

As we proceeded, he grew worse and worse, and, unwilling to repeat the tragedy of the day before, we called a halt at a farmhouse some ten miles on the road. Here another purchase was deemed advisable, and a thin, raw-boned horse secured on the spot, the farmer taking the sick animal and £15 in exchange. In making the bargain we felt that we had been done; but as there was no choice for it one way or the other if we wished to get down country speedily, we resigned ourselves to the prospect of having to go on buying relays all the way to Ladysmith! On the fourth day of our travels, having averaged about fifty miles a day, our cross-country journey came to an end at Winburg. Here the Mud River purchase nearly succumbed, and was only saved by the timely emptying of a bottle of brandy into its inside, for which extravagance we fully expected to be charged five pounds! In this surmise we were agreeably surprised, when, before taking our departure the next morning, we came to pay the bill. The modest charge of £6 for ourselves and horses was all that my money-making friend thought fit to ask us on this occasion; but as we had had very little to eat, still less to drink, and a dirty, uncomfortable room to sleep in, I do not think I am far wrong in

surmising that his profit reached the entire sum in question.

In spite of the bottle of brandy, another forty miles completely knocked up our Mud River purchase, and, arrived at Senekal, we were obliged to conclude another bargain with a Boer, who did not forget his own interest in the transaction. Our fresh purchase was a rough but strong-looking pony, who treated the whip with supreme indifference, chose his own pace—which neither coaxing nor beating would induce him to alter—and was provokingly deliberate and slow over each meal, which he munched with a satisfied air. An original pony he decidedly was, and that he possessed a will of his own we were not long in finding out; but that he also possessed a conscience I am bound to maintain, for, although he was very deliberate and chose his own pace, as I have already remarked, he worked honestly at the collar and did his full share conscientiously.

On the eighth day of our travels we at length crossed from the Orange Free State into Natal, and arrived on the summit of De Beer's Pass in the Drakensberg. On the road we had several times cautioned the driver as to the steepness of this pass, and impressed upon him the necessity of careful driving during the descent. I must

confess we had not much confidence in his coachmanship, and as he was continually entertaining us with accounts of the different spills he had been in, as well as the numerous "fares" at Kimberley which he had upset, we were not greatly reassured thereby. On this occasion, and heedless of our warnings, without an attempt to pull the horses together, he started down the hill at a brisk trot. Though we ordered him to try and steady them a bit, it was quickly apparent that such a course was no longer possible, and the only thing to do was to sit tight and trust to their not falling, which, from the great pace at which we were going, appeared inevitable at every moment.

Ere long we perceived that he had lost complete control over the animals, the two leaders breaking into a gallop, as, in a few minutes, the wheelers likewise did. The pace was now frightful, and though the driver was unaware, I recalled to mind the fact that we were rapidly approaching the winding portion of the road, on one side of which a sheer precipice fell away. From our position at the back of the cart, we were almost powerless to move and quite unable to reach the reins, whereas the driver was free and in a position to jump out at any moment.

“We’re always getting into carriage accidents, no matter where we go,” I remarked to my husband; “and now we’re decidedly in for another, so we had better get as free as we can in order to bundle out somehow or other, if the horses are not stopped before we reach the narrow, unprotected part of the road.”

On this suggestion we were proceeding to act, and were engaged in struggling and wriggling ourselves as best we could out of our cramped position, when suddenly down went the carriage on the side on which I was seated,—a confused jumble of falling, of struggling, of sounds of kicking horses and breaking straps, and a firm idea that we were over the precipice and done for, ensuing; after which I felt myself crushed by a heavy weight, which was followed by a confused buzzing in my ears, and then came the calm feeling of resignation to the inevitable, which those who have faced death and given up all hope know so well. From this point of the proceedings, I remember no more until a sudden sense of relief sent the blood coursing with a warm glow all over my body, the numbed, helpless feeling subsiding. This was caused by the uplifting of the carriage from me, the weight of which once removed, I was very soon all right

again, and beyond a severe shaking had suffered no injury.

The place into which the carriage had been upset, was a deep crevice off the road some ten feet down. Finding himself quite powerless to stop the animals, and seeing the danger ahead, the driver had with a last effort guided them off the road on to a level piece of side ground, in the hopes of there being able to arrest them. Even while doing so, he saw the crevice into which we had fallen; but it was too late to stop, so, calling to us to look out for ourselves,—a matter easier said than done,—he had jumped from the carriage. Then came the crash; my husband was thrown clear off the cart, while hapless I remained buried beneath.

However, all's well that ends well. None of us were hurt, the horses were effectually stopped and sobered, and beyond one or two fractured springs, even the carriage sustained no injury. Help was speedily obtained from the Good Hope Inn hard by, where we also sought shelter for the night; and that evening we discussed our adventures over the supper table with some Orange Free State Boers, who were all more or less inebriated, but withal not offensive. At last one, growing a little more excited than the rest,

seized me by the hand, and in one breath assured me that he would come and see me when he came to England, and that "Zur Avelan Wooodde (Sir Evelyn Wood), he was a sjentleman,—oh yes, he was a sjentleman;" when, failing to see what connection his visiting me in England and Sir Evelyn Wood being a gentleman had with each other, I disengaged my hand from the grasp of my excited friend, and leaving him to my husband to entertain, went off to bed.

We reached Ladysmith next day in time for luncheon, and dined that evening with the 14th Hussars. I here received information of the approaching entry into Zululand of Sir Evelyn Wood, who was to be accompanied by three squadrons of cavalry. This decided us to return to Newcastle at once; so, after several days pleasantly spent in Ladysmith, we bade farewell to our driver, and wishing him success in his return journey to Kimberley, which we did not envy him, the services of Nancy, and Punch, and Fatty Cavendish were once more requisitioned, and the trekking on the hard high road resumed; two days later finding us in our old camp at Bennett's Drift, busily preparing for the proposed expedition into Zululand.

CHAPTER XXI.

PREPARATION FOR ZULULAND—MORNING OF DEPARTURE—
A SCRAMBLE FOR BREAKFAST—A SCENE OF CONFUSION—
HORRIBLE CRUELTY—NO WATER—BRIDGE-MAKING—AN
UNWELCOME ORDER—SEKETWAYO AND CETSHWAYO.

BUT though the plan of march through Zululand had been drawn out, the date of the departure of the squadrons had not yet been decided upon at headquarters. When at length it was, the notice given was somewhat short ; but it caught no one napping, and found readiness the order of the day. The three squadrons of cavalry ordered out for the occasion consisted of one of the 15th Hussars, one of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, and one of the 14th Hussars, the whole under the command of Colonel Luck, C.B., 15th Hussars. The last-named squadron being quartered at Ladysmith, received orders to begin their march from a lower point, and join the main body of the troops at the Buffalo River, so that all might enter Zululand together ; while, previous to this order,

the generals rode down country to Ladysmith and inspected the regiment in its entirety.

So at length the morning dawned for our departure. It rose in a cold, damp mist, which shortly relapsed into a confirmed drizzle. Everything was wet,—tents, horse clothing, and baggage,—and the task of packing and loading up was rendered intensely disagreeable in consequence. Punctually at 5 A.M. the *reveillé* sounded; it came through the mist with startling distinctness, which made me spring up from a sound sleep and consult my watch. Yes, sure enough it was five o'clock and no mistake; but oh! how cold and dark and wet everything felt and looked, as I drew aside the hangings of my tent. No one else had heard the *reveillé*, or, if they had, probably thought it was but a dream; so I was forced, by shouting to every one to get up, to dispel any such illusion.

Having succeeded in arousing the servants and the waggon-driver—the latter of whom lay huddled up in a blanket under the cart, looking for all the world like a mummy—I proceeded actively to engage in the packing. Before long our goods and chattels were collected into two heaps—the smallest of which was destined to accompany us on our travels, while the other was to be relegated to the guardroom, consisting

as it did of collections, trophies of the chase, and such like, which we could not drag about wherever we went, and therefore left behind in the care of the sergeant of that department. By six o'clock everything was ready for loading up, at which hour a corporal and six privates arrived on the scene, by whom everything was quickly placed in the waggon, to which ten patient oxen stood yoked. Ox transport had been decided upon for the expedition, in consequence of the great quantity of food required to be carried for mules; added to which nearly every available animal of this description, except those required for the General's use, had been ordered up to Pretoria to assist in bringing the troops and stores down country. The order to march at six o'clock punctually had been given the previous day, but on arriving in the 15th Hussars' camp it was evident that yet another hour must elapse before everything could be got under weigh. The scene was a diversified one, and partook somewhat of confusion; men were to be seen in every direction rushing about with bundles, or boxes, or parcels of some description or another, eagerly inquiring the whereabouts of their particular waggon, on which some particular article had to be placed. No one seemed to be able to furnish information to his

neighbour, though at the same time he was willing enough to ask of others what he could not give himself. Near the officers' tents, two or three large hooded waggons were being rapidly filled; while the mess-sergeant, assisted by several men, seemed intent in loading up the mess vehicle with boxes innumerable of Tivoli beer and other delicacies. In the marquee itself I found several officers busily engaged in negotiating coffee, boiled eggs, or hot bacon—not a few scalding their mouths in their hasty efforts to dispose of their coffee, as the voice of the colonel outside was heard hurrying matters on, and calling to the officers on duty to form up their men. In the general scramble I was, however, well provided for, and made a hearty breakfast, after which I went outside and found my husband struggling with a box of Tivoli beer, which he meditated adding to our stores. Whether he effected his purpose or not, I did not see, and forgot at the time to inquire, my attention being taken up in watching the waggons getting under weigh. Before long they were all on the move, our own amongst them, and the march on Zululand fairly began.

Ere it had proceeded a quarter of a mile, the mess wagon broke down. This catastrophe I

laid to the door of those boxes of Tivoli beer which I had seen the sergeant depositing with so much care on the cart not long before; and as I passed the scene of the wreck I could not help laughing at the lachrymose expression depicted on Fergusson's face, who, as acting messenger of the expedition, had charge of the waggon. Some time must necessarily elapse ere it could be mended or a fresh one procured, and here he was evidently *planté* for the better part of the morning. The squadron had trotted on towards Fort Amiel, and, having crossed a small spruit, an offshoot of the Icanu River, had formed up to await the waggons and afford any assistance that might be required. This, ere long, was much called for at a short but very perpendicular hill, which rose abruptly from the spruit in question to the level of the Fort. In spite of gallant efforts on the part of the oxen, several waggons stuck fast, and it required many and many united hauls on the part of the men before they could be extricated. All this took up a good deal of time, and it was nearly nine o'clock before the last waggon was seen safely to the summit, and the troops became at liberty to proceed. On arriving at the Icanu, however, another halt had to be called, and a delay even

more lengthened and tedious undergone in superintending its passage, for the ford was an awkward one, lying deeply in a hollow, and the waggons descending with a rush into the rapid waters, some difficulty was found in preventing the poor beasts yoked to them from coming to a dead stop for the purpose of slaking their thirst. In this way several spans got hopelessly entangled, and much delay was occasioned in their unravelling; added to which the way leading out of the spruit rose in an abrupt incline, which, speedily becoming slippery from the drippings of several waggons that had already passed, rendered it almost impossible for the animals to retain their footing. Down they kept falling one by one, the confusion so occasioned being frightful. Altogether, what with the shouts of the soldiers and the fiendish yells of the drivers and conductors, the scene became one somewhat in accord with the descriptions of the infernal regions.

The sun was high up in the heavens before the last of a hundred waggons was got safely across, and four hours of continued struggling resulted in a distance of about three miles being placed between our then position—which was in the heart of Newcastle—and the camp we had left that morning in the mist. “A hundred

waggons!" I think I hear my reader exclaim; "all that for three squadrons of cavalry?" And yet so it ever is: a like number of Boers could have done the journey we were undertaking comfortably with half-a-dozen; or an equal number of Zulus could have tripped in one day the distance we proposed to do in ten; their food they could send on alive and ahead of them, their drink they could find in the pure springs of the Veldt, their couch would be Nature's own when they halted at night, and their tent the bright or clouded canopy of heaven, whichever it happened to be. But with us it is different: the civilised soldier must have his tents and his commissariat always in due attendance. What would soldiering and war come to if the expense of so much unnecessary paraphernalia was done away with?

On leaving Newcastle it was pleasant to be able to put one's horse into a gallop, and feel that some movement was really taking place, of which the recent dawdling about for so many hours had made one almost doubtful. The long line of waggons was now extending several miles in length, and the scenes as we passed along it were many and varied. With the Icardu business over, the troops had as before trotted on ahead, and when I came up with them they were

halted, and busy superintending another passage —this time a boggy place in the Veldt. For a time I stood by and watched the process; but our waggon arriving, and being got safely over, I turned and rode on with it. The brutality of the drivers, and above all that of the conductors, to their animals, sickened and disgusted me. For nearly six hours the poor brutes had been in the yoke, the last four under a burning sun. The prospect of yet another two before they were released was before them, and yet, tired and fainting for food and water, neither lash nor goading punishment was spared to make them proceed.

In one of the first chapters of this book I have alluded to the unenviable life of a trek-ox especially that of a Government one, or one in the pay of the Government. Knowing that he will be remunerated for its death, the owner makes no endeavours to spare it. Half-starved and over-worked, these poor brutes struggle through their cruel, and, happily for them, short existence. For them life has never known its share of happiness; born to pain, they live and die in that heritage of woe.

At the end of seven hours' trekking the Ingagane River was reached, on the opposite

side of which Colonel Luck decided to halt for the night. As my cousin was acting in the capacity of staff officer to the Colonel, he at once proceeded to mark out the camp, and the squadrons, who shortly afterwards put in an appearance, proceeded to take up their allotted quarters. But though we were fortunate in getting our waggon at once, and our tents pitched, many a weary hour went by before the whole convoy had crossed the ford. Long after darkness had set in they were still arriving, and it being too late to liberate the oxen for fear they should stray, the poor hungry brutes remained tied to their waggons all night without the food or water which they so greatly needed. No wonder that many were found dead or dying next day.

On the following morning the trek was resumed, and proved even severer than that of the previous day. No one appeared to be acquainted with the line of march we were pursuing—distances being miscalculated and underrated in the most confusing manner possible by the very men who professed to have a knowledge of the country. Hour after hour wore its slow march along ; the oxen drooped beneath the fierce rays of a scorching sun, their dry swollen tongues clenched between their teeth, and the thick,

dust-speckled foam dropping from their nostrils. Far and wide stretched a barren Veldt, whereon no sign of water showed itself, though many an eye swept it in keen search. The country around appeared silent and deserted, shunned apparently both by man and beast. At length, wearied with the crawling pace at which we were moving, I forsook the column, and rode on ahead in the hopes of coming upon a spruit, which would have been welcome news to return with to those in the rear. Some five miles on the road I fell in with a farmhouse, which turned out to be occupied by an Englishman of the name of Dick, whom my first care was to question on the supply of water obtainable in the locality. His reply was not reassuring, as it appeared that the spruit on which he depended was dried up to the dimensions of a tiny rivulet, which would be useless for the purpose of watering animals. Three or four miles farther on he, however, assured me we should find a good supply of both grass and water, suitable in every way for outspanning. While we were talking, Colonel Luck, my cousin, and several other officers appeared on the scene, to whom the same information as had been given to me was repeated, and received with expressions of disappointment and disgust; for, on seeing the

farmhouse, they had made certain of coming upon water at last. There was nothing, however, to be done but to wait for the squadron to come up, and then, having left word for the waggons to follow on, to trot forward in search of a suitable place to outspan. While waiting for the squadrons I dismounted and went in search of a deserted lion's den, which the farmer informed me I should find not far off. A wide opening in some masses of rock attracted my attention, and, having returned and armed myself with a light, I departed, accompanied by several of the others whom my vivid description of what was to be seen had filled with curiosity and a desire to explore. The cavern, for such it was, turned out to be a big one, and full of a lot of trappy pits, into which, at every moment, we ran a risk of falling. At the far end skeletons of animals and heaps of decayed bones were discovered, which we concluded to be the remnants of the last occupant's daily meals. In this secluded fortress he had doubtless feasted and revelled right royally until the approach of civilisation had driven him to become a wanderer and a vagabond on the face of the earth. By the arrival of the troops at Dick's farm, our expedition of discovery was brought to a close, and we hurried back and joined Colonel

Luck, whom we found on the point of starting. A trot of four or five miles at length brought us in sight of the outspanning ground, where the horses were at once watered, knee-haltered, and turned out to graze. Two good hours or more elapsed before the first waggon hove in sight, the oxen positively staggering along in the most pitiable condition. During that time we had not been idle; for, on arriving at the place of outspan, a boggy spruit was discovered, across which it became apparent that until a safe road was made no waggon could venture. Relays of men were at once ordered up to construct a secure crossing, and every available hand set to work to collect stones, and grass, and rushes for the purpose. On the arrival of the waggons a strong compact bridge had been constructed, over which the long straggling convoy passed in safety, and, forming up in one immense line, the weary, famished animals were released from the yoke to find what food they could in the two short hours' law granted them for that purpose. Meanwhile the mess waggon had been made to disgorge some of its contents, and we were soon busily engaged with the luncheon which the efforts of Fergusson were not slow to provide. I cannot quite remember what fell to my share; but it

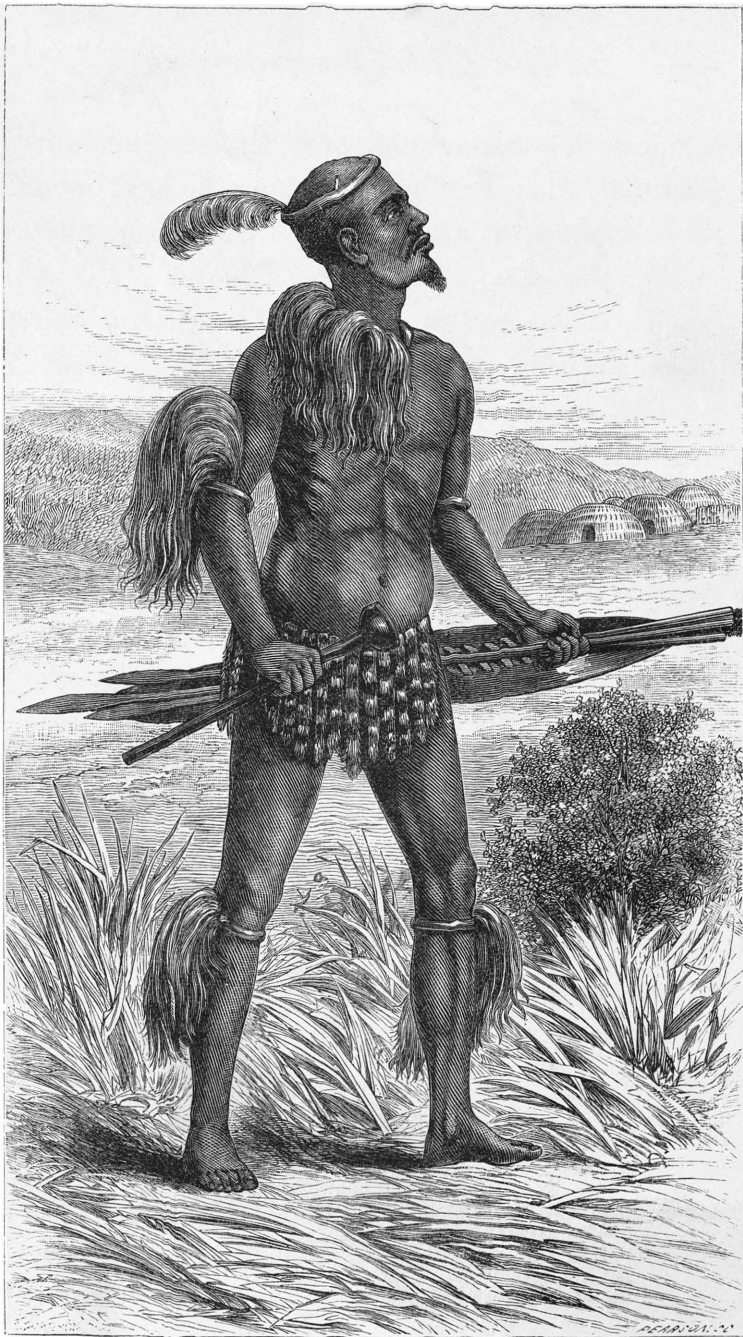
was something very good, partaking of the subtle flavour of pork pie, doubly enjoyed from the fact that my breakfast that morning had been, in the hurry of an early departure, little more than an apology. Luncheon over, an hour of luxurious ease was enjoyed. Every one settled himself into comfortable attitudes of repose—Captain Sullivan, my cousin, and myself, sharing the welcome shade afforded underneath the mess waggon, where, I'm afraid, I was malicious enough to enjoy the occupation which I set myself, of preventing these two from falling asleep, which they were very desirous of doing. My efforts were successful, and, in spite of their remonstrances and threats, I managed by various cunningly-planned devices to keep them awake, until suddenly the voice of the Colonel was heard giving the order to saddle up and inspan, which decided the conflict in my favour. While everybody was busily engaged in obeying this order, a messenger from General Buller arrived bearing instructions for Colonel Luck to proceed as far as the Buffalo River that night, on the banks of which the General, who had preceded the column the day before, was encamped. Every effort to hurry on the inspanning of the waggons was therefore made, for the afternoon was already far

gone, and the distance between our then position and the Buffalo was considerable. When the conductors learnt our destination they remonstrated, and, remonstrance proving vain, they became sulky. At this there was small cause for wonder; for their oxen—worn, footsore, and in very poor condition—were in no fit state to proceed, while the mere fact of inspanning them before they had sufficiently rested and fed themselves simply meant death to many. As it was, several had already, since the outspan, succumbed to their inevitable fate, sinking to the ground, from which neither threats nor torture could move them—they would never rise again.

With the shades of evening fast setting in, the Buffalo River was reached, and about forty or fifty waggons got safely across. Darkness stopped the progress of the remainder of the column, which was forced to outspan on the wrong side of the river; in consequence whereby many of the officers and men were deprived of their tents and baggage, and had to seek the hospitality of their comrades and friends. At this place we were joined by the squadron of the 14th Hussars, who, mounted on their white Persian horses, presented a very martial appearance. For a long time I puzzled myself to find out what it was that

made such a marked difference between the 14th and the 15th. Both were as fine a body of men as one might wish to see ; but there was no mistaking the one for the other. The clue was at length discovered in the fact that whereas the 14th all wore beards, the 15th were closely shaved, while the helmets of the latter were of a peculiarly good shape, which was enhanced by the white, artistically folded puggery around them. The white horses of the 14th looked sleek and fat, and well cared for, their light colour forming an agreeable background to the dark, English horses of the Inniskillings, and the variously-coloured colonials of the 15th.

In consideration of the wretched state of the oxen, a very short march was made next day, the Colonel deciding to encamp at the first place of outspan. We were here visited by large crowds of natives, who came running from their kraals full of curiosity, and to whom the band of the Inniskillings was a matter of extreme wonder and interest. A fine young Zulu, a son of the reigning chief, Seketwayo, made his appearance with a note for Colonel Luck from General Buller, who had gone straight through to the Blood River, and finding the road somewhat confusing, had despatched young Seketwayo to the column



SEKETWAYO'S HEIR.

to act as guide. Some excitement was at first caused by the idea which gained ground that this Zulu was Cetshwayo's son, the Prince Dinuzulu ; but as the latter is a youth of fourteen, and the Zulu in question was a man of apparently twenty-five, the illusion became quickly dispelled. With the band playing gay music, and attended by crowds of admiring natives, the march on the Blood River was resumed, and long ere the frosty mists of early morning had cleared off, the column was well under weigh. With comparatively few losses in the way of oxen, the journey was successfully performed that day ; at four o'clock Conference Hill was passed, Bemba's Kop loomed in sight, the stretching, rocky, hill-bound plains of Zululand appeared ; and by half-past four the squadrons had crossed the Blood River, and once more the foot of the British soldier was pressed on Zulu soil.

Here we found General Buller already encamped, and learnt from him that General Wood was momentarily expected. His arrival was soon heralded by the approach of several mule waggons, which rattled up and disgorged their numerous contents. Before long the Union Jack marked the spot where headquarters was established, and the roomy, comfortable, house-shaped tent of the

General was erected. Then Sir Evelyn, attended by Major Fraser, Captain Slade, and Mr. Hamilton, arrived on the scene. The miniature camp settled into something like order and neatness; far and wide the foreloupers might be distinguished herding and bringing in the cattle; the horses, which on arrival had been turned out to graze, were driven in, captured, fed, and blanketed up for the night; and then the great gold sun which had seemed to linger behind the distant mountains as though an interested spectator of the busy scene, flashed his bright smile on the fast darkening earth, lingered yet awhile in the rose and purple and opal tints of his setting glory, then, passing away from the earth he had gladdened, sought other worlds to cheer; the chill and gloom of night fell over the camp, and the land of the noble savage was plunged in darkness.

CHAPTER XXII.

KAMBULA—PLEASANT REMINISCENCES—A DUSKY BEAUTY—
FOR KING AND COUNTRY—THE HEROISM OF MIGHT AND
RIGHT—NATURE'S BEAUTEOUS SCENE—A BANQUET.

THE evening of his arrival at the Blood River, Sir Evelyn had intimated to us his intention of visiting the battlefield of Kambula on the following day, and had invited us, as well as a number of officers, to accompany him. In view of the good pasturage and abundance of water to be found in the locality around the camp, a day's rest had been decided upon, and there was to be no marching on the morrow.

Kambula Hill, whereon the battle of that name was fought, lay some twenty miles away from our present encampment, within easy riding distance, so that a pleasurable excursion was looked forward to as an agreeable change in the monotony of the past few days' trekking. In a visit which, later on that evening, Captain Slade paid to our tent, he advised us to provide ourselves with

second horses, as the travelling would in all probability be somewhat speedy.

So next morning, having breakfasted in the mess-tent of the 15th, where we found Colonel Luck and several others hard at it, our horses were brought round and we rode down to the General's tent. Sir Evelyn was ready and awaiting us, setting an example of punctuality to others who had not yet arrived; while General Buller we found in the midst of tent-striking—he being about to move on a march ahead. Leaving the laggards to follow in our wake, the General gave the signal to start by mounting his horse and leading us forward at a gallop. The bright, fresh morning, the exhilarating air, and, above all, the consciousness of freedom from ox-waggons and other annoyances, served to raise our spirits to their highest pitch. We sent our horses along at a pace to which for many days they had been little accustomed, and which, doubtless, caused them some surprise. That surprise was, however, I am inclined to think, on the pleasurable side, to judge by the way in which they took hold of their bits, and the disinclination which they evinced to being restrained. Altogether we formed a very merry party, doing our best to make time fly, and succeeding therein. Captain Slade, who had

served during the Zulu war under Sir Evelyn, and who had also accompanied the Empress Eugénie in her travels through the country, was full of anecdotes of both occasions. Every spot brought its reminiscences, every landmark had its tale to tell; and I am inclined to think that during that ride the gallant aide-de-camp lived those portions of his life over again. If he did, his dreams were doubtless pleasant ones.

But though we galloped when we could, the way was not always plain sailing, frequent treacherous looking bogs, and grass, and bush-grown gullies, having to be got over. On these occasions the light weights had a decided advantage of the heavy brigade, and when the utmost care and caution was required on the part of the latter, the former could afford an appearance of recklessness. This, however, as proved later in the day—in the case of Major Fraser—was not always warranted. Some ten miles on the way our party fell in with Walkinshaw, who, riding one horse, and leading another which carried the precious luncheon panniers, was making the best of his way over hill and dale, bogs and gullies, with the greatest *sang froid*. Judging from the line he was taking, the old waggon track had evidently no charms for him,

and he preferred the more tortuous and risky travelling of a point-to-point line. Often we watched him with fear at our hearts; but lest we should be considered greedy, kept our anxiety to ourselves. A good fright, however, awaited us a little further on, where we were suddenly confronted by a gully of more than ordinary depth and blindness. We pulled up our horses to reconnoitre it carefully, and after some sliding and slipping, and one or two splutters amongst the heavy weights, managed to get safely over. Then we turned to look for Walkinshaw—when, oh horror! our forebodings were being realised in good earnest, as we saw him dismounted and struggling to extricate the animal with the luncheon baskets from a deep bog into which it had sunk. All delicacy of being thought greedy at once vanished as we galloped to his rescue. Captain Slade being the first to arrive, was quickly off his horse, and actively engaged when we came up in helping to drag forth the wretched animal. A little timely assistance effected the matter, and the baskets having been examined, the reassuring “all right” sent a glow of thankfulness to our hearts. Counselling Walkinshaw to be a little less daring, we turned and galloped after Sir Evelyn, who, with Major Fraser and Colonel Luck, was riding

slowly on ahead. Before long the Ingabe - Ka Hawane Mountain, or the Stronghold of Hawane, came well into view ; and on breasting a low hill a small village of kraals appeared in sight, at which Sir Evelyn informed us was located the old chief Tinta, whom he had captured during the war, and afterwards settled in this district. There, sure enough, we found the old man surrounded by his family, and very much delighted to see Sir Evelyn again, whom he recognised at once. From behind some palisades several young girls could be distinguished peering forth ; but nothing would induce them to come out and show themselves, they being, perhaps, of not so trustful a nature as the older generation. One of them that I caught sight of was exceedingly pretty, there being a good deal of the Arabian about the shape of her features, not the least of her charms consisting in a pair of heavily-fringed, laughing eyes, which seemed to mock my efforts to get a good view of her.

Bidding the old chief farewell, we rode on to a high plateau, from which a magnificent view was obtained. Straight in front of us, some three miles distant, lay Kambula, extending in a long undulating ridge, which appeared to run from left to right, in one immense line, from the wooded

range of heights at the back of Kambula to the mighty slopes of the Zuinge Nek, many miles away. Far and wide stretched what appeared to be an interminable succession of hills and dales, rough rugged mountains, and giant rocks; while, behind us, through the golden haze that enveloped it, the shadowy outline of the Inshlazatye Mountain could be distinguished, the beauty of its ever green slopes, which we were ere long to behold, as yet withheld from the gazer's eye.

On this plateau Major Fraser lingered behind to make a sketch or two of the surrounding scene, I remaining with him. The long ridge from the plateau of Kambula to the Zuinge had fascinated me, and I felt as if I could never tire of letting my eyes wander over the maze of its intricate and manifold windings. Over that vast tract of rugged ground the weary retreat from the Inhlobane Mountain had been effected; backwards to the wooded slopes they toiled—thither they came; and here this gallant band of Englishmen resolved to stand at bay. Then, across the rugged country they had traversed the day before, advanced against them those 26,000 warriors of Cetshwayo, who for king and country came to strike a blow at the invaders of their dearly loved land. What to them was death?

They feared it not. Was it not enough that an ambitious policy was doing its best to turn their country upside down, drag from them their king, whom, spite of the many slanders levelled at himself and his rule, they loved and were loyal to? Yes, it was a noble foe against whom the English fought that day. In thousands they came on, and in thousands the sweeping fire of our men mowed them down. While hope of success remained, they fought and fell; then, when hope vanished and the swords of the mounted men committed fearful havoc amongst them, they scorned to beg for mercy,—no prayer for quarter was ever heard from the lips of those noble savages who died for king and country that day.

Dreaming in this wise, I was awakened to the reality of the present by the voice of Major Fraser, intimating to me that his sketching was completed. We hastened down the steep slopes of the plateau as quickly as we could, in order to rejoin Sir Evelyn and the rest of the party, whom we could distinguish some distance off. We found the going exceedingly rough, large masses of rocks overgrown by long thick grass and vegetation bringing us frequently to grief, and delaying our progress considerably; but, in spite of these manifold hindrances to rapid travel-

ling, we were successful in joining the others ere the ascent of the rugged facings of the Kambula plateau was commenced. When we came to set about it, the climb proved one of great severity for the horses, both on account of its extreme abruptness, and that the ground was thickly strewn with sharp, loose stones, which gave way beneath their feet in the most distressing manner. Sweating profusely, they, however, stuck gamely to their work, and we were at length rewarded for our exertions by reaching the summit.

The first portion of the ground over which we rode was thickly strewn with Zulu graves, which rose in roughly-erected heaps of stones on all sides. But what principally attracted our attention was the glimpse which we suddenly caught of the remnant of the old fort that had assisted so staunchly to repel the advance of the Zulu hosts. To the many present, to whom this scene was not a familiar one, it was not even deemed necessary to explain what the ruined earthworks, breasting the sides of a low mound ahead, meant. Who is not familiar with the many episodes of the Zulu war? but above all, who has not heard and read with thrilling interest the accounts of that gallant defence which, in the attack on Kambula Hill, Colonel Evelyn Wood so successfully sustained?

'Twas a band of brave men under a brave commander, who fought that day. They fought with the coolness and courage of true soldiers, pitted against a savage though a noble foe. Brave as they were, their courage was equalled by their enemies; the struggle was one of determination—one of life and death; and thus they fought,—fought on through the whole of that memorable day. Deeds of valour were performed,—deeds which the annals of gallant actions must ever preserve for England's pride and glory; and yet, looking back on that terrible conflict, when brave men fell down and died, and the blood of the British soldier flowed on Kambula Hill in the fierce struggle of might over right—looking back, I say, the policy which took their life's blood rises up like a dark and terrible cloud, and the heart which joyfully exults over the valour of her noble dead cannot stifle that regret which will arise, that so much gallantry should have been sacrificed in so unjust a cause.

As the horses were somewhat fatigued after their arduous climb, our first care was to search for a suitable place near water on which to off-saddle. This was quickly found in a hollow on the other side of the ridge, and here the animals were knee-haltered and turned out to

graze. Walkinshaw arriving at this moment, the luncheon panniers were at once seized upon and examined, and the contents having been laid out on a smooth stone ledge, which admirably served the place of a table, we proceeded, hungry as hunters, to negotiate them. On the sunny slopes of Kambula, where not long since a gallant Colonel had stood amidst the roar of cannon and the hail of bullets and assegais coolly directing his men, the more peaceful scene now presented itself of a gallant General eating sandwiches, drinking claret, and surrounded by his followers, who were busily engaged in following their chief's example.

An excellent lunch over, we all accompanied Sir Evelyn up the hill to the fort, where the General was kind enough to give us an interesting description of the battle, pointing out the different points from which he had been assailed, as well as the various spots of interest connected with the affair. Piles of empty cartridges yet remained, showing in many places where the fight had been sustained with great vigour; while around the cattle laager, where the conflict at one time had been most obstinately waged, pieces of burst shells were picked up and treasured as mementoes of the visit. Not far away from the fort the cemetery containing the bodies of the officers who

fell that day could be distinguished. We visited it and found it in perfect order. Flowers which Captain Slade had planted a year before on the graves, on the occasion of the Empress's visit to the spot, were flourishing; while not the least lovely of them all was the young verdure of the Veldt itself, which, bursting into the bloom of early spring, shot forth the radiant colours of its myriads of variegated flowers, so that the slope on which the cemetery was situated seemed as it were one large garden. Several hours were spent roaming over the battlefield, and inspecting the many spots of interest; and, all too soon as it seemed to many of us, the order to saddle up and begin the homeward journey was given. We hastened, however, to obey; the horses having been captured, in a very short time we were all ready to start; and, the General having mounted, we set off down the steep, slippery slopes of Kambula at a famous pace. As everybody took their own line, our progress soon assumed the aspect of a point-to-point race; but many, in their over confidence in themselves and their certainty of finding the way, found it on several occasions blocked by suddenly yawning precipices or chasms of great breadth and depth. These obstructions forced them to halt, and, retracing their footsteps, seek

safety in our wake. Several were thrown considerably into the background in consequence, and left well out of the race. In the passage of a deep spruit Sir Evelyn and Major Fraser ran a narrow risk of being drowned; indeed the gallant Major and his horse were completely submerged in a treacherous hole, but fortunately escaped with nothing worse than a wetting, which the hot afternoon sun lent its service to dissipate.

Though we had been hurrying over the rough and difficult ground, with the strange perversity of human nature we made the pace much easier upon reaching better going, and prolonged our ride into the cool of evening. With the setting sun tinging the low crest of Conference Hill, the camp on the Blood River was reached, where the party separated and repaired to their various quarters to remove the marks and dust of the day's travelling. On reaching my tent I found that my servant Tom, catching sight of our approach in the distance, had with careful forethought prepared a steaming hot bath therein, which looked very refreshing and tempting, and in which, after indulging in a cup of tea, I soon found myself; then, when our toilets were completed, we walked down to the General's tent for dinner, where we found a goodly number of

officers already assembled, and where quite a banquet was prepared. During its progress that night plans for the morrow were discussed and a visit to the Inhlobane Mountain determined on. It was arranged that our tent and what baggage we required should be placed on one of the head-quarter waggons, our ox-transport going on with the troops, from whom for a time we should therefore be separated. Ten o'clock on the morrow was fixed for departure,—the column marching at six; and having settled everything satisfactorily we made our way back to our tent through the slumbering lines of horses and men, stumbling over picket ropes, which in the darkness of the night were not distinguishable, and which a lantern, with which Captain Slade insisted on lighting us home, failed to disclose. Several times we were challenged by the sentries, whose minds were set at rest by the reply of "friend;" then through the darkness our little tent, with the cheerful fire burning close by, hove in sight, where, bidding goodnight to Captain Slade, we turned in, and soon the land of dreams took the place of reality; and not once, not twice, but many times that night, I found myself on Kambula, in the ruined fort, by the silent graves, or amidst the rocky scenes of that memorable battlefield where brave men fought and died.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SECOND EXPEDITION—AN AGREEABLE COMPANION—A RIDE TO THE INHLOBANE—"INKŌS"—A LONELY GRAVE—THE DEATH OF RONALD CAMPBELL—INTENSE THIRST—DESCENT OF THE DEVIL'S PASS—THE GRATEFUL LUXURY OF EASE.

I WAS up betimes on the following morning, superintending the division of our baggage and the loading upon the ox waggon that portion of it which was to accompany the troops on their forward march. Bearing in mind the already somewhat overloaded condition of the General's waggons, I was careful to retain only those things which were absolutely necessary for use, such as our tent and bedding. By seven o'clock everything was ready, and in the wake of the mess waggon, and under the charge of Fergusson, our lumbering vehicle moved slowly away, leaving us alone in our glory amidst the ruins of a deserted camp. At eleven o'clock our things were called for by one of the General's mule waggons, and at 11.30 we made a start of it, shaping our course

in the direction of Tinta's Kraal, which was situated some fifteen miles distant on the White Umvolosi River. The ride thither was a very pleasant one, our way leading us over a rough but grand country, which possessed for me a strange charm. With anecdotes of former days, which the surrounding scenes conjured up in his mind, the General entertained me as we cantered along, and soon the distant outlines of the Inhlobane Mountain and the Zuinge Nek heaving in sight redoubled the many interesting reminiscences which arose to be discussed. A rough, rocky spruit suddenly intervening, brought conversation to an end, and it was with no little anxiety that we pulled up to watch and superintend the passage of the waggons across. This affair was safely accomplished with the wetting of a few things that had by some mishap got loose and were bumped into the stream; they were quickly fished out, however, and packed securely away on the waggons which had formed up in one long line, waiting for the order to continue on their way. Early in the afternoon, we reached Tinta's Kraal, and a cosy little camp was formed under the ruins of some old forts, remnants of the Zulu War, and which commanded a small eminence overlooking the river. Grass

was good and plentiful, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the mules and horses indulging in a good feed, which they appeared duly to appreciate. When the dinner hour arrived, it was the cosy number of eight that obeyed its summons, and a choice *menu* testified to the unfailing resources and ingenuity of Captain Slade as a purveyor of good things. Early to bed was the order of the evening, and the "Good-nights" which went round were accompanied by strict injunctions not to be late on the morrow, six o'clock, or even earlier, being mentioned as the starting hour.

Obedient to these instructions, I was up long before five next morning, taking the precaution to give my horses a good feed of corn apiece. But early as it was, I could make out the figure of Walkinshaw close to the General's tent, and once or twice I heard his voice sharply requesting the cook to arise and light the fire. This was followed a few minutes later by the light of some burning sticks showing itself, which proved that his call had been obeyed, and soon the moving here and there of several figures showed that the camp was awake and astir. Then, on the distant horizon, the dawn of early morning peeped from the crests of Zulu ranges, and an hour later a

row of horses saddled and bridled testified to the fact that all was ready. The appearance of the General gave the signal for a general occupation of saddles, and in less than a hour from the time of rising, we found ourselves galloping over the Veldt at a famous pace, pointing for the Inhlobane Mountain, which lay some twenty miles away from Tinta's Kraal. The old track formed by General Wood's column during the Zulu war was not as yet completely grass grown, so that we got along at a much greater pace than we could otherwise have done owing to the great height to which the grass grew, in many parts sometimes quite over the horses' ears. Several hours' riding brought us in a line with the Zuinge Nek, keeping to the right of which we bore away towards a group of kraals which we perceived nestling amidst the long grass on the western side of the Inhlobane. By the Zulus who inhabited them we were hospitably received and attended to. Their store of mats was hastily collected and laid on the ground under the shade of some willow fencing, while men hastened to relieve us of our horses, and several boys were despatched to drive in the cows in order to supply us with fresh milk. I could not but admire the total absence of bitterness in their conduct towards us,

although these very people were a portion of that Abaqualusi tribe who were so earnest in their desire for their captive king's return,—that king whom we, their enemies and conquerors, had stolen away from them. Alas! they have since paid the penalty of their loyalty and devotion to the cause of their exiled sovereign in the total annihilation of their tribe by the Chief Oham, whose conduct,—a direct breach of the stipulations made to the Chiefs in Sir Garnet Wolseley's settlement of the country,—neither received censure nor punishment at the hands of a feeble and impotent British Resident. Little we dreamed that bright sunshiny morning, as we lay on their mats, negotiating breakfast and accepting their services, that this fine group of men,—loyal to their king, respectful and hospitable to their conquerors,—would ere long become the victims of a cold-blooded massacre, dying for the loyalty they could not extinguish, murdered most foully for adhering to a noble principle, and, dying, become forgotten and unavenged by the nation which, despoiling them of their own government and king, professes to protect them through its Resident

Breakfast over, we remounted our horses and started once more on our journey. Fol-

lowing a Kaffir path which ran parallel with the southern slopes and crags of the Inhlobane Mountain, we threaded our way through a rough and intricate country, thickly peopled with Zulus, many of whose kraals, arranged in tiny villages, we frequently passed. The inhabitants greeted us with smiles and obeisances, and the stately sounding salutation "Inkōse," accompanied by the hand of the speaker raised towards the heavens, met us on all sides. It is a salutation which has to be heard and seen to be appreciated. Uttered by the stately sons of Zululand in their musical voices, and accompanied by the dignified motion of their right hand above their heads, there is a solemnity and dignity about it which is indescribable.

Six or seven miles' riding brought us to the turning point of the mountain, on to its eastern face. Here the deep gorges and abundance of vegetation presented a decided contrast to the barren hillside we had been hitherto following; while the mighty crags of this colossal rock, covered with giant creepers, were indeed magnificent to behold. It was here that, altering our course, we began to push up the eastern face of the mountain; masses of immense disjointed rock, overgrown by and hidden beneath grass of luxu.

riant growth, rendering it a by no means easy task. Floundering and struggling, slipping and falling, the horses endeavoured to make their way upwards. Here no Kaffir paths lent their friendly guidance to facilitate our progress, and each of the party had to make his way as best he could. Mr. Punch, on whom I was mounted, efficiently asserted his Basuto origin, and lent his sturdy little energies to the task, and the superiority of the lowest weight began to tell in the manner in which he outdistanced the others. About half-way up the face of the mountain I came upon a lonely grave, which was ornamented by a beautiful marble cross. It was enclosed by some rough-made but tidy fencing, and the little garden around the grave showed evidence of kindly and fostering hands. Within the enclosure a Zulu was busily engaged in tending the ferns and flowers that grew around, and in pulling up several weeds that had escaped previous notice. So busy was he, that until I spoke he did not notice me; but, as soon as he did, he sprang to his feet, and his musical voice greeted me with the lofty-sounding "Inkōs!" Jumping off Punch's back, I entered the enclosure and proceeded to examine the inscription on the cross. It told me what I had already guessed, that this lonely

resting-place sheltered the remains of the gallant and lamented Captain Ronald Campbell and Mr. Lloyd, who lost their lives while in attendance on Sir Evelyn Wood during the assault of the Inhlobane. My companions at this moment all rejoined me, and, dismounting in a body, gathered silently and quietly around the grave. Few words were spoken; the hearts of every one were too full; memories sad and regretful must have taken possession of those who could recall that day two years ago, to whom the picture of those gallant dead must have returned with silent force; and in these memories the voice became hushed, and the heart welled up in silent mourning and regret. Lonely, but unforgotten, beneath the wild crags of that beautiful mountain, the grave is tended by the noble Zulu. Thither the memory of many will often wander; above it the stars will ever shed their light, the sun will gild each rising morn, shadowed by the crags 'neath which they fell; lonely, but unforgotten, the brave and the gallant sleep side by side in their last long rest.

At this point we left our horses in the charge of Walkinshaw, who, assisted by my husband and Captain Slade, retraced his steps along the route we had come, driving the whole lot of them

before him. The remainder of our party turned to pursue their upward climb, following the line which had been taken by General Buller during his assault of the mountain. To us it was a matter of wonder and admiration as we reflected on the fearful difficulties which this intrepid officer must have faced and overcome in his successful attempt to gain the summit with his following of 200 mounted men. From crag to crag we had to scramble, sometimes on hands and knees—arduous for man, but how far more trying for beast; and had we not known that the ascent had been accomplished, we should have pronounced it almost an impossibility.

For a few brief moments we turned aside to visit the spot whereon Captain Campbell fell. It should be seen for the gallant self-sacrifice of life to be duly appreciated. In order to reach that cave in which the Zulu had taken refuge who had shot Mr. Lloyd and Sir Evelyn's horse, it is necessary to scramble for some fifty yards over huge masses of disjointed rocks which ascend steeply upwards. To charge that cave was certain death, and yet it was imperative that its occupier should be dislodged. The foremost man had little chance of escape in attacking the position, and this was well known to the gallant

officer who, rushing forward, and, followed by Mr. Lysons and three men of the 90th regiment, strove to force an entrance. The cave in question was a deep hollow or chasm in the rocks, and as Captain Campbell sought to enter, he fell, shot dead. This, however, enabled his companions to effect their entrance and despatch the Zulu ere he had time to reload and do further mischief; but it was a success all too dearly purchased in the loss of so gallant a life. Continuing our scrambles over vast masses of rocks and giant boulders, we at length reached the broad, grassy plateau which forms the summit of the Inhlobane. Many of us were a little short of wind, and I must confess that, inured as I was to mountain climbing by many Scottish hills, Swiss-Italian Alps, or snow-capped Andes, surmounted in other days, I was not sorry to reach the top, and could not resist a gasp or two in search of fresh air. After a few minutes' law had been given to rest and get cool, we turned to follow two mountain Zulus who acted the part of guides, and whom we had found on the hillside during our upward progress and pressed into our service. They led us by a short cut across the broad, flat plateau, which had all the appearance of a great plain, and which, had we not known it, we should never have guessed

to be the summit of a high hill. The ground in many places was thickly strewn with the bones and skeletons of horses, while here and there the grinning death's head of some unburied Zulu seemed to mock us with its horrid stare as we passed along. Now and then our somewhat winding course would bring us to the edge of the mountain's northern face, which fell away in sheer precipices, some hundreds of feet down. The view, which lay stretched out in a vast panorama, was exceedingly beautiful; the country away to the eastward being of the most hilly and rugged description, while the blue outlines of the Lebombo Mountains rose grandly majestic on the far horizon. Several miles of this kind of walking made us all feel rather footsore, weary, and limp. For myself, I was undergoing an agony of thirst, and my tongue had become so dry and parched that it had withered up and clung to the roof of my mouth in a most distressing manner. I would have rushed at the veriest puddle in existence had such a puddle come in my way, but no such thing existed on the dry, parched-up, glaring plateau of the great Inhlobane. Far away on the plains below glittered and glistened several lakes of shining silver, the sight of which only aggravated and tortured my thirst, and rendered

it almost insupportable. Walking, too, in a habit and top-boots is not the easiest and pleasantest method of toiling along a burning plateau. My feet began to swell, and walking became a difficulty. All these little annoyances I, however, kept to myself, for fear of being a nuisance to my companions; while, for a time, all discomfort seemed to be forgotten in the interest with which the sight of the "Devil's Pass" filled me.

We had by this time reached this singular link, which connects the two portions of the Inhlobane. Let my readers try and picture to themselves a sudden and abrupt slope, so steep as almost to be called perpendicular, and whose face is so rugged and rocky as almost to defy even the descent of man. If they can condense this into their imagination, they will have formed a true idea of the Devil's Pass. To me it seemed as though nature had chosen this spot on which to perform her gambols: vast masses of disjointed rocks and giant boulders lay piled, one on the top of the other, for some 200 feet down, whence a narrow ledge joined the western portion of the mountain.

Ere attempting the descent, a few of us lay down on the ground to rest ourselves, and await one or two of our party who had fallen behind.

During this interval we were able to examine the precipitous pass down which Colonel Buller had led his 200 mounted men, surrounded by thick masses of attacking Zulus. Bravely had every inch of the way been fought—as bravely disputed; but the loss sustained was terrible, and over sixty horses were left writhing in the agonies of death on that rocky slope, whence escape was impossible for many a poor maimed or broken-legged beast. Their sufferings are long since over, but the bleaching carcasses of many still remain. Some lie jammed in crevices where they fell; the bones of others, dragged hither and thither by despoiling vultures, cover the stones and rocks around. It is a scene of past carnage whose traces will bleach on beneath a burning sun for yet many and many a year.

And on this rugged spot many a gallant act was performed that day, which it is not in my province here to relate. All know that it was here that Colonel Buller gained the Victoria Cross, and that the gallant Piet Uys, in returning to the assistance of his dismounted son, was attacked and assegaied. On the spot whereon he fell a rough stone has been erected bearing his name, which is scratched in rudely-formed letters.

The remainder of our party having arrived

upon the scene, we commenced the descent of the Devil's Pass. It proved even a more arduous task than we, examining it from its summit, had imagined; and it was not without many a slip and a slide, and a tumble or two, that we reached the lower plateau of the Western Inhlobane. Here Major Fraser stopped to make a sketch of the pass, while the rest of us walked slowly on. The torture of thirst had returned with renewed vigour, and for the first time in my life I underwent this experience. When at last we reached the western face of the mountain and commenced the descent, we could distinguish, far away below, the friendly Zulu kraals at which we had breakfasted in the morning, and where doubtless, even at that moment, a refreshing repast was already awaiting us. With longing eyes I once or twice glanced in their direction, and pictured the moment to myself when a soft, cooling drink would banish the torturer thirst; but each time they always appeared farther off than ever, and I gave up looking for them as an action more of pain than pleasure.

But the happy moment came at last when we actually neared the kraals. Unable any longer to bear the agonies of thirst, I pressed ahead of