

rain was falling. Everything was quiet except for the boom of the guns firing every now and then at the retreating mass, and the occasional groan of wounded men. "Good God!" I thought, "they are moving away." Such was indeed the case, and our side was retiring towards the camp. I struggled to my feet, and tried to wipe the congealing blood out of my eyes; everything was dancing before them, but at last I could see our men disappearing over the hill. I endeavoured to run, but found walking even beyond my strength. I fell to the ground with a thud that opened my wounds afresh. My knee, too, was stiff and painful. After resting a few moments, sucking the wet grass, which revived me a little, I crawled along on my hands and knees in great agony. Going through some rather long grass I heard the thud of horses' hoofs, and crouched down in it. Presently some Basutos dashed past, not a hundred yards from where I lay. They

were following our men who were in retreat. The sound of heavy firing told me of the renewal of the fighting. Crawling ahead as fast as I could, I saw a fierce struggle going on below. Once more the enemy were beaten off; I could see them retire in the opposite direction. Our side waited in a square, anticipating another attack, and in order to pick up the dead and wounded. This gave me a chance. I struggled on as fast as my lacerated knee would allow me, until I was forced to give in, and could not get a yard further. Half kneeling, half fainting, I waved a handkerchief. Luckily for me, it was seen. Three officers of the Cape Mounted Rifles — Capt. Cecil D'Arcy was one—came out and helped me in.

There was no room in the ambulance wagon, it was crowded with wounded; even the open wood wagons were laden with dead and wounded. I was laid on to one of these, shaking like a leaf. An infantry man took

off his coat and put it over me, remarking consolingly that I looked like "pegging out"! If his words carried no comfort his coat did!

Yet once more the Basutos charged, and lying in the wagon I watched the progress of the fight, not caring a "doit" what happened. They were driven off again. It was getting dark, and we had seven miles to go over a rough country. There was a dead Kaffir driver lying next to me, smelling so horribly that my faintness increased. Dr M'Lean then came up. He was one of the finest fellows I ever had the pleasure of meeting; he was badly wounded on the head and body himself, but he had bandaged himself, and had attended to the wounded through the thickest of the fight. He showed great pluck and endurance that day, and deservedly got the Victoria Cross for it. He examined my wounds, and having dressed them, remarked that the wagon I was in was

no place for a badly wounded man. On going to the ambulance wagon he found a fellow had just died, and he put me in his place, then made a start for the camp. The jolting was most excruciating, and it was pitiable to hear the groans and curses of the wounded. We pushed right on to Mafeteng, where the hospital was, into which we were put.

I lay on my face for nearly a week, while the surgeon probed for splinters of bone. Capt. Bowker, of the Native Levies, took rather a fancy to me, and I owed many comforts to his kindness during my stay here. On the journey in the ambulance wagon I recognised a friend, named Blaine, of the Cape Mounted Rifles. He, poor fellow, was assagaied through the body, and died in the bed next mine the day following. The whole thing seemed like a dream to me; I was dazed, and unable to realise the course of events.

We lost over twenty men that day, and

many were wounded. My escape was considered miraculous, and I was not a little amused at the newspaper accounts of it.

Colonel Carrington received a wound from a spent bullet while returning to camp, but it was slight.

I made inquiries about Col. Sinclair, and heard he was sound and well. Was it some special providence that had caused me to be wounded just at that moment, and saved me from—well, murder? I like to think it was.

I lay for weeks in the hospital in a very uncomfortable bed, cursing my luck, for peace had been proclaimed. Col. Sinclair and his Yeomanry had returned to the Colony; most of the burghers had deserted, and the rest disbanded. As soon as I was able to hobble about I bought another horse and fed him up well, preparatory to my long ride.

I reached Cradock in four days, my horse knocking up at the end of the journey.

I found the town deserted ; everyone had gone to the race meeting, which was at that time one of the best held in the Colony. The race-course being only three miles away, I borrowed a horse and rode out to it. In the ring in front of the grand stand I was greeted by everyone (for they had all heard of my escape) with congratulations. As I did not see Mabel in the stand, my first question naturally concerned her. I was told they had married a few days before, and were away on their honeymoon. What I felt is better imagined than described, so I will not bore the reader with any more of my love troubles. Suffice it to say, I felt as all youngsters do, that life was no longer worth living.*

* I met a man afterwards who had served with me in this war, who informed me that he had received fifty shillings in prize-money from the Colonial Government. I had not applied for any, not being aware of any large captures of cattle, and had merely been compensated for

Before ending this chapter, it may be well to say something as to the cause of this war. It arose out of the enforcement of the Native Disarmament Act, an absurd Act passed after the Kreli War, 1877-79, for the purpose of depriving the natives of their firearms. The ridiculous part of it was that the natives did far more damage with their assagais than their guns, most of them not being able to shoot at all. One officer, who had been through the Kreli War, told me how he had met suddenly one of the enemy in the bush. The native, who was about twenty yards away from him, raised his piece, fired, and

the loss of my horse. As I was only slightly higher in rank than this man, and did not think there would be much difference in our awards, I offered to sell him my chance for £3, to save myself the trouble of applying. He accepted the offer, applied, and obtained £11! It turned out that there was "blood money" due to me, a Colonial custom of which I was ignorant.

missed. My informant then promptly shot him, and, on examining the Kaffir's rifle, found that he had the sight fixed at 700 yards. The Basutos refused to comply with the Act, and hence the war.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVING received an invitation to stay with some friends in Grahamstown, which, by the way, is my birthplace, I accepted it. Giving my horse a few days' rest, I rode down and spent a quiet month. Whilst there I was unfortunate enough to lose my horse through the terrible Cape horse-sickness. It is known by no other name than "horse-sickness," and has hitherto defied all veterinary skill to find a cure for it. It generally attacks a horse in the summer, and they rarely survive it. As to the symptoms, the belly tucks up, the eyes become large and glassy, the animal froths at the mouth and nose, and dies apparently in great agony in

the course of a few hours. It is strange how they sometimes turn instinctively to man when this disease attacks them. My friend had an unbroken horse which was particularly wild, and would let no one approach him. One day we were leaning on the gate of the field where this horse was running, when suddenly we saw him walk slowly towards us. He came right up and laid his head against my shoulder, breathing heavily ; his nose and mouth were covered with sticky froth, and he was trembling all over. We kept quiet, and I felt his head get gradually heavier and heavier, until I could scarcely support it, then at last he suddenly fell, made a slight struggle, and died. To us, who were passionately fond of horses, it was a sad sight.

Another curious sickness which attacks cattle is the *dronk siekta*. It is caused by eating a kind of grass called *dronk* grass. Eating it induces a comatose state, from which

the animals do not recover unless quickly attended to. The only effectual antidote known is some form of alcohol. A transport rider told me that he had once emptied three cases of gin into a "span" of his oxen which were thus affected, with good results.

Seeing no prospects of getting employment, I resolved to try my luck at the gold-fields, which were then attracting considerable attention, and reports of good finds were in constant circulation.



A BOER TREKING.

CHAPTER X.

THE coaster left Port Elizabeth at four o'clock P.M., and arrived at Durban at the same hour on the third day. Staying there a day or two at the Royal Hotel, I went on to Pietermaritzburg, and then by mail cart to Newcastle. I left my luggage to come on by ox wagon, and never saw it again.

Then, to save money, I arranged with a transport rider to pay five pounds for a lift in his wagon as far as Leydenburg, a distance of 240 miles. On the second day we crossed the Umzinyati on Buffalo River, which takes the name of Tugela, on reaching the border of Zululand. *Trekking* up the steep hill, we saw where the Boers fired on the ambulance

wagons as they descended with wounded men, on their way to the hospital at Newcastle. Reaching the top, we saw Langs Nek and Majuba Mountain, the scene of the disaster which put an end to the Boer War. Near here we passed a stone monument, where thirty-three officers and men fell in a few minutes under the unerring aim of the Boers. Crossing the Ingogo River we outspanned, and I strolled up to a store near the bank to buy some provisions. I found the proprietor an intelligent man, who had remained unmolested in his shop through the entire war, and witnessed not a little of the fighting from his door.

I had a long conversation with him, and found his ideas agreed with mine in reference to this war. The proper way to fight the Boers is either in their own way, or by attacking them at night ; keeping persistently after them by forced marches if necessary. The English soldier is a bad shot under the

easiest of circumstances, and when marched into the open to face bullets that are directed with unerring aim, and drop his comrades one after the other, giving him no chance to retaliate, as no enemy is visible, only here a hat or there a puff of smoke behind a rock, what chance has he? He can but run away (which he *did* do), or stand and be killed.

On the other hand, in night attacks Tommy Atkins is as good a shot as any Boer. Only one thing would be needed : a gallant charge with bayonets. The Boers, who are arrant cowards, would certainly retreat on horseback, leaving their wagons, oxen, spare horses, ammunition, and provisions behind them.

In a great many instances their wives and children were with them in their big tent wagons.

The Boers could not retake the camp, and would not even try ; as long as their ammunition held out they would shoot at long ranges

in the daytime, but they would never risk a fight at close quarters or in the dark, having only their unequalled shooting to rely upon. What a chance General Colley missed! If, instead of climbing up Majuba with no sensible object in view, he had marched along Langs Nek to the enemy's camp about the same distance away, I really think the war would have been ended there and then in our favour. I heard afterwards that the Boers knew the English were marching that night, and, fearing an attack, had inspanned their oxen ready for retreat, but this they would have found impossible. A hundred heavy wagons would have great difficulty in getting away across such rough country in the dark.

But, instead of that, what happened? When daylight appeared, the Dutch, to their great surprise, discovered the English on the top of Majuba, waiting, as it were, to be shot at. In a very short time the Boers surrounded them, and creeping up behind the stones

picked off their men with the greatest ease, and the least danger to themselves.

After this defeat the Government disgraced the British army by suing for peace, which was declared, and then the army slunk quietly away, leaving the Boers to insult and sneer at every Englishman they came across.

Travelling on, we steered for the town of Leydenburg, where we arrived after having been twelve days on the road. We saw a good deal of game on the way—springbok, blesbok, and a few hartebeests.

Leydenburg is a pretty little town, consisting of two long streets running parallel with each other. It was the scene of some fighting in the Boer War, the English camp being almost within rifle range of the town, which was *laagered* by the Boers. Firing was constantly kept up without much damage resulting to either side.

One painful and curious incident occurred at this time. As is well known, if a sentry

on active service is found asleep at his post, he is liable to be court-martialled and sentenced to be shot, especially at a time and place where danger is imminent. One night a sentry in the —th Regiment was discovered asleep at his post, which was situated between the two camps. He was court-martialled, and condemned to be shot at sunrise. The day broke ; he was escorted to a spot in the camp, and all the troops were mustered to see the sentence carried out. There was breathless suspense, and, just as the command to fire was about to be given, a stray bullet from the rifle of a Boer whistled through the group of officers and men, and shot the prisoner through the heart !

Every house in this town has its large garden well stocked with peach-trees, bearing a rather hard though juicy yellow fruit. Leydenburg is situated right in the heart of the gold formation, and “colour” can even be found in the dust swept from the streets.

I was surprised to find there a friend of mine, who had just arrived for the purpose of trying his luck at alluvial digging. We agreed to go to the De Kaap Valley and work together, and, like all beginners, were eager to commence, imagining that it was more profitable and easier worked than it is. There were a good many diggers in town, with some of whom we soon became friendly, and we listened eagerly to their wonderful stories of mining — how they found gold every day with the greatest ease — all the usual lies told to greenhorns. We agreed to take one with us as a mate, to share in our fortunes and teach us the science of gold-digging. We started one day on our forty miles' walk, crossing over the "Devil's Knuckles," a hill shaped like a clenched fist, and on the second day passed through the "Devil's Kantoor," a village under canvas, where we bought our tools, some boards, provisions, and took out our licenses. Hiring a

bullock cart, we started down the mountain-side to the valley below, where we could see many tents dotted about. Reaching the foot, we pitched the tent, and I took back the cart.

Our first work was to go prospecting, which is the most difficult part of gold-digging. Our new mate certainly understood his work, but I did not care for his company, and I resolved to dissolve partnership at the first opportunity. Every day for a fortnight we would try fresh places—sometimes in shallow gravel, sometimes in the terrace of a creek, or a dry gully—carefully lift the “wash” of the bed rock, carry it to the nearest water, and pan it off. We nearly always got “colour,” but not in paying quantities. At last, one evening, we struck good “colour” in a little creek, and returned home to pack up, after pegging out our claims. Our home did not take long to get ready with the help of a pile of wood which we cut on the side of the mountain. We worked

like slaves, eager to start at our El Dorado. Our next proceeding was to make a "tail race," that is, a fall from our claims to carry away the earth and fine gravel, otherwise "tailings." This took us three days' hard work, standing up to our knees in water, working with pick and shovel. That finished, we made a "head race," about 200 yards long, from the claims up the side of the creek to a favourable place for the building of a dam. That was another three days' work. The next day saw the dam finished, and then we started to wash off the earth from the gravel, which process is called "stripping." When this is done, a sluice-box is fixed at the lower end of the claim in the "tail race." This box is generally twelve feet long and twelve inches wide, and paved with rough stones, leaving plenty of crevices between which the gold can settle. One man then stands at the head of the box with a twelve-pronged sluice fork with which

he loosens *débris* in front of the box, and causes it to wash away, and forks up stones of a certain size, and throws them over his head on one side of the claim. The larger stones are thrown up by hand, the boulders smashed with a sledge-hammer. This work goes on until the "paddock" is washed down to the bed rock, generally a week's work, then the clearing up commences. The bottom is generally a blue micaceous substance, that cuts like cheese, upon which the gold lies. The top of this is carefully skimmed off with a spade, and placed in a heap near the head of the sluice-box. A few stones are taken out to enable the fork to be worked easily. Less water is now used than before, and the wash is slowly forked in the box. This finished, the stones are lifted out of the box and washed, in case any gold is sticking to them. The contents of the box is then scraped into pans, which, when "panned off," leaves the object and result of the week's work exposed.

Our first "wash-up" amounted to nearly an ounce of gold, worth about £3, 5s. It was disappointing, but we hoped for better luck next time. Another week's work gave us 10 dwt., worth 35s. Talking the matter over that night, we decided to do one more week's work, and then, if no better result issued, to prospect for another place. The next wash-up brought less gold than before, and the claims were given up.

We had become short of provisions, and our new fellow-workman proposed to go into the Devil's Kantoor, sell the gold, and buy the necessary wants. He went the next day, and Dick and I did a little fruitless prospecting. Arriving home that night, we found our mate had not returned, and came to the conclusion that he had drunk too much "squareface" (Hollands), the general drink there. The next day there was still no sign of him, so we went supperless to bed, there being no food left.

Hungry and annoyed, we set out the next day to look for him, but found no trace. Making inquiries, we heard he had disposed of the gold for five pounds immediately on his arrival, and was afterwards seen on the road leading to Leydenburg. He was, we also heard, one of the biggest scoundrels in the gold-fields, and went by the name of "Long Tom." It was no use in following him for so small an amount, but we rather prized it as the first result of our digging experiences. We saw a good many diggers about camp, a number of these were "fossickers,"—that is, men who pot about creeks and places scraping the dirt from under boulders and out of crevices with their pan, and washing it in the nearest water, making a few shillings daily.

We dined in a canvas eating-house, where there were about twenty other diggers eating, drinking, and swearing. It contained a long table with forms on either side, a

large pot at one end of the room slung over the fire. As a man came in a tin plate was taken by the proprietor, who was cook as well; this he piled up with a mixed kind of stew out of this pot by the aid of a huge fork and ladle, clapped it down in front of the customer with a tin pannikin, and demanded half-a-crown. If he wished for tea, it was sixpence extra. Such tea it was too, stewed to a black liquid, and no milk, except condensed, to be had! Some of the men brought a pint of gin in their pocket, and emptied it into a pannikin. The heat was fearful, and the place swarmed with flies; but we were hungry, and, finishing our "dollop," as they called it, as quickly as we could, were glad to get out of the reeking place into the fresh air.

After buying provisions at the stores, the storekeeper, to whom we had confided our affairs, said he knew of a claim for sale which had been paying well, and the owner

wished to go back to his home. We walked about a mile to where the claim was, and had a talk with the owner. It was the last claim at the head of a worked-out creek. Trying the wash, we found fair prospects in the pan. He asked £50, and we eventually bought it for £35 and a suit of clothes. The bottom under the worked-out claims was all soft "blue," and I noticed that in the last paddock he had finished it was a hard yellow rock, and seemed to shelve up, making the wash shallower as it went on. This was a puzzle to my inexperienced eye, and I was rather afraid; but not knowing what to do or where to go, we thought we might as well risk it.

Paying over the money, it left us with only £5 between us, and it was necessary to hire a native to help us at £1 a week and his food.

The next day we moved our camp over and commenced work. At the end of the week

we washed up, and, to our intense disgust, found only five dwt., worth 30s. We paid the boy, bought more provisions, and, as the monthly license had expired, had to take out fresh ones, which left us penniless.

Another week's wash-up resulted in no gold whatever beyond a few "colours." We went to the storekeeper with our tale of woe, and he advised us to try another week at it, and gave us credit for provisions at large prices, and paid our boy

It was Sunday, and leaving Dick asleep I strolled down to the claim to have a quiet smoke, and think. Looking at the hard, cracked bottom a desire seized me to break through this and see if there was any difference in it a few feet underneath. Seizing a pick, I managed to heave up a large three-cornered chunk of flat rock, and, to my surprise, I saw yellow gravel underneath. Rushing back to the tent I quickly roused Dick, and told him of

my discovery on our way to the claim. Regardless of it being Sunday, we dug a lot of this out, and panned it off, and soon a shining rim of gold, more than we had ever found in a week, lay round the edge of the pan.

It was barely daylight the next morning when we set to work, and in three weeks we had taken out over £800 worth of fine gold. We were only sorry it did not last longer, but it was encouraging, and we never worked harder in our lives, not breathing a word about our luck to anyone, for fear of the claim being "jumped," which was no uncommon thing in those days, there being no law whatever other than Lynch law, and disputes often settled by fights.

Digging is exciting work; it amounts to a craze, a fever. There is always the chance of a big nugget or a rich "pocket," such as the one we found. In the summer it is almost certain death to go down

into the low country, yet I have seen men who could not resist it, but go to their fate to some reputed rich ground. Four went down from the Devil's Kantoor while I was there. A fortnight later one of them returned a wreck, physically ruined; the others, he said, were dead.

The claim exhausted, we were again stranded with no work to do; we half contemplated going to a "rush" a few miles off, but waited for better news of it. On a visit to Leydenburg to bank our money, I met a man who had a large concession in Swaziland, and he offered me the post of agent there. I was to receive a small salary, have food supplied, be allowed to work the creek for my own benefit, and receive payment of £1000 on the event of my discovery of a payable reef. Similar terms were offered for Dick. We consented, and started on a seventy-five miles' walk, with two Shangaan natives carrying our

“swag.” There was no road, and we walked in single file along the narrow bridle-track with the mountain peaks to guide us. Passing out of the Transvaal into Swaziland, I saw one of the most beautiful sights in Nature I had ever seen. The border between the two countries is formed by two distinct mountain ranges, which are part of the Great Drackensberg, which extends 1000 miles along the eastern side of South Africa

We arrived at Kamhlabana Peak to cross the border, and here we found a natural bridge stretching from one range to the other. This bridge is a vertical rock formation, crossing a valley of about 2000 feet in depth, is 20 feet wide, and 200 feet in length, with trees and bushes growing on it. On either side we could see the deep, narrow valley winding its way for miles amongst a rugged confusion of mountains. The sides were thickly grown with trees and under-

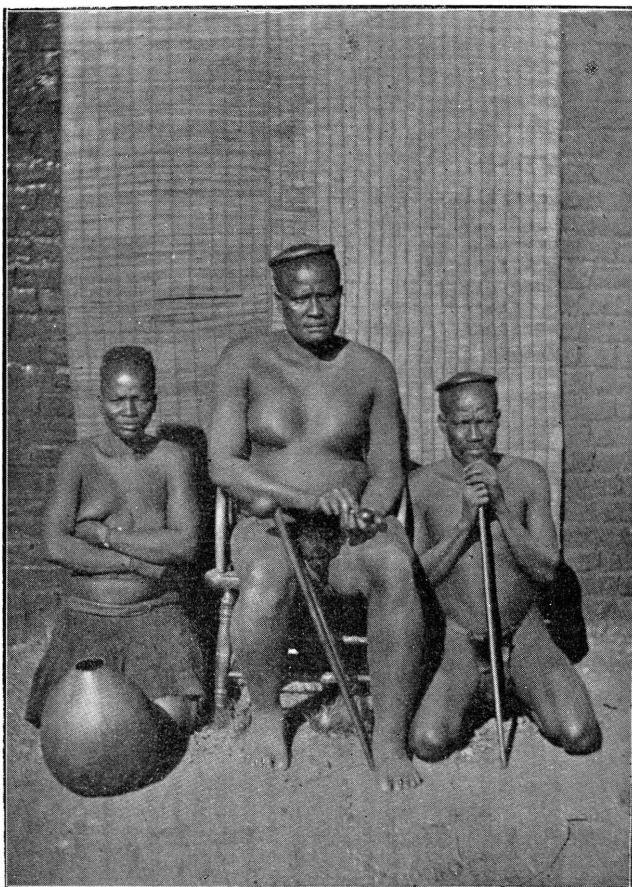
growth of creepers and ferns, amongst which was the *baviaan tau*,* studded with its thick sharp thorns, and strong enough for a ship's cable. Cascades were crashing their foaming way through the rocks, dashing the rainbow-bowed spray far out into the valley. It is called the Devil's Bridge, and why so many beautiful places are named after His Satanic Majesty I can never understand.

On the fourth day we arrived at our new home, a pretty grass bungalow on the edge of the creek. We found the provision wagon had come, and stood outspanned, ready for unloading. We spent the week in making camp bedsteads and chairs, and getting our Robinson Crusoe home comfortable.

We found a quantity of goods for trading with the Swazis, such as knives, axes, beads, and coloured stuff. The beads were

* Baboon rope

of three kinds, but they would only have one sort, a little ruby one which they called *umlwolan* (the fiery one). The cotton stuff was blue, and blue with red stripes ; they preferred the latter, and called it *malenkamp* ; the other they called *tyodo*. Salt was in great demand ; they gave us a quart of milk for half a teaspoonful. It was curious to see them lick it out of the palms of their hands. Salt being so heavy, and the journey so difficult, made it an expensive article. Mealies, honey, and native potatoes they brought in quantities. The latter vegetable is a round dark-brown root, with a thin tough skin ; it grows like a small shrub, and is very prolific. After boiling for two hours in two waters the skin becomes loose, and it is fit for table. We found it a delicious vegetable, and I should think, with cultivation, it would improve and become a favourite dish in Great Britain, where it would grow well, as it is suited to

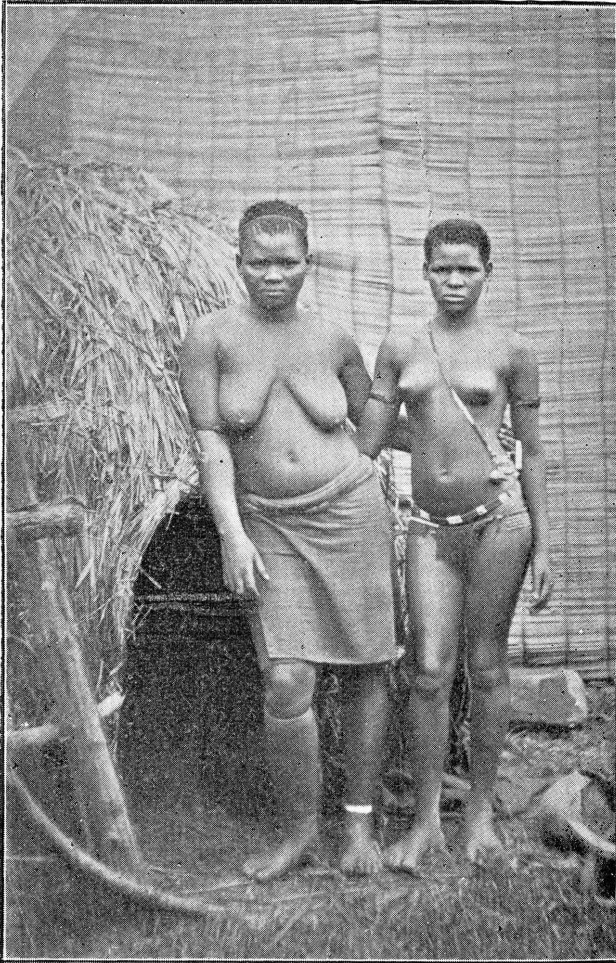


ZULU CHIEF AND WIFE.

the high and cooler parts of Swaziland They called them *matapan*. They also brought us gourds, sweet potatoes, beans, *twyala* (beer), *habane* (bananas). The beans were of two kinds, *tmshlulu* and *tmshlumio* Money at that time they did not understand the use of, and would never take any One day one of them brought me a sixpence, and wanted to buy a blanket with it. He seemed very disappointed when I laughed and shook my head, and told him it was of no use He ran off gesticulating wildly, and waving his assagais and sticks, talking angrily to himself He had evidently been defrauded by some trader, and had probably given a couple of goats for it There are three kinds of *twyala* (beer) one made of *amabele* (Kaffir corn or millet), *umbila* (maize), or the two mixed We preferred the latter, but took some time to acquire a taste for it. It looks as repulsive as pig-wash, and they sit round, drinking gallons

of it out of large black earthenware pots, and smoking and taking snuff. They are not great smokers of tobacco, but use another plant that has a large percentage of opium in it, the smoke of which they inhale, then, filling their mouths with water, spit it out together with the smoke, through a reed. They become intoxicated from this dirty habit, and shout out the most utter nonsense between the whiffs. They manufacture their snuff out of home-grown tobacco, the ashes of burnt aloe leaves, and a plant called *falani*. It is very pungent. I took a pinch once—but never again! I never sneezed so much in my life, much to their amusement.

A chief is called *inkosi*, the chief man at a kraal *umnumzana*, an officer under a chief *induna*. These three men have the right to wear the head-ring encircling the top of the head, which is made with great care with their own hair (or rather wool) and bees' wax, then polished with a prepara-



SWAZI WOMAN AND GIRL.

tion made from the leaves of a plant called *lotsana*.

Boys (*umfana*) or men without wives and cattle (*amahobo*) are not entitled to a heading.

The married women (*umfazi*) wear a black skin petticoat to the knees, called a *kaka*. The young women (*entombi*) wear beads round their waists, with several strings of them hanging down in front. Girls up to ten years old wear nothing at all.

They are a social, hospitable people, and many a night when far from home, shooting or prospecting, they have given me food and a hut to sleep in, making me as comfortable as possible in their way, asking me numerous queer questions, carefully examining my clothes and watch, uttering exclamations of astonishment and delight like children. Sometimes they played strange music on their chief instrument, called a *gubu*, which is something like a one-string banjo with an empty

gourd for a drum. A few women would beat time gently with their hands, sitting in a circle round the player, who struck the strings with a wand, and softly chanted a song, which I noted was generally about their cows. A weird sight and a weird song I thought, as I sat and watched them with the light of the wood fire flickering on their faces.

They are a most moral people in every way, and it is a very rare instance when a man seduces a girl. They are generally put to death, and if the man leaves any property it is given to the father of the girl, to whom it is a financial blow, as he has lost all chance of selling her. Theft is almost unknown, and punished by death or exile. Their religion is to do what is right, which is what we call "right" also. Lies are rarely heard, and to tell one is considered a disgrace. They know there is a God and call Him *Utixo* and *Nkulunkulu*, the highest of the highest.

They have a great belief in their king or queen, whom they say is inspired by God, and think he causes rain to come and go, causes good or bad crops, and anything else by his great power—and the king himself really believes it too.

An amusing instance occurred a short time after I arrived. There was a great drought raging—almost an unknown circumstance there. King Umbandine was implored to cause rain to fall, as their crops were failing, and starvation would ensue. He said it could only be accomplished by his people offering him cattle, and *indunas* were sent throughout the land collecting from those who would give, and a large herd was presented to the king. He then caused large quantities of *twyala* to be made, and many beasts to be killed. All the chiefs were then invited to the feast, and they gorged and drank to intoxication, and the drunken king, smeared with red ochre, covered with skins and ostrich

feathers, danced and yelled round a large fire, and invoked rain. After this had been kept up for three days and three nights, the king proclaimed to the people that rain would fall in four days. The people were delighted, drank more beer, and sent messengers round with the good news to their wives and daughters, singing the praises of the king throughout the night. The fourth day dawned, and with it came no rain to fall on the thirsty land. There was great wailing among the people, who asked the king whose fault it was. He told them that some of his people had given no cattle, and until these arrived no rain would fall. The *indunas* rushed forth again, searching for those who had not given, and brought back many more. So the feast continued, and the king went through the ceremony again, and declared that rain would fall before seven suns had passed. On the third day rain fell copiously, and the people praised their God and king.

The religion suits them, and my life amongst them always forces me to ask, Why interfere with it? This inquiry brings me to the vexed question of Missionaries. Most men who have lived with the natives, and with whom I have spoken upon this subject, are agreed as to their harmfulness. They tell the native his belief in his king is foolish, nay, wrong. They destroy it, they break up a religion absolutely suited to the nature and character of the people, and replace it by Christianity, which experience has proved has a demoralising influence upon them, when it has any at all. They teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic, and old residents are agreed the more they learn of our so-called civilization, the less they advance in real civilization. Discontent with their lot replaces happy content; vanity replaces simplicity; and European immorality, a simple, good code of morality. Our code of morals, as practised—as preached, it

only exists in isolated cases—is far below their standard; they have no system of prostitution.

The system for marrying their women is admirably adapted to their needs, and indeed for the protection of the latter. An *indoda* has as many wives as he can support, and they are all honest women; at home the European *indoda* has one legal wife, and as many as he can pay for in dishonour.

It is impossible to defend our system, or explain it to a native mind.

Logically, we ought to begin at home, and it is a colossal impertinence and a sinful waste of money—with an East End such as ours, the statistics of bastards we return, and the system of prostitution, which is hopeless, facing us at home—to try to foist our religion upon a people who have one of their own in every way better suited to them. Rather take a lesson from them, and make our roads as straight as theirs. We go from

sin to purity, and destroy a virtuous people, body and soul, in the name of religion. In olden days white women and children were always safe with the South African native ; not so, I am told, nowadays, we have taught them, by violating their women, to disrespect ours.

As with the other native races, the women do most of the work. Fortunately for them, the richness of the soil enables them to reap good crops by doing little more than scratching the surface of the earth with their hoes. The herding of the cattle is done by the boys. The men have almost exterminated the game by their system of surrounding a piece of grass and setting fire to it, knocking over the animals as they rush from the flames. They are very fond of this, which really has as much sport in it as beating up a field of partridges in England. They crack jokes, laugh, and chaff each other, and all are in good humour. Every-

thing falls a prey to their unerring aim—bok, partridges, and *pauw*. After the grass has been burned, quantities of *pauws* (wild turkeys) assemble to feast on burnt locusts, grasshoppers, lizards, etc. There are two distinct species of them—the bush *pauw*, and the *vlakke* or veldt *pauw*. The average weight of the former is about twenty-five pounds, the latter about fifteen pounds. The plumage of both is similar, and they are beautiful brown birds, and excellent eating

To these burnt places Dick and I would go and often secure one or two of these welcome additions to our larder. Upon the mountains, we were told, there were many eland and other game, but we had no opportunity of going to shoot them.

Some days Dick and I worked in the Creek with our man, and others we spent prospecting. The gold we found was but little, but it was better than being idle.

One day I stayed at home, determined to be busy at nothing more or less than an attempt to make myself a pair of trousers. I found it more difficult than I imagined, and was just finishing a most extraordinary-looking garment when Dick burst in, with his pan full of quartz. He seemed very excited, and told me he had found a good reef about three miles away, with gold showing in the stone. The next day we went to see the place, and almost everywhere we broke the surface quartz there was visible gold.

It was lucky finding a reef so easily, as it is generally very hard and tedious work. Striking the gold, for instance, in a creek, the prospector works up, testing the nature of the gold with his magnifying glass yard by yard, and sees it change from round, worn specks to thin, flaky, ragged ones. He then knows he is nearer the reef. Then, if the gold appears worn again, he knows he has gone

too far. Going back, he prospected the sides, sinking shafts, digging trenches, and continually panning off. Sometimes the result is the finding of a "leader," or a reef that is not a payable one to work, and all his labour has been in vain.

We had lived here now two and a half years, and were anxious to leave, so Dick started to walk to the Devil's Kantoor with the servant, to inform the owner of the discovery of the reef, leaving me alone

Not caring to do any more work, I started out every day with my rifle, calling often at kraals scattered about the country. One day I was sitting in the doorway cleaning my rifle when a white man staggered up as if drunk. I caught hold of him and helped him on to Dick's bed, and could see at once what was the matter with him. He had the fever badly. I dosed him with quinine, and got him to swallow some soup. The poor fellow was shaking with ague, his head

throbbled with pain, and he seemed bad with dysentery also. He told me where he had been: down in the low valleys where we had done some prospecting the winter before. He spoke particularly of a certain valley that I knew well. It had always struck me that the formation here was so different, but not being at all well up in geology I did not know what it indicated. This man, with a knowledge of geology, saw a possibility of finding emeralds there, and risked the descent. For three days he worked there, sleeping high on the mountain-side, but the precaution was of no use; the malaria fiend seized him, and now he seemed doomed to die. His labour had not been in vain, for out of his belt he took and gave me a small but beautiful emerald, advising me if he died to work in the valley in the following winter. Three days afterwards he died, and with the assistance of a Swazi I buried him in a pretty spot under some huge rocks. I have