony.

In company with Mr. Knobel I paid a visit to the Colesberg hill. It is equally interesting to the botanist, the geologist, and the zoologist. The number of mountain-hares, rock-rabbits, birds of prey, starlings, pigeons, snakes, lizards, spiders, and other insects that I saw more than repaid the exertion of the clamber.

Hence my next stage was towards Cradock, not however by the shortest route, because of the parched state of the district, but *via* Middleburg, so as to find better fodder for the bullocks. The first destination on the route was Kuilfontein, Mr. Murray's farm, where Mr. Knobel told me he had seen some fossilized animal remains in a wall. I obtained permission of the owner to take as much of the wall down as I wanted, and found some fine pieces of the skeletons of saurians embedded in hard sandstone; they belonged principally to the dicynodon and to the lacertan and crocodilian species; besides these I discovered a fossil plant in the grey sandstone overlying the dicynodon strata

that are common in the eastern province of the colony. I stayed over a week at the farm, and so pleasant was my entertainment, and so full of interest my fossil investigations that I should have been delighted to avail myself of the hospitable invitation to remain longer, but I knew that in consequence of the drought Mr. Murray was at a great expense in buying food for part of his cattle, and in sending the other part off to a distance where some grass survived, and I would not permit myself to encroach upon his kindness longer than I could help. My host, during the time I was with him, took me for several excursions around Kuilfontein, and I found strata of clay-slate containing small mollusks, as well as traces of huge lizards, probably dicynodons. The only game that I saw was springbucks, bustards, grunners, partridges, wild pigeons, and wild ducks. On the farm itself I secured three of the herons that are nearly tame, and build every year on the pastures beside the springs.

The continuation of the extreme drought made the latter stages of my journey to Cradock very arduous. At Newport Farm I found some pretty fossils, including some impressions of lizards. Here, again, I had a hearty welcome, and was sorry not to be able to accept an invitation to join a party that was being arranged for gazelle-hunting and fishing. The Newport Farm scenery is the best in the Middleburg district, and I look forward to making good use of a photographic apparatus on a future visit.

My intention had originally been to stay only a few days in Cradock to recruit my bullocks, all of which were now very weary, a few of them

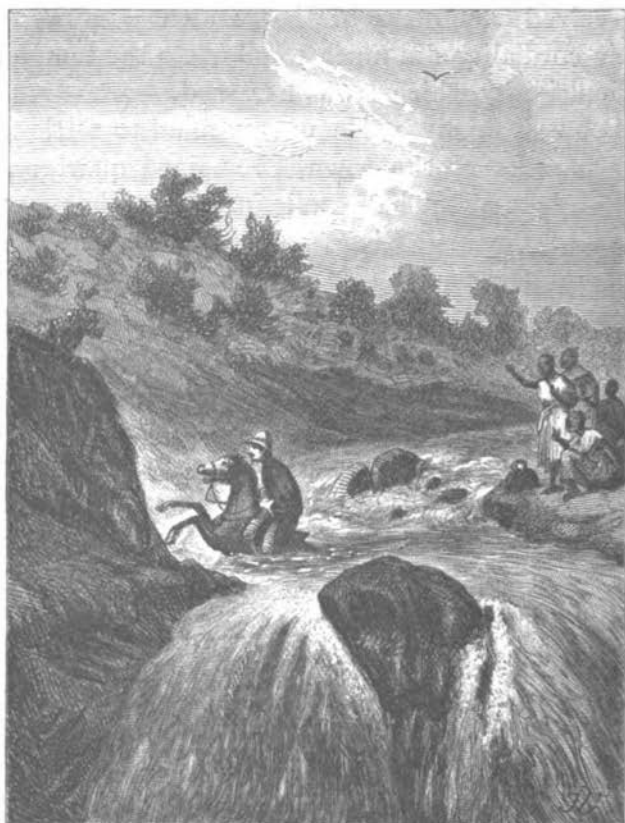
having succumbed to insufficient food. But, as I have said, I found myself detained by a different cause, and I had to apply myself to my old profession to recover various losses that I had sustained. I have a most grateful remembrance of the kindness I received from many of the resident families, and their cordiality did much to alleviate the temporary difficulties by which I was harassed.

Before I finally made up my mind to settle for a few months in the town, I remained quartered in my waggon about half a mile further up the opposite bank of the Fish River. I soon had about twenty patients, and had to ride into Cradock several times a day. My horse Mosco did me good service, although on one occasion he very nearly came to grief.

There were two rain-channels that had to be crossed before arriving at the bridge; these were more than three feet deep, and I was told that after a very few hours' rain they were filled with the water that rushed down from the slopes of the hills, amid a cluster of which the town is situated. After fourteen months' drought, when I had been in my retreat about six weeks, there came a succession of wet days; the consequence was that both channels were quickly filled with muddy water, in one stream nearly red, in the other nearly yellow. One morning at this time I was summoned to the town, but patients in such numbers had come to consult me at my waggon that I could not set out until the afternoon. The Fish River roared at my side, but I kept on my way, and crossed the first of the little affluents in safety; but on arriving at the second I found a



group of nearly thirty people brought to a standstill on its bank. They were for the most part laundresses, who had gone out in the morning as usual to the sulphurous springs, a mile or two



NARROW ESCAPE NEAR CRADOCK.

further up the river, but on their return had found their progress arrested by the sudden rising of the flood. I was greatly tempted to turn my horse's head round, and if I could have believed that the case was of trifling importance, I should unhesi-

tatingly have gone back ; but the account of the symptoms that the messenger had brought inclined me to suspect that the case was serious, and I felt that I ought to persevere if possible. The torrent seethed in front of me ; the red turbid stream was certainly thirty feet wide, and its depth had increased to quite four feet. Not far below was a hollow, some ten feet in depth, and into this the waters plunged in an angry cataract. I relied, however, with all confidence upon my horse, and urged him into the stream. Very few steps had he taken before I felt him tremble, but at a word of encouragement from me he went forwards again. In order to avoid the cataract, I thought it best to guide him a little to the right, but unfortunately the stream proved to be violent beyond all expectation. Mosco stumbled, but happily his head and mine remained above water ; by a vigorous effort he recovered himself, and after a fatiguing struggle was nearing the opposite side, when again he missed his footing, and came down upon his knees. I momentarily expected to be rolled into the torrent, but had the presence of mind to give my horse his head ; one dash, and he fixed his forefeet into the soft clay of the shore ; an instant's pause, and with a desperate bound he carried me safe to *terra firma*.

It was during the time of my residence in Cradock that the Zulu war, the most important event that has occurred in South Africa for the last quarter of a century, was going on. For the advancement of civilization that war was a necessity, and it must not be supposed either that it was a mere arbitrary proceeding on the part of Sir Bartle Frere, or that the British Government had no valid reason for

taking up arms. It was, I am convinced, the wisest step that Sir Bartle Frere, as a statesman, could have taken; he foresaw the danger that threatened the colony from Zululand; he was perfectly aware of Cetewayo's warlike preparations; and he knew, moreover, that all the force that had been collected was eager for a conflict with the whites. The colonists in Natal, and the residents in the south-east of the Transvaal, had been perpetually complaining of the encroachments which the Zulus made, whilst for the last ten years numbers of the Zulus themselves had been taking refuge in both these districts from the cruelty and oppression of the king and the indunas.

If the English Government had not taken the initiative, the whole horde of Zulus, bloodthirsty as hounds, would have overrun Natal, and probably 20,000 lives or more would have been sacrificed. Cetewayo had long made up his mind what he would do; his scheme might cost him many lives, but hundreds and thousands of lives were of little account to him considering the numerical strength of his tribe as compared with all others; it sufficed for him to rely on the courage and daring of his warriors, and thus he was encouraged to indulge his one great vision of becoming master of Natal. Had his venture proved successful, the first terrible result of the victory achieved by him would have been a general rising of the adjacent tribes in revolt against the white men.

I know indeed that there are many men both in South Africa and in England who regard the Zulu war as a great act of injustice, but I can only express my conviction that the opinion they form is founded

upon a complete misunderstanding of the character of the natives as a whole, and of the Zulus in particular; I can only believe of them that they have never been in contact with natives, so as to become aware of the bare-faced line of action they pursue; and generally I should presume of them that in the view they take they are blinded by the prejudice that every negro is a poor oppressed creature, ever ill-used, abused, and trampled on.

In England, after my return, I had several opportunities of talking over this matter with various influential people, and found that whenever I expressed my belief that there was a happy future in store for the natives of South Africa, my anticipations were uniformly regarded with extreme surprise. The general impression seemed to be that the black man was becoming extinct as the result of oppression, and that the outbreak of the Zulu war was only an additional proof of this. That there has hitherto been a failure in the relations between white men and coloured in so many places is, I conceive, attributable to the entire misapprehension of the character and position of the native; either he has been treated as a being scarcely endued with human qualities at all, or, by the opposite extreme, he has been encouraged to regard himself as in every respect the equal of his master. To give a negro the rights of civilization, and to entitle him to enjoy its privileges before training him to use them aright, is only like treating a child as though he were a full-grown man, and the result has been to make him presume upon his alleged equality to take up arms against his superiors.

Other things that have been very fatal to the establishment of a proper relationship are the introduction of alcoholic liquors, the spread of contagious diseases, and the want of integrity on the part of those commissioned by the government to open traffic with the natives, and who have only too often consulted their own selfish interests without the least regard to the welfare of those with whom they were sent to deal. On this latter point, however, as far as South Africa is concerned, there is not much to be said; the veracity of the reports made by the commissioners can be easily put to the test, and the slightest abuse of power is quickly visited by chastisement. In the previous chapter I have attempted to show that the authorities are now in a fair way of understanding the best mode of dealing with the natives. With respect to the sale of spirits, we find, incredible as we might have imagined it, that it has been prohibited by several native princes, and that some of the colonial governments have, if not forbidden, at least limited the traffic with the independent tribes.

With so warlike a people as the Zulus, a settlement of the question of their relations with the colonists could not possibly be arrived at without an appeal to arms; and it has to be remembered that it was a question as important to South Africa as "the Eastern Question" to many of the European powers. My long residence amongst many of the tribes, and especially my peculiar sphere of work, gave me repeated opportunities of seeing them in different aspects, and of considering their relations not only with each other, but with the English and



Dutch colonists, and it was mainly on this account that I ventured to publish my pamphlet and other articles.

I am quite aware that this is hardly the place to enter into any full details concerning the Zulu war, of which the general history is universally known, but I cannot forbear making one or two observations.

The disaster that befell the British force at the commencement of the campaign was, I think, to be attributed first, to the mistake of supposing that the Zulu method of attack would be the same as that of the Kaffirs; secondly, to the circumstance that the numbers of the Zulu warriors had been so much underrated that an insufficient English force was brought into the field against them; not that Sir Bartle Frere was in any way responsible for this, as he had already asked for reinforcements; and thirdly, that there had not been diligence enough exercised in reconnoitring the country. But if the defeat brought its indignity, it was soon obliterated by the victory that ensued, when general, officers, and men, regained their laurels in contending with the most martial of African people upon the most unfavourable of soils. It was the victory of Ulundi, not any achievements of Sir Garnet Wolseley, that was the crowning-point of the campaign, and I cannot but consider that it was premature on the part of the English Government to supersede Sir Bartle Frere, and to recall Lord Chelmsford, before the war was actually at an end. The consequence has been that the treaty made with the Zulus has not been of a character to ensure a permanent peace with the native element in South Africa.

The truth of my convictions seems to me to be borne out by the recent rising of the Basutos against the Cape Government with respect to disarmament. Had peace been concluded with the Zulus in strict accordance with the general feeling that rules in the colonies, the Basutos would never have ventured upon rebellion; but the leniency of the policy pursued by the Government towards the Zulu chiefs was regarded by the other native tribes not in any way as a generous forbearance, but as an indication of weakness.

The object of disarmament, which undoubtedly in some instances has answered very well, is twofold; its first design is to bring about peace in South Africa; its second to secure a permanent satisfactory solution of the entire native question. By purchasing fire-arms of the people and refusing to sell them any, it is thought that tribes warlike by hereditary character, and tribes that have been rendered warlike by the acquisition of guns, may be converted into peaceful husbandmen and cattle-breeders; the process should be gradual, but the main object being once attained, it might then be safe for the Government to issue gun-licences to any individuals who should require them for hunting purposes.

On my way back to Europe I happened to fall in with Lord Chelmsford and his staff; at my first interview with him he thanked me for the candour with which I had expressed my opinions during the war. He was accompanied by Sir Evelyn Wood, whose personal bravery has won for him a high renown in the British army. This distinguished officer was not a little surprised when I showed him

some telegrams demonstrating that I had been in direct communication with Natal all throughout the campaign; one of these contained the announcement of his own victory over the Zulus at Kambula.

I can safely say that since my return to Europe my regard for South Africa has in no degree diminished, in spite of the calumnies published in one of the South African newspapers by Westbeeck and Anderson, although they, as well as the newspaper itself, applauded all that I said while I was out there. It was gratifying to find that the most influential of the papers had all reviewed my proceedings with strict impartiality. I shall always take a deep interest in the progress of the colony, and cannot do otherwise than entertain a pleasant recollection of the kindness I received from both English and Dutch colonists.

Before the war was over I had earned the means I required for continuing my journey, and accordingly I proceeded towards Port Elizabeth. On reaching Grahamstown I took up my quarters in a house in Bathurst Street, where there was a yard large enough to allow my horse and most of my live-stock to run about. My brief visit was rendered very enjoyable by the courtesy of many of the principal residents. I obtained some interesting natural curiosities, including a live lynx from Dean Williams, and some trilobites from Mr. Glanville, the curator of the museum. I also made several additions to my collection of minerals, and procured a number of exotics from the Botanical Gardens. Of the live birds that I secured, three-fourths died on the day that I went on to Port Elizabeth;

an icy rain began to fall, and as we had some miles to travel by road to the nearest<sup>1</sup> station many of my animals, in spite of my care, succumbed to the inclement weather.

I arrived at Port Elizabeth in the evening of the same day that I left Grahamstown. It was a great pleasure to me to see the sea again, and throughout



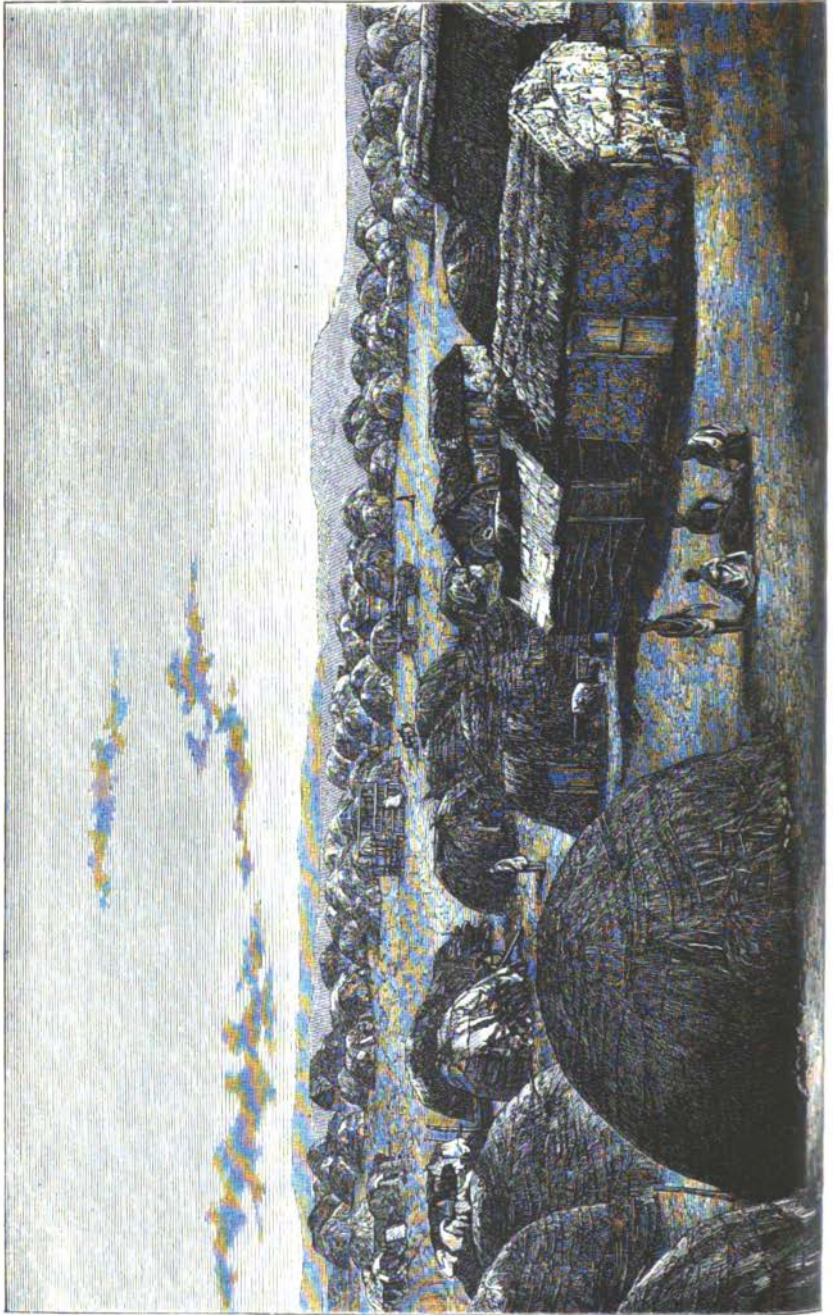
MAIN STREET IN PORT ELIZABETH.

the six weeks that I stayed there I rarely allowed a day to pass without riding out to Cape Recif, or to the mouth of the Zwartkop river or even farther, to make collections upon the shore. I gave several lectures in the town, for one of which I received 60*l.* from the Chamber of Commerce. Much kindness

<sup>1</sup> The railway is now open as far as Grahamstown.







was shown me by the editors of the *Eastern Telegraph* and the *Eastern Herald*, and several residents took a warm interest in my scientific pursuits. Mr. Holland pointed out to me, at several places on the coast, piles of bones and shells, the remains of the meals of the ancient inhabitants; but as my attention was only drawn to them shortly before my departure, I had not time to ascertain whether they had been accumulated by the Bushmen; if not, I should be inclined to suppose they must be the relics of some extinct tribe.

The twenty-one packages that I had sent on to Port Elizabeth a year ago were all in good condition. Those that I had now brought with me raised the number to forty-seven; and two more, subsequently added at Cape Town, made a total of forty-nine to be conveyed to Europe.

My intention was to take all my collection from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town by the Union Steamship Company's "Arab," and after staying at Cape Town for a fortnight to proceed homewards in the "German." Accordingly, after seeing all my baggage carefully stowed on board the little cutter that acted as tender to the "Arab"—that lay at anchor about half a mile out—I went back into the town to pay some farewell visits. My consternation may in a measure be imagined when returning a few hours afterwards, I found all my cases piled up promiscuously on the beach. The rope by which the tender was being towed through the surf had broken, and the vessel had been washed back to the shore, but not until she had begun to fill with water.

The great wonder was that the craft had not been dashed against the wooden landing-stage; I

could not be too thankful that the collision had been averted; it would have brought all my labours of the last four years to a deplorable end. I had proposed bringing my good horse Mosco with me, and was much disappointed that circumstances prevented me from including him with my general baggage.

As the "Arab" was bound to leave that day, and it was too late for me to get my property conveyed on board, I consented to go without it, leaving it in charge of Herr von Mosenthal, the newly-appointed Austrian Consul, who most kindly undertook to have it forwarded to Cape Town.

The same cordial reception awaited me at Cape Town as I had found at Port Elizabeth, and I delivered several lectures, one of them before the Philosophical Society, which, a year before, had elected me one of their corresponding members. It was here that I had the honour of an introduction to Sir Bartle Frere and several of the members of his staff; I also made the acquaintance of many of the most distinguished members of both houses of the Cape Parliament, and of the leading scientific men and newspaper editors of the place. All alike entered warmly into my plans for the exploration of Central South Africa, and for the opening up of the great continent from the south. The very day that I left Cape Town Mr. Brown did me the honour of bringing forward a motion (which, at the desire of the Government, was only withdrawn on account of my departure) that my services should be secured for making an investigation of the district between the Vaal and the Zambesi.

I passed most of my time on the sea-shore, still adding to my collection of fishes and sponges. Algoa

Bay supplied me with numbers of cephalopods, mollusks, sea-snails, aphrodites, and algæ; the surrounding neighbourhood with a considerable variety of plants and fossils.

Before finally quitting Cape Town I received a gift of 40*l.*, which was very acceptable, as I had again been compelled to spend part of the money that I had reserved for my passage.

It was on the 5th of August, 1879, that I embarked on board the "German." After an absence of seven years, I had been drawn homewards by an irresistible desire to see my kindred and friends. Green Point and the summit of Table Mountain faded from my view, and I was again upon the bosom of the ocean that on my outward voyage had so nearly cost me my life, but which now lay calm and placid till I set my foot safely once more on the soil of Europe.

I would not omit to express my obligation to the Directors of the Union Steamship Company, who franked my baggage all the way from Cape Town to Southampton, nor would I fail to acknowledge the kindness of the Hon. Mr. Littleton, the son of Lord Hatherton, who placed 100*l.* at my disposal, which materially assisted me in forwarding my collection to Vienna.

My ethnological specimens collected from about thirty<sup>2</sup> tribes of South Africa, and those of my natu-

<sup>2</sup> These tribes include Bushmen, Hottentots, Fingos, Gaikas, Galekas, Pundos, the southern Zulus, the northern Zulus (Matabele), Basutos, the various Bechuana tribes (Batlapins, Barolonges, Banquaketse, Makhosi, Manupi, Baharutse, Bakhatlas, Bakuenas, Bamangwatos), the northern and southern Makalakas, Mashonas, Manansas, Matongas, Masupias, Marutse-Mabundas, and Manköë.

ral history collections amounted to more than 30,000; of these a selection of nearly 12,500<sup>3</sup> was made, and by the permission of the Board of Trade was exhibited in the Pavillon des Amateurs in Vienna. The exhibition was open from May to October, 1880.

Of the live animals that I brought with me, I gave the caracal, the two brown eagles, and a secretary-bird to the London Zoological Society, and the rest I took to Austria. I have already mentioned that the Crown Prince Rudolph did me the honour to accept the two royal cranes. My baboon, which was remarkably tame, and a grey South African crane I sent to the town council of Prague for the public park, and I presented the dark-brown vulture, and one of the long-armed Zanzibar monkeys to the Physiocratical Society of that city.

I stayed several weeks in London, and contributed a paper to the Royal Geographical Society. Many kindnesses were shown me by various English families, and I very gratefully acknowledge the assistance I received in the transmission of my large collection to my home.

<sup>3</sup> Besides about 40 skulls, 134 pairs of antlers, and 70 anatomical or pathological curiosities, the exhibition contained 400 bird-skins, a fine group of 57 ostrich feathers, nearly 300 reptiles, 2056 insects (out of 18,000 collected and purchased), 782 mollusks, 933 of the lower orders of marine animals, 3328 dried plants, 1138 fossils, and 720 minerals. The number of small animals would have been larger, but many were spoilt by the bad quality of the spirits of wine. The insects for the most part were pinned out and arranged by Dr. Nickerle, of Prague. Except sixty-four, which were given me, I collected the 3328 plants myself; I also found the 1138 fossils, except about sixty, which were given to me by Dr. Reed in Colesberg, Mr. Murray in Kuilfontein, Mr. Kidger in Cradock, and Mr. Cook in Port Elizabeth. There were 365 sponges from Table and Algoa Bays.



If my life and health be preserved, I have it in my heart to return as soon as may be to the scene of my researches. In the first place, I am anxious to make a more accurate survey of the places that I have already visited; but more than all, I am longing to extend to Central Africa those investigations for which "seven years in South Africa" have given me so much experience.





# INDEX.

---

- ACACIAS**, i. 78.  
 Accidents, i. 3, 116, 129, 208; ii. 274.  
 Albert Country, ii. 194, 211.  
 Algoa Bay, i. 11.  
 Algæ, ii. 185, 195.  
 Aloes, i. 410.  
 Alumba tribe, ii. 173.  
 Amulets, i. 332; ii. 327.  
 Anthills, i. 127, 313.  
 Assegai-traps, i. 35; ii. 51.  
 Assegais, ii. 338.
- BABOONS**, i. 74, 82, 85, 244; ii. 199.  
 Baharutse, ii. 22.  
 Bakuenas, i. 310, 316, 321; ii. 103.  
*Balearia regulorum*, i. 148.  
 Bamangwato district, i. 364.  
 Bamangwato, i. 370; their history, i. 376, *seqq.*  
 Banquaketse district, i. 304.  
 Baobab, ii. 53, 97.  
 Barolongs, i. 246, 269, 282, 294.  
 Barotse Valley, ii. 145.  
 Barwas, i. 345.  
 Basutos, i. 83, 214; ii. 143.  
 Batlapins, i. 119, 125; ii. 11.  
 Batlokas, i. 411.  
 Batokas, ii. 199.  
 Beads, ii. 351.  
 Bechuanas, i. 102, 315, 327, 392; ii. 15.  
 Bee-hunt, i. 22.  
 Beetles, i. 161, 278; ii. 261, 360.  
 Beltong, i. 188.  
 Birds, varieties of, i. 105, 190; ii. 98.  
 Blessbocks, i. 146, 156; ii. 10.
- Blignaut's Pont, ii. 4.  
 Bloemhof, i. 143.  
 Bluewilde beest, i. 107.  
 Boers, i. 33, 43, 59; ii. 48.  
 Bogueras, i. 398; ii. 420.  
 Buffaloes, ii. 89, 246, 361, 364, 367.  
 Buisport, i. 413; ii. 25.  
 Bultfontein, i. 64; ii. 3, 431.  
 Bushbocks, i. 27.  
 Bushmen, ii. 435.  
 Bustards, i. 48, 267.
- CANOES**, ii. 119, 125.  
 Cape Town, i. 4, 7, 9; ii. 465.  
 Celestial phenomenon, ii. 363.  
 Cetewayo, i. 9; ii. 458.  
 Chelmsford (Lord), ii. 461, 462.  
 Chenalopex, i. 137, 275.  
 Chobe River, ii. 108, 121, 358.  
 Christiana, i. 141, 202; ii. 5, 428.  
 Chuai Jungmann, i. 276.  
 Chukuru, i. 417.  
 Chwene-Chwene, i. 411; ii. 423.  
 Cobras, i. 113, 234; ii. 440.  
 Coffeefontein, i. 49.  
 Colesberg, i. 38; ii. 453.  
 Conflagration, i. 223; ii. 155.  
 Cradock, i. 30; ii. 455.  
 Crane (S. African grey), i. 42, 183; ii. 9; (royal or crowned) i. 148; ii. 10.  
 Crocodiles, i. 408; ii. 32, 234.  
 Cucumber, i. 364.
- DAMARA Emigrants**, i. 25, 33.  
 Dances, reed, i. 295; kishi, ii. 168; prophetic, ii. 170, 229; lion, ii.

- 254; boat, ii. 260; nuptial, ii. 262; Matabele war-dance, ii. 405.  
 Darters, i. 180; ii. 125, 245.  
 Deykah River, ii. 99.  
 Diamond fields, i. 50, 58, 65, 426; ii. 430.  
 Dolos, i. 330, 350.  
 Dornveldt, i. 409.  
 Doves, i. 47.  
 Drought, i. 135, 222; ii. 44, 64, 97.  
 Drums, ii. 123, 171.  
 Dutch hunters, i. 389; ii. 96.  
 Dutoitspan, i. 51, 63, 209, 420.  
 Duykerbocks, i. 99.  
 Dwars Mountains, i. 412; ii. 25.
- EARTH-PIGS**, ii. 439.  
 Elands, ii. 49.  
 Elephants, i. 27; ii. 90, 92, 97, 107, 212.  
 Elephant-hunt, ii. 241.  
 Elephant-hunters, ii. 20, 82, 85, 123.  
 Euphorbias, i. 17.  
 Executioner (Mashoku), ii. 148, 226, 320.
- FAN-PALMS**, ii. 50.  
 Fauresmith, i. 43.  
 Fig-marigolds, i. 16.  
 Fish, i. 317, 405; ii. 30, 139.  
 Fishing, ii. 224, 288.  
 Fish River, i. 37; ii. 456.  
 Fossils, i. 19; ii. 454.  
 Francis Joseph Valley, i. 365; ii. 416.  
 Francolin (S. African), i. 402.  
 Frere (Sir Bartle), i. 6, 9; ii. 457, 465.  
 Funnel chasms, i. 169.
- GASHUMA** Flat, ii. 105, 178, 183, 216, 373.  
 Gassibone, i. 132.  
 Giraffes, i. 343, 356.  
 Gnus, i. 107, 157, 188, 200, 271.  
 Gold-diggings, ii. 399.  
 Gong Gong, i. 108.  
 Gourd-shells, ii. 117, 335.  
 Grahamstown, i. 30; ii. 463.  
 Graves, ii. 6, 118, 218, 237, 315.  
 Griqualand West, ii. 445.  
 Griquas, i. 96.
- Grottoes, i. 173; ii. 45.  
 Guinea-fowl, i. 159; ii. 30.
- HALLWATER** Farm, i. 192; ii. 5, 428.  
 Hartebeest, i. 227; ii. 63.  
 Harts River, i. 110; ii. 6, 428.  
 Heaths, i. 18.  
 Hebron, i. 62, 94, 125, 205.  
 Henry's Pan, ii. 96.  
 Hippopotamus, ii. 128, 219.  
 Honey, i. 363; ii. 107.  
 Hoogeveldt, i. 421.  
 Horse whims, i. 68.  
 Huts, Koranna, i. 97, 102; Gassibone's, i. 134; Barolong, i. 294; Bakuena, i. 316; Masarwa, i. 347; Bamangwato, i. 391; Masupia, ii. 121; Marutse, ii. 163.  
 Hyæna-dogs, i. 302.  
 Hyænas, i. 145, 255; ii. 29, 77.
- IGUANAS**, i. 139.  
 Illness, i. 3, 357, 410; ii. 190, 270, 278 *seqq.*, 285, 358.  
 Impalera, ii. 109, 121, 124, 358.  
 Ivory-traders, ii. 43, 84, 99, 177, 376.
- JACKALS**, ii. 67, 73, 382.  
 Jacobedal, i. 50; ii. 451.  
 Joubert's Lake, ii. 425.
- KAPELLA**, ii. 138, 148, 238, 365, 373.  
 Karri-Karri Saltpan, ii. 55.  
 Kashteja River, ii. 133, 257.  
 Khamane, i. 385.  
 Khame, king of Bamangwatos, i. 335, 369, 377; ii. 35; his prohibition of sale of brandy, ii. 42, 374, 376, 418; farewell visit from, ii. 421.  
 Khame's Saltpan, i. 403; ii. 44, 421.  
 Khari, i. 377.  
 Khataisive, king of Banquaketse, i. 291, 305.  
 Kimberley, i. 60, 67,  
 King-finch (*Vidua Capensis*) i. 178.  
 Kiri, i. 109; ii. 341.  
 Klamaklenyana springs, ii. 80.  
 Klerksdorp, i. 162.  
 Klipdrift, i. 101.

- Kobuque Pass, i. 311.  
 Konana, i. 261.  
 Koodoo antelopes, ii. 68.  
 Kopjes, i. 64.  
 Korannas, i. 84, 96; ii. 5.  
 Kotlas, i. 318, 374, 394.
- LANYON (Major) ii. 446.**  
 Leopard, ii. 413.  
 Leshumo Valley, ii. 178, 216, 359.  
 Letshwe antelopes, ii. 128, 244.  
 Libanani, ii. 380.  
 Libeko, ii. 140.  
 Likatlong, i. 118.  
 Limpopo River, i. 408; ii. 31, 421.  
 Linokana, i. 416; ii. 22, 424.  
 Linyakas, 330, 395.  
 Lions, i. 192, 262; ii. 27, 65, 69, 76, 90, 100, 179, 200, 249, 367, 407, 423, 433.  
 Litta or Lytta, i. 285; ii. 261.  
 Livingstone (Dr.), i. 314; ii. 103, 135.  
 Lizards, i. 392.  
 Lo Bengula, ii. 410.  
 Locusts, i. 75, 134, 199, 252.  
 London Geographical Society, ii. 468.  
*Lycæon pictus*, i. 301.  
 Lydenburg, i. 423.  
 Lynx, i. 309.
- MADENASSANAS, ii. 82.**  
 Mahura's Town (Taung) i. 120.  
 Makalakas, ii. 31, 41, 44; Menon's, ii. 145, 383, 389.  
 Makalahari, i. 258, 364; ii. 11.  
 Makalolos, i. 379; ii. 143.  
 Makumba, ii. 107, 123.  
 Malau's Heights, i. 286.  
 Malays, i. 7.  
 Malmani River, ii. 19.  
 Mambari, ii. 150, 293.  
 Mananassa, ii. 106, 204.  
 Mankoë, ii. 237.  
 Mapani-tree, ii. 48.  
 Maquassie River, i. 150; hills, i. 192.  
 Maque plain, ii. 47.  
 Maritsana River, ii. 11.  
 Markets, i. 72; ii. 22.  
 Marutse-Mabundas, history, ii. 143-146; culture, ii. 158; cleanliness, ii. 233; character, ii. 294; religion, ii. 300; manners and customs, ii. 302 *seqq.*; industry and handicraft, 332, *seqq.*  
 Masarwas, i. 345.  
 Mashukulumbe, ii. 258.  
 Masupa, i. 304.  
 Masupias, ii. 112.  
 Matabele Zulus, i. 380; ii. 59, 115, 205, 400.  
 Matebe River, ii. 24.  
 Mathiutse River, ii. 396.  
 Matonga, i. 270.  
 Matsheng, i. 380; ii. 420.  
 Maytengue River, ii. 383.  
 Medical practice, i. 13, 45, 53, 92, 210, 424; ii. 425, 431.  
 Menagerie, ii. 431, 434.  
*Meliera Canorus*, i. 239.  
 Menon, ii. 385.  
 Mimosas, i. 277, 288, 404.  
 Missionaries: Brown, i. 238; Webb, i. 280, ii. 13; Price, i. 315; Williams, i. 315; Hephrun, i. 373; Mackenzie, i. 373, ii. 41, 417, 423, 424; Jensen, i. 417, ii. 22, 424.  
 Modder River, i. 46; ii. 451.  
 Moffat's Salt Lake, ii. 11.  
 Moilo, i. 417; ii. 424.  
 Molapo River, i. 278; ii. 18.  
 Molema, i. 279; ii. 13.  
 Molema's Town, i. 279; ii. 12.  
 Moloi, i. 334.  
 Molopolole, i. 310, 313.  
 Monkeys, i. 138; ii. 32.  
 Monomotapa, i. 196.  
 Montsua, i. 280, 291; ii. 12, 17.  
 Mooi River, i. 165.  
 Moquai, Sepopo's daughter, ii. 144, 159, 219, 261, 291.  
 Morula-trees, ii. 391.  
 Moselikatze, i. 380; ii. 205, 392, 401.  
 Moshaneng, i. 294.  
 Moshungulu-tree, ii. 111, 270.  
 Mosquitoes, ii. 286, 359.  
 Mountain groups, i. 293.  
 Mulekow, ii. 114, 207, 298.  
 Musemanyana, i. 251.  
 Mutshila Aumsinga rapids, ii. 273.  
 Myrimbas, ii. 137.
- NATA River, ii. 64, 382.**  
 Native question, views on, ii. 440.  
 Nautilus, i. 15.  
 Nectariniæ (sun-birds), i. 29.



- New Year's Day, i. 354.  
 Night watch, ii. 26, 65, 86.  
 Notuany River, i. 408; ii. 24, 39, 431.
- OATES, Frank, ii. 396.  
 Orange Free State, i. 59.  
 Orange River, i. 39.  
 Orbeki gazelles, ii. 105, 183.  
 Ostriches, ii. 49, 79, 81, 375, 453.  
 Otters, i. 177; ii. 120.
- PALLAH Antelopes, i. 409; ii. 200.  
 Panda ma Tenka, ii. 99, 180, 374.  
 Parrots, i. 286.  
 Philippolis, i. 39; ii. 452.  
 Plat Berg, i. 205; ii. 3.  
 Pniel, i. 94.  
 Port Elizabeth, i. 12; ii. 464.  
 Potchefstroom, i. 164, 422.  
 Puff-adder (*Vipera arietans*) i. 406; ii. 40, 94.  
 Puku antelopes, ii. 128.
- QUAGGA Flats, i. 251, 254; ii. 8, 427.  
 Quaggas, ii. 71.
- RACES of South Africa, i. 213.  
 Rain doctors, i. 330; their ceremonies, i. 337.  
 Rapids, ii. 272.  
 Reed-rats, i. 187.  
 Rhamakoban River, ii. 398.  
 Rhyzoena, i. 76, 143; ii. 67.  
 Rietbocks, i. 177.  
 Riet River, i. 46; hotel on, i. 49; ii. 452.  
 Rock-rabbits, i. 305.  
 Rohlf's Pass, i. 412.  
 Ruins, ii. 397, 406.
- SALT, i. 198.  
 Salt pans, i. 76, 197, 276, 403; ii. 53, 72.  
 Sandy pool plateau, ii. 78.  
 Schneemann's Pan, ii. 106, 372.  
 Schweinfurth's Pass, i. 412; ii. 25.  
*Scopus umbretta*, i. 112.
- Sechele, king of Bakuenas; history, i. 314; visit to, i. 319; policy, i. 382, ii. 30; war with Bakhatlas, ii. 422.  
 Sekeletu, ii. 143.  
 Sekhomo, late king of Bamangwatos, i. 335, 368, 376, 389; ii. 42.  
 Sepopo, king of Marutse-Mabundas; change of residence, ii. 134; appearance, ii. 137; supper with, ii. 141; dominions, ii. 147; pilfering propensities, ii. 149; interviews with, ii. 150, 174; mode of chastisement, ii. 157, 245; revenue, ii. 160; residence, ii. 165; laboratory, ii. 167; band, ii. 137, 168; wives, ii. 221, 231, 268; cruelty, ii. 225, 329; officials, ii. 238; council, ii. 240; magic, ii. 241; unpopularity, ii. 284, 370; meals, ii. 287; illness, ii. 291; medicine-hut, ii. 328.  
 Sesheke, ii. 133, 140, 154, 282.  
 Sesuto language, ii. 147, 216.  
 Shaneng River, ii. 56.  
 Shasha Rivers, ii. 397.  
 Sheat-fish, ii. 30, 231.  
 Shoshon River, i. 364, 367.  
 Shoshong, i. 367; ii. 42.  
 Sirorume River, i. 405.  
 Skerms, ii. 190.  
 Skins, i. 152; ii. 342.  
 Snakes, i. 20, 79, 113, 234, 356, 406; ii. 94, 440.  
 Soa Saltpan, ii. 57.  
 Springbockfontein, i. 130.  
 Springbocks, i. 31, 254; ii. 11.  
 Spitzkopf, i. 126.  
 Steinbocks, i. 99; ii. 67.  
 Storks, ii. 70.  
 Storm, i. 272; ii. 367.  
 Sugar-cane, i. 127.  
 Swallows, i. 164.
- TABLE Mountain, i. 2.  
 Tamafopa Springs, ii. 86.  
 Tamasanka, ii. 380.  
 Tamasetze, ii. 93, 376.  
 Tati River, ii. 399.  
 Taung, i. 120, 235.  
 Tortoises, i. 105.  
 Transvaal, ii. 419, 426.  
 Tsetse fly, ii. 105, 183, 374.  
 Tsitane Saltpan, ii. 53.

USNEA, i. 25.

Vaal River, i. 61, 94, 219.

Vaalstone, i. 62, 205.

Vegetation on Chobe River, ii. 111.

Victoria Falls, ii. 191, *seqq.*

Vlakvarks, ii. 375.

WANA Wena, ii. 319.

Warren (Colonel), ii. 446.

Waterbock, ii. 31.

Weaver-birds, i. 78, 122, 284.

Weltufrede Farm, ii. 20.

Wild dog, i. 301.

Wild goose, i. 137, 275.

Wood (Sir Evelyn), ii. 462.

YOCHOMS, i. 258.

Yornah Pool, ii. 86, 379.

ZAMBESI River, ii. 99, 108, 121,  
125, 266.

Zebras, ii. 71, 74, 88.

Zeerust, i. 420; ii. 22.

Zizka saddle, ii. 19.

Zooga River, ii. 58.

Zoological Society of London, ii.  
376.

Zulus (Matabele), i. 380; ii. 59, 205.

Zulu War, ii. 457.

Zuur Mountains, i. 24.

Zwartkop River, i. 14; ii. 464.

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