



# LION HUNTING

IN  
SOUTH AFRICA.

## CHAPTER I.

TRADING AT THE CAPE—PREPARATIONS  
FOR HUNTING.

My first object, after having resolved to make a hunting expedition into the interior of Southern Africa, was to find some experienced person who

could give me the necessary information as to what purchases I ought to make in the way of waggons and oxen, and as to my outfit in general; and I accordingly applied to an individual of the name of Murphy, a trader in the interior, who, I had reason to believe, was better acquainted than any other person in Grahamstown with the frontiers of the colony, and the adjoining territories of the Griqua and Bechuana tribes, situated beyond the Great Orange River. With this person I had already had the pleasure of becoming known during the short time I was quartered in Grahamstown in the month of July, 1843, having been introduced to him by another trader, a man from my own land of Moray, who was famous among the Dutch Boers about and beyond the frontiers. This man, by name Andrew Thompson, of Forres, was one of three brothers, all of whom followed the same adventurous line of life, and were as steady, hard-working, and determined young men as might be met with throughout the colony.

As, in the course of the following pages, I shall have occasion to allude to these traders, it will perhaps be as well to give the reader a sketch of the manner in which their occupation is conducted. Each trader is supposed to be the proprietor of one or two ox-waggons. These they "load up," from the large stores of the merchants in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, with every species of merchandise which the far-dwelling isolated Dutch Boers are likely to require. So supplied, they set out on their long journey, which usually occupies from six to eight months; at the end of this time they return to the colony, enriched with immense droves of sleek oxen and fat wethers, selected from the numerous herds and flocks of the pastoral dwellers in the interior. The waggons of a trader generally contain groceries, hardware, bales of cloth and canvas, haberdashery, saddlery, crockery—in short, everything, from an awl for the Boer to mend his "feldtschoens" or country shoes, to a roll of cherry-coloured or sky-blue riband to tie up the bonny brown locks of his fair daughters, whose beauty, I fear, in too many cases, like that of Skye terriers, consists in their ugliness.

As the trader advances up the country and effects exchanges, he leaves the cattle or sheep for which he has bar-

tered his goods, in charge of the Boer their former master, picking them up on his return southward. When all his merchandise is disposed of, he generally winds up his dealings by exchanging the waggon or waggons which bore them for cash or oxen, or both, and then, purchasing a horse, returns in light marching order to the colony.

The price which a trader gives for a waggon is usually from 40*l.* to 60*l.*, and in war-times often a thousand rix-dollars, or 75*l.*, and he generally obtains for it at the close of his journey from forty to fifty oxen, which he is supposed to select himself. The value of the waggon is partly dependent on the character of the tent or tilt. Tents are of two kinds; the one being coarsely but strongly constructed of green boughs fitting into iron staples along the sides of the waggon, and lashed together with strips of green hide so as to form a succession of arches overhead. These are kept in their position by means of long straight wands laid all along the outside of the arches, the whole framework being very strongly secured by the strips of green hide. On the top of this are placed coarse Kaffir mats made of reeds; these act, to use a seafaring phrase, as a Scotchman, to keep the waggon-sail, which is of stout canvas, from chafing. The other variety of tent is of a less homely build, and termed by the colonists a cap-tent. It requires the hand of a skilful waggon-builder, and is much more elaborately finished, the wood which supports and composes it being all neatly sawn and planed, and fastened together with iron rivets.

This description of waggon is preferred by the aristocracy among the Boers, as presenting the more *distingué* appearance of the two, when they drive their fraus and children on a round of visits, which they are constantly doing; or when flocking to the "Nachmal," or communion, which happens three or four times in the year. The former, or common wand-tent, however, possesses a great advantage over the cap-tent, inasmuch as, in the first place, it is cheaper by 10*l.*, and secondly, if broken in a capsizé, which in Cape travelling is an affair of common occurrence, it is easily repaired on the spot; whereas the cap-tent waggon, if once upset, is irremediably ruined.

When a trader arrives on a Boer's farm, he halts and walks

up to the door to inquire where he is to "outspan," or unyoke the oxen, and also in what direction they are to be driven to graze. At the door he is met by the baas, or master, generally pipe in mouth, who, cordially greeting him with one hand, raises his hat from his head with the other. The Boers lay great stress on this piece of etiquette, which has to be performed with a whole string of juvenile Boers following in the rear, each encased in a very roomy pair of inexpressibles, and crowned with an immense broad-brimmed tile, nearly half the breadth of its wearer. Permission to outspan being obtained, and a few complimentary speeches interchanged, the trader inquires of the Boer if he has any fat oxen to handle or barter, to which the Boer either at once replies in the negative, or more commonly says, "I do not know. What have you got on your waggon?" The trader answers, "I have got a little of everything, and all of the very best quality, and you shall have anything you require as low as a trader can possibly sell it. I shall presently unload a little for your inspection." The Boer politely says, "No, no, mynheer, you must not off-load; it would grieve me that mynheer should exert himself so much:" to which the trader replies, "It is no trouble; we are accustomed to do it, and it is our business." The trader then instructs his knecht, or head-servant, to make a parade of the goods, and accompanies the Boer into the house, where dinner shortly makes its appearance, to which the Boer invariably, in the most hospitable manner, makes every white stranger welcome. Here, if the trader is wide awake to his own interest, he will pay marked attention to the Noe or frau, as no bargain or transaction of any nature can be ratified with a Dutchman without *her* full concurrence and approval. The Dutch are particularly cleanly in their establishments and cooking, and moreover possess a very fair notion of the culinary art, their tables in general being graced with several very excellent and substantial dishes. When dinner is over, all hands resort to the waggon and overhaul the merchandise, where it is ten to one but the Noe will find about fifty different articles that she will prevail upon her husband to believe indispensable in the private economy of his establishment. Thus when "handling" once begins, it

often goes on briskly, and, from a Boer who at the outset declared himself independent of the trader's supplies, as many as two or three, or even half-a-dozen, fat oxen are often obtained.

As the trader knows well from past experience that the Boer will be sure to endeavour to abate his prices, he makes a point of asking a little more than he intends to take, that he may be able to give in to mynheer's importunities, who, with a sly wink at his wife, congratulates himself on his shrewdness, and flatters himself that he has run a hard bargain.

When the trader has collected all his cattle, he drives them by steady marches, of from twenty to thirty miles in the twenty-four hours, which are performed chiefly during the night, to Grahamstown or Beaufort, where he disposes of them to the butchers. At the former place they are purchased for the use of the town, and by the Government contractors for the supply of the troops. At Beaufort, which is on the high road to Cape Town, they are purchased for the supply of the Cape Town market. The payments for the cattle are seldom, if ever, made in hard cash, the poor trader having to content himself with approved bills, drawn at six or nine months, which in too many cases are never honoured, the defaulter being found either bankrupt, or to have bolted for England or California. The life of a trader is hard and harassing, and he is often liable to very heavy losses by deaths from severe drought, distempers, and other causes; also from the chances of war, oxen straying and being found no more, overstocked markets, and non-payments as above, besides the danger to which he is sometimes exposed from the attacks of wild beasts. During the time he is engaged in driving his oxen, he is compelled to watch his cattle all hours of the night, in all weathers, always obliged to have his clothes on, and to sleep when he can, after the manner of a sea-captain in bad weather, who hangs his nose on to a rutlin, and so takes a nap. As an instance of the injury from chances of war I may here allude to the severe losses sustained by my friend Mr. Peter Thompson. During the war that ravaged the colony in the years 1846 and 1847, he was returning to Grahamstown with a large herd of some hundred fine oxen, the well-earned

proceeds of a toilsome expedition, when he was attacked, within one march of Grahamstown, in De Bruin's Poort, a rugged and densely-wooded ravine, by a band of the marauding Amaponda Kaffirs, armed with guns and assagais, who swept off the whole of his drove, he himself barely escaping with his life.

In years when the prices of cattle are low, these traders occasionally vary their line of march, and, forsaking the Boers for a season, load up a suitable cargo, and direct their course for the Bechuana tribes, from whom they obtain ivory, karosses (skin cloaks), and ostrich-feathers, along with various curiosities, for which they obtain a ready sale in the Grahamstown market, where good ivory averages from 4s. to 4s. 6d. per pound. Karosses vary in price from 1l. to 3l. each, according to their size, kind, and quality. Ostrich-feathers used to fetch from 5l. to 6l. per pound, but, partly owing to the feathers being less worn by the votaries of fashion in London, and partly to the late disturbances throughout Europe, the prices have greatly fallen.\* The articles required for trading with the Bechuana tribes are beads of all sizes and colours, brass and copper wire, knives and hatchets, clothing for both sexes, ammunition, guns, young cows, and she-goats. The two latter the trader obtains in barter from the Boers, Griqua and Koranna tribes, more immediately adjacent to the colony. Some writers have erroneously stated that snuff and tobacco are a good circulating medium among the tribes in Southern Africa, but in the course of my experience I can scarcely remember ever having obtained the smallest trifle in barter for either, not even a drink of milk. The natives have certainly no objection to receive these articles when given gratuitously, but are far too wide awake to place any great value upon them. During my career in Southern Africa I have had much experience in trading with the Bechuana tribes, and, as I shall have occasion to refer to my trading exploits in the course of my narrative, I have entered into the above particulars, that the reader may, at the outset, form an idea of the manner in which these things are conducted.

\* From seventy-five to ninety good-sized ostrich-feathers weigh a pound.

To return to my own journey. I had scarcely expected to find Andrew Thompson and Murphy still in Grahamstown, where I left them about three months before, when I marched thence into Caffraria with my regiment; the latter, whom I found to be a confirmed tippler, was able, in his few lucid moments, to give me much valuable information relative to the preparations which I required to make in the way of purchasing oxen and waggons, engaging servants, &c. &c.; also various wrinkles as to the conducting of my establishment, the hours of marching, and the line of country which I had chalked out for my first expedition. Poor Murphy! he was as kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed.

From the 1st till the 22nd of October I was actively employed in making the necessary purchases and arrangements for my journey, and in forwarding my affairs, in which Murphy, during his sober intervals, most willingly assisted me. As the reader will observe, my establishment at my first outset was on a much more limited scale than upon subsequent expeditions. This was partly owing to the uncertainty which I felt as to the success of my sporting undertakings, and the length of time I might feel inclined to devote to this line of life. I was much in the dark as to what sport I might expect to realise, and what difficulties I should have to encounter, in the trip I was about to make; the truth being that I could not find a single individual, either among the natives or the military, who could in the smallest degree enlighten me on the subject.

The general impression amongst my military friends was, that any game which remained in the interior must have, ere then, retreated to such remote parts, far away in the territories of savage tribes, as to be utterly beyond the reach of any sportsman, however enterprising; and when they saw me bustling about, making my purchases, they used to say to me, "It is all nonsense your laying out your money in this way. We shall see you returning in a month or two, like those fellows who went on a shooting trip last year."

The shooting party here alluded to consisted of one officer of the 7th Dragoons, two of the 27th, and others who, having obtained a few weeks' leave, and burning to distinguish them-

selves in a campaign against the feræ of Southern Africa, had hired a waggon, and penetrated as far as the Thebus mountain, where for a few days they enjoyed some good sport among the black wildebeest and springboks which abound on the plains surrounding it; till, having broken the stocks of their rifles in falls from their horses while impetuously "jaging" the game, they returned to head-quarters, one suffering from *coup-de-soleil*, and the rest from dysentery brought on by drinking bad water, they having been unfortunate in the vley beside which they had fixed their encampment. My gallant friend, Lieutenant H—, of the 91st, was one of the most urgent in endeavouring to dissuade me from my steadfast purpose of trekking up the country, and recommended me rather to return with him to England, whither he was about to proceed. H—, who, like many others of the military, entertained a profound disgust for the colony and everything connected with it, at first could hardly believe I was in earnest when I spoke of going up the country; and when convinced that such was my determination, he said, with a strong lisp which was habitual to him, "Good G—, Cummin! you are thurely mad to remain longer in thith country after you have obtained leave to return to dear old England. I athure you, I had rather be a thoe-black in England than live in thith beathly country."

Notwithstanding these friendly dissuasions on the part of my acquaintance, I continued to prosecute my affairs so unremittingly, that on the 22nd I considered my manifold arrangements complete, and, being much harassed and annoyed by the unavoidable delays to which I had been subjected, I was full of impatience to make a start. These delays were in a great measure occasioned by the weather, heavy and constant rains having fallen during the previous fourteen days, accompanied with a cold wind from the Southern Ocean. This, of necessity, materially interfered with and delayed my arrangements, and had also the effect of rendering the country perfectly unfit for locomotion, in many places cutting up the roads with rugged impassable watercourses, and in low-lying districts converting them into deep, impracticable quagmires.

It will here be necessary to give a detailed account of my outfit, to put the reader at once in possession of the extent and nature of my establishment and camp equipage. My first object was, of course, to secure a travelling-waggon, and I procured an excellent new cap-tent one, complete with all its gear ready for inspanning, from Mr. Ogilvie, of Grahamstown, for 60*l.*; which, as it eventually proved a right good one, was decidedly a bargain. I very soon found out, however, that, as I collected numerous specimens of natural history, one waggon was insufficient; and not long after, in the town of Colesberg, on the frontiers of the colony, I purchased a second, also a cap-tent waggon, with its necessary accompaniment, a span of oxen; and at a later period I found it necessary to purchase a third, and became the proprietor of considerably more than a hundred draught oxen.

From an English farmer in the vicinity of Grahamstown I obtained a span of twelve excellent, well-trained, black, züürveldt oxen, which I judged suitable for my purpose, they having been in the habit of bringing in very heavy loads of wood to the Grahamstown market. Their price was 3*l.* each; and as it is not unusual to see an ox, in the best of spans, knock up on long marches, by Murphy's advice I purchased two spare oxen of Mr. Thompson.

My stud of horses as yet consisted of but two, which had been my chargers in the regiment. These were "Sinon," a stallion I had bought of Major Goodman of the 27th, and "The Cow," an excellent dark-brown gelding, which I obtained from Colonel Somerset, of "Ours." I did not think it wise to lay out more money in horse-flesh in Grahamstown, as I should shortly have to pass through the Hantam, where most of the Boers breed horses extensively, and which are famed for their spirit and hardiness throughout the colony. I engaged four servants,—an Englishman of the name of Long, as head-servant, a thorough cockney, who, as I afterwards learnt, had formerly been a cab-driver in London, and whom I took into my service at Murphy's recommendation, Long being supposed to possess a certain degree of experience, having penetrated as far as the banks of the Orange River on a trading excursion on his own account; but his heart, as the

event proved, inclined more to worship at the shrine of Venus than at that of Diana. A certain little dark-eyed damsel, who acted as laundress to the military, and who was employed all day in driving her mangle, seemed entirely to engross his thoughts—Long frequently observing that “there was that sweet little creature obliged to drive a mangle who ought rather to be sitting practising at her ‘pihanny.’”

My other three servants were natives. A waggon-driver, named Kleinboy, a stout active Hottentot, with the high cheek-bones and woolly head of his race, and who was quite *au fait* at his department. Like many others of his countrymen, he was subject to fits of sulks, and much preferred reclining for hours under my waggons, or in the shade of a bush practising on his violin, to looking after his master's work. My leader's name was Carollus, a stout, powerful fellow, descended from the Mozambique races; he was the third whom I had engaged in that capacity, the other two having absconded. He entered my service under cover of night, having absconded from Kingsley of “Ours”—that gentleman, according to his assertion, being in the habit of administering a little wholesome correction with the jambok, which, on further acquaintance with him, I had reason to believe he richly merited. My third native servant was Cobus, a Hottentot of light weight, the son of a veteran in my regiment. He listed in the capacity of after-rider, and proved to be first-rate in his calling, being the best horseman I met with in South Africa; he also, like Kleinboy, was liable to fits of sulkiness.

The baggage, provisions, and general stores which I carried with me were as follows:—Two sacks, containing 300 lbs. of coffee, 4 quarter-chests of tea, 300 lbs. of sugar, 300 lbs. of rice, 180 lbs. of meal, 100 lbs. of flour, 5 lbs. of pepper, 100 lbs. of salt, an anker of vinegar, several large jars of pickles, half a dozen hams and cheeses, 2 cases of gin, 1 anker of brandy, 1 half-um of Cape brandy, iron baking-pots with long legs, stewing and frying-pans, saucepans and gridirons, tin water-buckets of various sizes, 2 large “fagie,” or water-casks, an accompaniment which no Cape waggon is ever without, 2 large flasks of tar to be subsequently mixed with

hard fat for greasing the wheels, 6 dozen pocket-knives, 24 boxes of snuff, 50 pounds of tobacco, 300 lbs. of coral, white, red, and bright blue beads of various sizes; 3 dozen tinder-boxes; 1 cwt. of brass and copper wire, which the Bechuana tribes, especially those dwelling to the east, readily barter and convert into ornaments for their legs and arms; 2 dozen sickles, 2 spades, 2 shovels, 1 pickaxe, 5 superior American axes, 2 augers, 1 stock and 36 bits, hatchets, planes, drawing-knives, several coarse chisels for waggon-work, a vice, blacksmith and carpenter's hammers, and a variety of other tools appertaining to both these trades. A gross of awls, a gross of sail-needles, 50 hanks of sail-twine, 2 bolts of sail-canvas, several rolls of stout woollen cloths, 2 dozen gown-pieces, 6 dozen Malay handkerchiefs; thread, needles, and buttons; ready-made jackets and trowsers for my people, several dozen coarse shirts, Scotch bonnets, and cocker-nonnys; as for shoes, colonial servants are supposed to make them for themselves; a few medicines, arsenical soap, English and coarse Boer's soap. Also, 1 large bell-tent, 1 mattress and bedding, 1 camp-table and chair, and my canteen, which I found a most serviceable and convenient appendage during my wanderings. My saddlery consisted of 2 English hunting-saddles, 2 common ones for servants, and 1 pack-saddle to convey venison to camp. My ordnance was as follows:—3 double-barrelled rifles by Purdey, William Moore, and Dickson of Edinburgh—the latter two-grooved, the most perfect and useful rifle I ever had the pleasure of using; 1 heavy single-barrelled German rifle, carrying 12 to the lb. This last was an old companion, which had been presented to me, when a boy, by my dear and much-lamented friend and brother-sportsman, the late James Duff of Innes House. With this rifle, about ten years before, I had brought down my first stag on the Paps of Jura, and subsequently bowled over many a princely master-stag and graceful roebuck in his summer-coat, in the glens and forests of my native land. The Purdey also was a tried friend, both it and the heavy German having been with me in several campaigns on the plains and in the jungles of Hindostan. Besides these I had 3 stout double-barrelled guns for rough work, when hard riding and quick

loading are required. Several lead-ladles of various sizes, a whole host of bullet-moulds, loading-rods, shot-belts, powder-flasks, and shooting-belts; 3 cwt. of lead; 50 lbs. of pewter for hardening the balls to be used in destroying the larger game; 10,000 prepared leaden bullets, bags of shot of all sizes, 100 lbs. of fine sporting gunpowder, 300 lbs. of coarse gunpowder, about 50,000 best percussion-caps, 2000 gun-flints, greased patches and cloth to be converted into the same. I carried also several spare yokes, yoke-skeys, whip-sticks, rhims, straps, and 2 sets of spare linchpins, all of which last articles belong to the waggon. With the above, and 200*l.* in cash, I considered myself prepared to undertake a journey of at least twelve months amongst Boers or Bechuanas, independent of either.

While I was laying in these stores, I once or twice amused myself by riding in quest of rheebock in the rugged and precipitous high grounds lying immediately to the south of Grahamstown. On one of these occasions I was accompanied by my cousin, Colonel Campbell of the 91st (one of the bravest and most distinguished officers in the late Kaffir war, and withal about the best rifle-shot and keenest sportsman then in the colony), a brother of Captain Campbell of Skipness, the author of the 'Old Forest-Ranger,' a work highly approved amongst Indian Nimrods. The rheebock is a species of antelope generally found in all mountain districts throughout Southern Africa, from Table Mountain to the latitude of Kuruman or New Litakoo. Of this animal there are two varieties; the rhooye-rheebock, or red rheebock; and the vaal-rheebock, or grey rheebock. The range of the vaal-rheebock, to the northward, ceases in the latitude of the Long Mountains lying to the south of Kuruman; the other variety is met with as far north as the mountains in the territory of Sichele, chief of the Baquaines, about fifty miles to the north of the Kurrichane range: both of these antelopes frequent high and rocky mountains. They are both hunted in the same manner; and, when properly pursued, I think it more nearly resembles Scotch Highland deerstalking than the pursuit of any other antelope.

Throughout the grassy mountains which the hunter must

traverse in following this antelope, his eye is often gladdened by romantic dells and sparkling rivulets, the exhilarating freshness of which strongly and pleasingly contrasts with the barren, rocky mountain heights and shoulders immediately contiguous. The green banks and little hollows along the margins of these streamlets are adorned with innumerable species of brilliant plants and flowering shrubs in wild profusion. Amongst them, to my eye, the most dazzling in their beauty were perhaps those lovely heaths for which the Cape is so justly renowned. These exquisite plants, singly, or in groups, here adorn the wilderness, with a freedom and luxuriance which, could the English gardener or amateur florist behold, he might well feel disheartened, so infinitely does Nature in this favoured clime surpass in wild exuberance the nurselings of his artificial care. I remember being particularly struck with two pre-eminently brilliant varieties, the one bearing a rose-coloured, the other a blood-red bell; and though I regret to say I am but a poor botanist, even in the heat of the chase I paused, spell-bound, to contemplate with admiration their fascinating beauty. Others, with their downy stems and waxen flowers of every gaudy hue, green, lilac, and various shades of pink, red, and crimson, some of them with brown lips to the bell, flourished in the richer hollows of their native glen, or bloomed with equal loveliness along the arid cliffs and fissures of the overhanging rocks. Almost equalling the heaths in beauty, and surpassing them in the additional attraction of their scented leaves, a whole host of geraniums fill the balmy breeze with their delicious perfume. These are too well known to admit of any novelty in description, but I may mention, *en passant*, that they attain a far larger growth in their native soil than in our greenhouses. Small groups of the lofty, fair, conscious-looking iris, rear their graceful heads along the edges of the streams. Their fairy forms reflected in the waters, "they seem to stand like guardian Naiads of the strand." Another tribe of plants, which particularly delighted me from old associations, though not so striking as many of its neighbours for perfume and brilliancy, was composed of several varieties of the light, airy fern, or bracken, which, whether gracefully overshadowing the mossy

stones, eternally moistened by the bubbling spray of the stream, which they kissed as it danced along, or veiling the grey lichen-clad masses of rock in the hollows higher up, strongly reminded me of those so conspicuously adorning the wild glens in the mountains of my native land. Besides these, a thousand other gay flowers deck the hills and plains wherever the eye can fall. Endless varieties of the ixea, the hæmanthus, the amaryllis, the marigold, and a number of everlasting flowers, are scattered around with a lavish hand; also the splendid protea, whose sweets never fail to attract swarms of the insect tribes, on which several bright kinds of fly-catchers, their plumage glancing in the noonday sun, are constantly preying. Farther down these watercourses, in the dense, shady ravines, the jungle is ornamented with long tangled festoons of different creepers, among which the wild jessamine ranks foremost, hanging in fragrant garlands amid the shaggy lichens, and bunches of bright orange-coloured mistletoe, for which the forests of Africa, in the vicinity of her sea-coasts, are so remarkable. While touching on the floral beauties of the hills more immediately adjoining the sea coast, I may remark that here are the great nurseries for heaths and geraniums. As the traveller advances up the country these gradually disappear, and, together with the animal kingdom, the vegetable world assumes entirely new features; the colonial forest-trees and bushes, herbs and plants, being succeeded by a vast and endless world of loveliness; unseen, unknown, untrodden, save by those varied multitudes of stupendous, curious, and beautiful quadrupeds, whose forefathers have roamed its mighty solitudes from primæval ages, and with whom I afterwards became so intimately acquainted.

## CHAPTER II.

## COMMENCEMENT OF MY JOURNEYINGS.

ON the 23rd of October, 1843, having completed my arrangements, and collected and settled all outlying debts, the weather, which had been wet and stormy for many days past, assuming a more settled appearance, I resolved to "inspan" and "trek," which the reader will bear in mind mean to yoke and march. I accordingly communicated my intentions to my followers, and despatched my leader Carollus to the neighbouring mountains, where my cattle were supposed to be pasturing, to bring them up. He expended the greater part of the day in searching for them in vain about their wonted feeding-ground: at length, late in the afternoon, he chanced to meet a comrade, who informed him that the oxen he was seeking were safely lodged in the "skit-kraal," or pound, Colonel Somerset, of "Ours," having detected them in the act of luxuriating in a field of green forage. This pleasing intelligence demanded my immediate attendance at the skit-kraal, where, by a disbursement of nine shillings, I obtained their release.

Having secured my oxen, my next business was to find my servants, who were all missing. Long, as I expected, was found gallantly assisting the dark-eyed heroine of the mangle, and Kleinboy and Cobus were discovered in a state of brutal intoxication, stretched on the greensward in front of one of the canteens, along with sundry other waggon-drivers and Hottentot Venuses, all in the same condition, having expended on liquor the pay which they had extracted from me in advance on the plea of providing themselves with necessaries. Drunk as the rest were, Carollus, who was sober, managed to allure them to the waggons, and, Long assisting, the in-spanning commenced. As no man who has not visited the

Cape can form any idea of the manner in which this daily operation is performed, it will here be necessary to explain it, and to say a few more words concerning the structure of a waggon.

The Cape waggon is a large and powerful, yet loosely-constructed vehicle, running on four wheels. Its extreme length is about 18 feet, its breadth varying from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet; the depth of the sides is about 2 feet 6 inches in front, but higher towards the back of the waggon. All along the sides two rows of iron staples are riveted, in which are fastened the boughs forming the tent, over the waggon usually 5 feet high, with an awning of Kaffir mat, and a strong canvas sail over all, with "fore-clap" and "after-clap," the colonial names for two broad canvas curtains, that form part and parcel of the sail, and hang in the front and rear of the waggon, reaching to within a few inches of the ground. In the front is placed a large chest occupying the extreme breadth of the waggon, on which the driver and two passengers of ordinary dimensions can sit abreast. This is called the fore-chest, and is secured from sliding forwards by two buffalo rheims, or strips of dressed hide, placed across the front of it, and secured to the sides. A similar chest is fastened in like manner to the rear of the waggon, called the after-chest. Along the sides of the waggon, and outside it, are two longer and narrower chests called side-chests; these are supported by two horizontal bars of hard wood riveted to the bottom of the waggon, and are very convenient for holding tools and all manner of odds and ends too numerous to mention. The fore and after chests are likewise extremely useful for containing clothing, ammunition, and a thousand small articles in daily use. Along the sides of the tent are suspended rows of square canvas bags, called side-pockets, in which the traveller keeps his hair-brushes and combs, razors, knives, tooth-brushes, soap, towels, or anything else he may wish to have at hand. In one of these bags I usually placed my luncheon—often a slice of elephant's trunk.

The traveller sleeps upon a sort of cot, termed a "cardell." This cardell is a light, strong, oblong frame, about eight feet in length, and occupies the breadth of the waggon. It is

bored all round with small holes, through which strips of hide are interlaced, forming a sort of network on which the mattress rests. This cot is slung across the waggon, and is attached with thongs to the bows of the tent, its elevation being regulated by the cargo, which is carefully stowed away beneath it in the body of the waggon. Suspended underneath the hind part of the vehicle is a strong wooden framework called the trap, on which the pots and gridirons are lashed during a march. The waggon is steered by a pole, called the dissel-boom, to the end of which is fastened the trektow, a stout rope formed of raw buffalo-hide. It is pulled by a span, or team, consisting of twelve oxen, which draw the waggon by yokes fastened along the trektow at regular intervals by means of strips of raw hide. Passing through each end of the yoke, at distances of 18 inches from one another, are two parallel bars of tough wood about a foot and a half in length; these are called yoke-skeys. In inspanning, the yoke is placed on the back of the neck of the ox, with one of these skeys on either side, and towards the ends are notches in which is fixed the strap, made of twisted hide; this, passing under the neck of the animal, secures him in the yoke.

Besides these straps, each pair of oxen is strongly coupled by the buffalo rheims, which are used in catching and placing them in their proper order, preparatory to inspanning. A rheim is a long strip of prepared hide with a noose at the end, it is made either of ox or buffalo hide, and is about eight feet long. A waggon likewise is provided with a tar-bucket, two powerful iron chains which are called the rheim-chains, and a large iron drag called the rheim-schoen; also the invariable whip and jambok, the former consisting of a bamboo pole upwards of 20 feet in length, with a thong of about 25 feet, to the end of which is sewn with "rheimpys," or strips of dressed steinbok-skin, the "after-slock," and to this again is fastened the "fore-slock," corresponding with the little whipcord lash of the English coachman. The "fore-slock," about which the waggon-drivers are very particular, is about a yard in length, and is formed of a strip of the supple skin of a particular variety of antelope prepared in a peculiar manner. The skins of only a few species of antelopes are

possessed of sufficient toughness for this purpose. Those most highly prized amongst the colonists are the skins of the hartebeest, koodoo, blesbok, and bushbuck; when none of these are to be obtained they use the skin of a he-goat, which is very inferior. The colonial waggon-driver wields this immense whip with great dexterity and grace; as he cracks it he produces a report nearly equal to that of a gun, and by this means signals his leader, who is perhaps herding the oxen at the distance of a mile, to bring them up when it is time to inspan.

The "jambok" is another instrument of persuasion, indispensable in the outfit of every Cape waggon. It is made of the thick, tough hide either of the white rhinoceros or hippopotamus. Its length is from 6 to 7 feet; its thickness at the handle is about an inch and a half, and it tapers gradually to the point. These jamboks are exceedingly tough and pliant, and are capable of inflicting most tremendous chastisement upon the thick hides of sulky and refractory oxen. Those manufactured from the skin of the hippopotamus are very much superior to those of the rhinoceros, being naturally of a much tougher quality, and, if properly prepared, one of them will last for many years. A smaller description of jambok is manufactured for the benefit of horses, and may be seen in the hands of every horseman in the colony.

When the leader brings up the oxen to the waggon to be inspanned, the waggon-driver, if possible, sends another Hottentot to his assistance, especially if any of the oxen in the span happen to be young or refractory. These, armed with a huge jambok in one hand, and a handful of stones in the other, one on either flank, with shouts, yells, and imprecations, urge forward the unwilling team towards the yokes, where the driver is standing with the twelve long buffalo rheims hanging on his left arm, pouring forth a volley of soothing terms, such as—"Ah! now, Scotland! Wo, ha, Blaiberg! you skellum, keer dor Carollus for Blaiberg, yo stand somar da, ich wichna wha yo hadachta ist." (Turn there for Blaiberg; you stand there in an absent state, I do not know where your ideas are.) "Holland, you ould My-footy" ("Myfooty" is a common Hottentot term, which I

would defy even themselves to construe. The Dutch word "somar," mentioned above, is also a word to which I think I could challenge the most learned schoolmaster in the colony to attach any definite meaning. It is used both by Boers and Hottentots in almost every sentence; it is an answer to every question; and its meanings are endless.) "Slangfeldt, you neuxel!" (Snakefield, you humbug!) "Wo ha, now, Creishmann!" (Crooked man.) "Orlair, you verdomde Kind, vacht un bidgte, ich soll you krae." (Civilized! you d—d child; wait a bit, I'll serve you out.) "Vitfoot, you duivel! slahm dar für Vitfoot, slahm ihm dat he barst!" (Whitefoot, you devil! flog there Whitefoot, flog him till he bursts.) "Englandt, you ould ghroote-pench! Ah now! Wo ha! Ye dat so lowe ist in die shwor plach, und dharum so vees at inspanning! Vacht un bidgte, ich soll a plach for you aitsuch. Ye lob da for nett so as ye will, mar ich soll you arter bring, whar ich kann you mach like baikam." (England, you old big-paunch! Ah now! Who ha! You who are so lazy in the heavy place, and nevertheless so vicious at inspanning. Wait a little. I shall seek out a place for you! You tramp there in front, exactly as you please; but I will yoke you farther back, where I can reach you with facility.) This is said in allusion to "England's" having lately been in the habit of being yoked in the front of the team, and if it is very long the driver cannot reach the leading oxen with his whip without descending from the box, and, therefore, when a fore-ox becomes lazy, he is yoked farther back, that he may have the full benefit of the persuasive "fore-slock."

While the driver's tongue is pouring forth this flow of Hottentot eloquence with amazing volubility, his hands and feet are employed with equal activity; the former, in throwing the open noose of the rheim, lasso-like, over the horns of each ox, and drawing it tight round them as he catches him; the latter in kicking the eyes and noses of those oxen which the jamboks and shouts of the leaders behind have driven too far in upon him. At this moment "Blauberg," who is an old offender, and who acquired in early youth the practice which he has never relinquished of bolting from the team at the moment of inspanning, being this day unusually lively, not

having had any severe work for some weeks, suddenly springs round, notwithstanding Kleinboy, well aware of his propensities, has got his particular rheim firmly twisted round his hand; and having once got his tail where his head ought to have been, and thus deprived Kleinboy of all purchase over him, he bounds madly forward, heedless of a large sharp stone with which one of the leaders salutes him in the eye. By his forward career Carollus is instantly dashed to the ground; and Kleinboy, who has pertinaciously grasped the rheim in the vain hope of retrieving the matter, is dragged several yards along the ground, and eventually relinquishes the rheim, at the same time losing a good deal of the outer bark of his unfortunate hand. Away goes Blaumberg in his headlong course, tearing frantically over hill and dale, his rheim flying from his horns like a steamer in the wind. His course lies right across the middle of the Cape-Corps barracks, where about forty or fifty riflemen who are lounging about, parade being over, rush to intercept his course, preceded by a pack of mongrel curs of every shape and size, but in vain; Blaumberg, heedless of a shower of sticks and stones hurled at his devoted head, charges through the midst of them, nor is he recovered for the space of about two hours.

The rest of the team, seeing their driver sprawling on the ground, as a matter of course follow Blaumberg's example; instantly wheeling to the right and left about, away they scamper, each selecting a course for himself, some with, and others without, the appendage of the streamers. The Hottentots, well aware that it will be useless to follow Blaumberg in the usual way, as he would probably lead them a chace of four or five miles, now adopt the most approved method usually practised in such cases. They accordingly drive out a small troop of tamer oxen, with which they proceed in quest of the truant; this troop they cunningly induce Mr. Blaumberg to join, and eventually return with him to the waggon—the driver, with pouting lips and the sweat running down his brow, pouring forth a torrent of threatened vengeance against the offending Blaumberg. The inspanning is then once more commenced as before, and Blaumberg, being this time cautiously placed in a central position, well wedged up by the

other oxen, whereby he is prevented from turning about, is lassoed with the strongest rheim, and firmly secured to the steady old ox who has purposely been driven up beside him. The twelve oxen are soon all securely yoked in their proper places; the leader has made up his "fore-tow," which is a long spare rheim attached round the horns of each of the fore or front oxen, by which he leads the team, and inspanning is reported to be accomplished.

I omitted to mention that the two fore-oxen, and the two after-oxen, which are yoked one on either side of the "dissel-boom," or pole, are always supposed to be the steadiest, most intelligent, and tractable in the team. The two fore-oxen in particular, to be right good ones, require a combination of excellences, as it is indispensable to the safety of the waggon that they should thoroughly understand their duty. They are expected, unguided by reins, to hold the rarely-trodden roads of the remoter parts of the colony either by day or night; and so well trained are these sagacious animals, that it is not uncommon to meet with a pair of fore-oxen which will, of their own accord, hold the "spoor" or track of a single waggon that has crossed a plain perhaps six months previously.

In dangerous ground, however—where the narrow road winds through stones and rocks, or along the brink of a precipice; or where the road is much intersected by water-courses, and bordered by the eternal hillocks raised by the white ants (of the consistence of a brick, being formed, during damp weather, of clay, which the sun afterwards hardens); or where the "aard-varoke," or ant-bear, with his powerful claws has undermined the road with enormous holes—the fore-oxen, however trustworthy, should never be left to their own devices, but the leader should precede them, leading by the tow. But this safe and highly necessary precaution is rarely practised by the ruffianly Hottentots when the "baas" or master is not present, these worthies preferring to sit still and smoke their pipes or play their violins during the march, to performing their duty—thus frequently exposing their employer's property to imminent peril. It is thus that more than half the capsizes, broken axletrees, broken dissel-booms,

and smashed cap-tents, daily occur throughout the colony. All being now in readiness, and some pots and spades, which the Hottentots as a matter of course had omitted to stow away in their proper places, being securely lashed on the trap and to the sides of the waggon, the illustrious Kleinboy brandishes his huge whip, and cracking it with a report which loudly reverberates throughout the walls and houses of the Cape-Corps barracks, shouts out, with stentorian lungs, "Trek, trek, you duivels! Rhure y'lla dar vor, you skellums! Ane spoor trap, you neuxels! Tabelberg, you ould kring! Trek, you löwe paar marys. Schneeberg, you löwe Satan! Blauberg, you duivel's kind!"—(Draw, draw, you devils! Move yourselves forward, there, you skellums! Tramp all in the same track, you humbugs! Table Mountain, you old ring! Draw, you lazy troop of mares! Snow Mountain, you lazy Satan! Blue Mountain, you child of the devil!)—At the same moment he catches the refractory Blauberg the most terrific wip round the ribs with his fore-slock, accompanied by a sharp report like the discharge of a pistol, upon which a cloud of blue hair is seen to fly from the ox, and a long red streak, down which the blood flows, denotes the power of the weapon the driver so mercilessly wields over the backs of his horned team. At last the huge and heavily-laden waggon is in motion, and rolls lightly along after the powerful oxen, which on level ground seem scarcely to feel the yokes that lie across their necks.

Having to pick up several large parcels at the stores of some of the merchants in the town, we trekked down the main street of Grahamstown; and in passing the shops of the butchers and bakers laid in a large supply of bread and fresh meat for immediate use. Before we had proceeded far, some sharp-sighted Hottentots came running after us, calling out that a fountain of tiger's milk had started in the stern of the waggon; and on halting we discovered that several loose cases of gin, which I had purchased for immediate use, and which had not been properly stowed, had sprung a leak. The Hottentots seemed to regret amazingly the loss of so much good liquor, and endeavoured with their hands to catch it as it fell. Owing to the various delays which had occurred during the

day, we were scarcely half a mile clear of Grahamstown when the sun went down; and there being no moon, I deemed it expedient to halt for the night. We accordingly outspanned; and the Hottentots, having secured the oxen to the yokes, and picketed my two horses on the wheels, requested my permission to return to the town to take another farewell of their wives and sweethearts. This I did not deem altogether prudent; but, knowing well that if I withheld my consent they would go without it, I considered it best to comply with a good grace, and, granting a general leave of absence, took on myself the charge of the ambulatory castle, which was destined to be my home during the next five years.

The Hottentots, strange to say, according to their promise, returned to the waggon during the night, and next morning, at dawn of day, I roused them, and we inspanned. When this was accomplished, my head servant Long not appearing, we marched; but had only proceeded about three miles when he managed to overtake us, the road being hilly and very soft, owing to the recent rains. On coming up and recovering his breath, he expressed himself very much disgusted at my starting without him, when I took the liberty of explaining that I expected my servants to wait for me, and not that I should tarry for them. Our progress was considerably impeded by the bad state of the roads, and at ten A.M. we halted for breakfast beside a pool of rain-water, having performed a march of about nine miles. Here, having outspanned our oxen, we set about preparing our gipsy breakfast: one collected sticks for the fires, another filled the kettles at the adjoining "vley," while Long and I were busied in spreading the table and dusting the beefsteaks with salt and pepper.

Having permitted the oxen to graze for a few hours, we again inspanned, holding the high road for Somerset; about sundown we halted for the night on the farm of a Mr. Fichett, a great sheep-farmer, who received me hospitably, and invited me to dine with him. Here I met Captain Codrington, who had lately sold out of the 7th Dragoons. Our march this day lay through a succession of low, undulating hills, richly

clothed with a variety of grasses, herbs, and flowers, with here and there large patches of dwarfish evergreens. I had directed my Hottentots to kraal the oxen that night, with the intention of making an early start on the following morning, but the herdsman contrived to lose them in the thick under-wood. They were, however, recovered at an early hour the next day, and, having breakfasted, I was about to proceed, when Long, with a face worthy of his name, came up to me with a whole tissue of dire complaints about his personal inconveniences, the most galling of which appeared to be his having to sleep on the ground in the tent. On my friend's advancing these objections, I saw very plainly he was not the man for my work, so I made over to him his impedimenta, paid him his month's wages, and wished him a safe return to Grahams-town.

It was a lovely day, with a bright blue sky overhead, covered with light, fleecy clouds, and the trees and shrubs, freshened by the recent rains, emitted an aromatic perfume. Having proceeded some miles, we commenced ascending the Zuurberg range, where we were met by two waggons from Somerset, laden with oranges for the Grahamstown market, of which I purchased several dozen, and found them excellent. The drivers of these waggons informed me that the road in advance was almost impassable, owing to the recent heavy rains. Although their oxen were better than mine, and their waggons lighter by some thousand pounds, they had had great difficulty in coming on, and recommended me to retrace my steps, and, crossing the country, try the other road by De Bruin's Poort. Notwithstanding their remonstrances, I resolved to push on.

About midday I outspanned for two hours, to let the cattle graze; after which, having proceeded a few miles, we found the road, as they predicted, so cut up, that we were obliged to abandon it, and trek along the rugged hill-side, holding a course parallel to it. Marching in front, and sinking up to my ankles in mud at every step, I endeavoured to select the hardest ground, on which the waggon might follow, but it became every moment worse and worse, and the panting oxen straining every nerve to keep it in motion, halted

every hundred yards to take breath. At length the wheels suddenly sank deep into the soil, and became immoveably fixed, upon which we made loose our shovels and pickaxe, and worked hard for half an hour, clearing away the soil in front of and around the wheels; which, being accomplished, we rigged out a fore-tow and extra yoke to inspan my two spare oxen, and then set our whole fourteen to draw, but they could not move the waggon an inch. We then lightened it of a part of the cargo, and, after half an hour's further labour, had relieved the waggon of upwards of three thousand pounds; but still the oxen, notwithstanding the most unmerciful application of both whip and jambok, failed to move it. The thought then struck me of pulling it out backwards; we accordingly cast loose the trektow, and, having hooked on the long span or team to the after part of the waggon, succeeded in extricating it from its deep bed. We next proceeded with much care and trouble to stow away the baggage we had removed, and the oxen being again placed in their position we resumed our journey; but, before we had gone three hundred yards, the waggon again became engulfed, sinking into the earth to such a depth that I half expected it would disappear altogether—the nave of the wheel was actually six or eight inches below the surface. This put us at our wit's ends, and I began to think that, if this was to be our rate of travelling, my hair would be grey ere I reached the land of elephants.

A few minutes after this had occurred another waggon, meeting us from Somerset, hove in sight, but shortly stuck fast within a quarter of a mile of us. Its owner, an Englishman, an Albany transport-rider or carrier, of the name of Leonard, now came up, and requested me to lend him my oxen to assist him in his difficulties, which I did, he promising in return to help me out of mine; but it was not until unloaded of the entire cargo that they succeeded in extricating his, after which, with considerable trouble, they came to us. We now hooked on to my waggon both spans, amounting to twenty-six strong oxen, the drivers standing one on either side, with their whips ready at the given signal to descend upon the devoted animals. I myself, with one of the Hottentots armed with

the jamboks, stood by the after-oxen, upon whom, in a dilemma of this sort, much depends. Every man and beast being at his post, the usual cry of "Trek, trek!" resounded on all sides, accompanied by a torrent of unearthly yells and abusive epithets; at the same time the whips were plied with energetic dexterity, and came down with startling reports on the backs of the oxen throughout the length of the team. The twenty-six oxen, thus urged, at the same moment concentrated their energies, laying a mighty strain on the gear. Something *must* yield, and accordingly my powerful buffalo trektow snapped asunder within a few feet of the dissel-boom. The trektow being strongly knotted together, a second attempt was made, when it snapped in a fresh place. We then unhooked the long drag-chains from beneath the waggon, where-with having fortified the trektow, we made a third trial. The cunning oxen, having now twice exerted themselves in vain, and being well aware the waggon was fast, according to their usual custom, could not be induced to make any further effort, notwithstanding the waggon-drivers had inflicted upon them about half an hour's terrific flogging. In cases of this sort the oxen, instead of taking properly to their work, spring about in the yoke, and turn their tails round where their heads should be, invariably snapping the straps and yoke-skeas, and frequently splitting the yokes. In the present instance my gear did not escape, for, after battling with the oxen till the sun went down, and smashing the half of my rheims, straps, and skeas, and splitting one of my yokes, we were obliged to give it up for the night. We therefore cast loose the oxen, and, driving them up the hill-side, granted them their liberty until morning; leaving our broken gear, pickaxes, spades, and other utensils scattered about the ground in grand confusion—tired and worn out, we kindled a fire, and set about cooking our dinner. Leonard and his servants declared that they had not tasted anything but a little biscuit and coffee during the last three days, the Dutchmen along their road being very unfriendly and inhospitable to the English transport-riders.

Next morning we awoke refreshed by sound slumbers, and having despatched all the Hottentots, excepting one man, in

quest of the oxen, Leonard and I were actively employed for two hours in digging out and off-loading the waggon, after which he and the Hottentot set about preparing the breakfast, whilst I proceeded to darn my worsted stockings, having had the good fortune to obtain some hanks of worsted from the wife of a Scotch serjeant in Grahamstown, after vainly seeking that article in the shops of all the haberdashers in the place. While we were thus employed, Captain Codrington and Mr. Fichett rode up to us, and seemed very much amused at our situation. Having drunk a cup of coffee with me, Fichett and Codrington returned home, previously engaging me to dine with them, as I had resolved to retrace my steps and try another line of country. About eleven A.M. the Hottentots returned with our oxen, when, with the united efforts of the teams, we succeeded in extricating my now lightened waggon. The two oxen I purchased from Thompson, though well-favoured, proving indolent in a heavy pull, I exchanged them with Leonard, with liberty to pick any two out of his span, giving him a sovereign to boot. His team consisted of twelve tough little red Zoolah oxen, from the district of Natal, which, like the Albany cattle, are termed "Zuur-feldt." This colonial phrase is applied to all oxen bred and reared near the sea-coast, in districts where the majority of the grass is sour. Those from about the frontiers of the colony, or anywhere beyond the Orange River, are termed "Sweet-feldt" oxen. The Zuur-feldt cattle possess a superiority over the Sweet-feldt as trek oxen, inasmuch as they thrive on any pasture, whereas the latter die if detained more than a few days in Zuur-feldt districts. Leonard's waggon had been upset four times on the preceding day, so I determined on taking the route through De Bruin's Poort, which had been recommended to me by the drivers of the Somerset orange-waggons; by this route I should avoid Somerset, and pass through the village of Cradock. My plans at this time were, in the first instance, to proceed direct to the Thebus Flats, where black wildebeest and springbok were reported to abound; and thence march upon Colesberg, a village on the frontiers, where I expected to meet my cousin Colonel Campbell, of the 91st, by whose advice, in a

great measure, I intended to be guided in my future movements.

We now reloaded my waggon, made all fast, and, having put everything in order, Leonard and I journeyed together to Fichett's farm, where I once more took up my quarters for the night. While actively busied with my oxen, I saw to-day for the first time the honey-bird. This extraordinary little bird, which is about the size of a chaffinch, and of a light-grey colour, invariably leads a person following it to a wild-bees' nest. Chattering and twittering in a state of great excitement, it perches on a branch beside the traveller, endeavouring by various wiles to attract his attention; and having succeeded in doing so, it flies lightly forward in a wavy course in the direction of the bees' nest, alighting every now and then, and looking back to ascertain if the traveller is following it, all the time keeping up an incessant twitter. When at length it arrives at the hollow tree, or deserted white-ant's hill, which contains the honey, it for a moment hovers over the nest, pointing to it with its bill, and then takes up a position on a neighbouring branch, anxiously awaiting its share of the spoil. When the honey is taken, which is accomplished by suffocating the bees with the smoke of burning grass at the entrance of their domicile, the honey-bird will often lead to a second and even to a third nest. The person thus following it ought to whistle. The savages in the interior, whilst in pursuit, have several charmed sentences which they use on the occasion. The wild bee of Southern Africa exactly corresponds with the domestic garden-bee of England. They are very generally diffused throughout every part of Africa—bees'-wax forming a considerable part of the cargoes of ships trading to the Gold and Ivory Coasts, and the deadly district of Sierra Leone, on the western shores of Africa.

Interesting as the honey-bird is, and though sweet be the stores to which it leads, I have often had cause to wish it far enough, as, when following the warm "spoor" or track of elephants, I have often seen the natives, at moments of the utmost importance, resign the spoor of the beasts to attend to the summons of the bird. Sometimes, however, they are

“sold,” it being a well-known fact, both among the Hottentots and tribes of the interior, that they often lead the unwary pursuer to danger, sometimes guiding him to the midday retreat of a grizzly lion, or bringing him suddenly upon the den of the crouching panther. I remember on one occasion, about three years later, when, weary with warring against the mighty elephants and hippopotami which roam the vast forests and sport in the floods of the fair Limpopo, I sought recreation in the humbler pursuit of quail-shooting, that, while thus employed, my attention was suddenly invited by a garrulous honey-bird, which pertinaciously adhered to me for a considerable time, heedless of the reports of my gun. Having bagged as many quails and partridges as I cared about shooting, I whistled lustily to the honey-bird, and gave him chace, after following him to a distance of upwards of a mile, through the open glades adjoining the Limpopo, he led me to an unusually large crocodile, who was lying with his entire body concealed, nothing but his horrid head being visible above the surface of the water, his eyes anxiously watching the movements of eight or ten large bull-buffaloes, which, in seeking to quench their thirst in the river, were crackling through the dry reeds as they cautiously waded in the deep mud that a recent flood had deposited along the edge. Fortunately for the buffaloes, the depth of the mud prevented their reaching the stream, and thus the scaly monster of the river was disappointed of his prey.

## CHAPTER III.

## DE BRUIN'S POORT — GREAT FISH RIVER — CRADOCK.

My trektow having been destroyed during the recent struggles, I was glad to purchase a new one from a man named Mackenzie in Fichett's employ, for which, together with a strong thornwood yoke, he charged me 1l. On leaving the farm we took an easterly course, and struck into a track which in a few hours led us into the high road leading from Grahamstown to Cradock. Having followed this for several miles, we commenced descending through De Bruin's Poort, where the road winds in a deep, narrow, and rugged ravine, through dense evergreen underwood, in its descent to the lower ground adjacent to the banks of the Great Fish River. This poort, or mountain pass, the terror of waggon-drivers, being at all times perilous to waggons, was in the present instance unusually dangerous and impassable, the recent heavy rains having entirely washed away the loose soil with which the colonists had been in the habit of embanking the permanent shelves and ridges of rock over which the waggons must necessarily pass, while they had at the same time undermined an immense number of large masses of rocks and stones which had hitherto occupied positions on the banks above, and which now lay scattered along the rocky way, presenting an apparently insurmountable barrier to our further progress.

As we were the first party who had travelled this road since the late inundations, it had not received the slightest repair, and this, to have been properly done, would have required the labour of a week. Having halted the waggon, and descended into the ravine for an inspection, accompanied by Kleinboy, I at once pronounced it, in its present state, to be

impassable. Kleinboy, however, well aware that he would not be called upon to pay for damages, seemed to entertain a different opinion, evidently preferring to run all risks rather than encounter the Herculean labours of rolling all the boulders to one side. Accordingly, having made up our minds to take the pass, we re-ascended to the waggon, and, having lashed or secured the two hind wheels by means of the drag-chains, Kleinboy took his position on the box, and the waggon commenced its perilous descent, I following, in momentary expectation of beholding its destruction. Jolting furiously along, it crashed and jumped from rock to rock: at one moment the starboard hind wheel resting on a projecting ledge several feet in height, while the front wheel on the same side was buried in a deep hollow; the next moment the larboard wheels were suddenly elevated by a corresponding mass of rock on the opposite side, placing the vehicle in such a position that it seemed as though another inch must inevitably decide its fate. I held my breath doubting the possibility of its regaining the horizontal position. Righting again, however, with fearful violence it was launched, tottering from side to side, down the deep stony descent, and eventually, much to my astonishment, the pass was won, and we entered upon the more practicable road beneath.

I could not help fancying how an English-built waggon would have fared in a similar situation, and how a Brighton coachman would have opened his eyes could he have seen my Cape turn-out in the act of descending this fine specimen of a colonial waggon-road, which I might aptly compare to the rugged mountain-bed of some Highland river. Having continued our journey till within an hour of sundown, we encamped for the night. The country through which we had passed was densely covered with one vast jungle of dwarfish evergreen shrubs and bushes, amongst which the speck-boom was predominant. This species of tree, one of the most abundant throughout the forests and jungles of Albany and Caffraria, is utterly unserviceable to man, as its pithy branches, even when dead, are unavailable for fuel. It is, however, interesting, as constituting a favourite food of the elephants which, about twenty-five years ago, frequented the whole of

this country in large herds. The footpaths formed through successive ages, by the feet of these mighty animals, are still discernible on the sides and in the necks of some of the forest-clad hills; and the skulls and larger bones of many are at this moment bleaching in some of the forest-kloofs or ravines adjacent to the sea in Lower Albany.

From time immemorial these interesting and stupendous quadrupeds had maintained their ground throughout these their paternal domains, although they were constantly hunted, and numbers of them were slain, by the neighbouring active and athletic warriors of the Amaponda tribes, on account of their flesh—the ivory so much prized among civilized nations is by them esteemed of no value, the only purpose to which they adapt it being the manufacture of rings and ornaments for their fingers and arms. These gallant fellows, armed only with their assegais or light javelins, of their own manufacture, were in the constant habit of attacking the gigantic animals, and overpowering them with the accumulated showers of their weapons. At length, however, when the white lords of the creation pitched their camps on the shores of Southern Africa, a more determined and general warfare was waged against the elephants for the sake of their tusks, with the more destructive engines of ball and powder. In a few years those who managed to escape from the hands of their oppressors, after wandering from forest to forest, and from one mountain-range to another, and finding that sanctuary there was none, turned their faces to the north-east, and migrated from their ancestral jungles to lands unknown.\*

When the colonists first settled in Albany, they were in the habit of carrying on a very lucrative traffic with the chiefs of the neighbouring Amaponda tribes, from whom they obtained large quantities of ivory in barter for beads, brass wire, and other articles of little value.

Throughout the jungles of Albany and Caffraria, but more

\* A small remnant, however, remained; and these, along with a few buffaloes, koodoos, and one solitary black rhinoceros, still found shelter in the vast jungles of the Zuurberg and Addo bush as late as the commencement of 1849.

particularly in the deep kloofs and valleys, many varieties of noble forest-trees are found of considerable size and great beauty, several of which are much prized by the colonists on account of their excellence for waggon-work and house-building; of these I may enumerate the yellow-wood tree, the wild cedar, the stink-wood tree, and the black and the white iron-wood tree. The two latter are remarkable for toughness and durability, and are much used for the axletrees of waggons. The primitive wooden axletrees have of late years been superseded in some districts by patent iron ones; many, however, still use and prefer the old wooden axletrees, because waggons having those made of iron, in steep descents, run too freely after the team, to the injury of the two after-oxen; and, further, because a wooden axle, if broken, may be replaced in any remote part of the country, whereas a damaged iron axletree cannot be mended even by the skilful smiths of the colony. The iron axles are especially apt to be broken in cold frosty mornings during the winter, when a waggon, immediately after being set in motion, has to pass through rough ground before the friction of the wheel has imparted to it a certain degree of heat.

On the following day a march of four hours brought us to the bank of the Great Fish River, having crossed an extensively open glade covered with several varieties of low shrubs and grasses and rough heather. Here for the first time I saw and shot the black koran, an excellent game-bird, allied to the bustards, so abundant throughout South Africa. Its weight corresponds with that of our old cock grouse; the legs and neck are long, like those of the ostrich; its breast and back are grey, and the wings black and white. They are constantly to be met with where the country is at all level and open: when disturbed, they take wing and fly over the plain in circles, much after the manner of the green plover or peewit, uttering a harsh grating cry. The best method of getting within range is to use a horse, and ride round them in a circle, gradually contracting it. To this open glade, the name of which I have forgotten, the Nimrods about Grahamstown often resort, and indulge in the exciting sport of wild boar and porcupine hunting. This "chasse" is conducted on

bright moonlight nights, with a gathering of rough strong dogs, the hunters being armed with a bayonet or spear, with which they dispatch the quarry when brought to bay.

I found the Great Fish River, as I had anticipated, still flooded and impassable for waggons; it was, however, ebbing rapidly, and apparently would be fordable on the morrow. During the previous heavy rains, said not to have been equalled for twenty-seven years, it had risen to an immense height, and everywhere overflowed its banks. That part of the bank which formed the descent and ascent of the former waggon-road was entirely swept away, a steep wall on either side of the river remaining in its stead, flanked by a bank of deep and slimy mud. An immense deal of manual labour would consequently be necessary to form a road, by cutting down these walls, and clearing a channel through the mud, before a waggon could take the drift. Accordingly, I thought the sooner we set about it the better; so, having cooked and partaken of a hot tiffin, we cast loose the pickaxes, spades, and shovels, stripped to our shirts, and, half wading, half swimming, succeeded in crossing the river, where, having laboured hard till sundown, and constructed a famous piece of road, we considered our task on that side as completed. Early on the following morning we resumed our labours on our side of the river, and about ten A.M. the work was finished. A party of Boers now hove in sight with three waggons, which they outspanned on the opposite bank, and drove their oxen into the neighbouring hills to graze. Presently, observing us preparing to inspan, they beckoned to me to hold a conference with them across the stream, the object of which was, to endeavour to dissuade me from taking the drift until their oxen should return, under pretence of assisting us, but, in reality, fearing that we should stick fast, and that they should be *forced* to assist us, since, in the event of our waggon sticking before their oxen came up, they would be unable to pass until we were extricated. I saw the move with half an eye, and instantly ordered my men to inspan with all possible dispatch, when we got safely through the river and up the opposite bank, a far more successful result than I had anticipated.

It was a fearful pull for the poor oxen; the waggon stuck fast three times, and was within a hair's breadth of being upset; the water just came up to the bottom boards, but fortunately did not wet any part of the cargo. The Boers seemed much surprised at our performance, for they always entertain the idea that an Englishman's oxen must be inferior to theirs, but this notion is grossly erroneous, the reverse being invariably the case. A Boer will hardly ever flog his oxen when they require it, which, though it may shock the ear of my fair reader, my regard to truth compels me to state is indispensable, oxen being of a strangely stubborn disposition, perfectly different from horses. This, at a future period, I had cause to ascertain practically, when, forsaken by my followers on the borders of the Kalihari desert, I was necessitated daily to inspan and drive my own oxen, which I did, with the assistance of a small Bushman, for a distance of about a thousand miles.

It is a common thing to see a Boer's oxen stick fast on a very moderate ascent, with not above 1000 lbs. or 2000 lbs. weight in the waggon, where an Albany transport-rider would pass him with a load of 6000 lbs.; and it is by no means uncommon to see these Albany men discharging a load of even 8000 lbs. weight at the stores of the Grahamstown merchants, which they have transported with a team of fourteen oxen through the hilly country between that town and Algoa Bay. After crossing the river, the road continued good for about three miles, but after that we found it washed away in many places. Once we stuck fast, and were obliged to dig the waggon out, and broke our trektow three times in extricating it. In other places we were obliged to leave the usual road, and cut a new way through the thorny trees with our axes, the road being cut up with watercourses six, sometimes eight feet deep. At midday we outspanned for two hours, to rest the oxen, on the farm of a Mr. Corrie. Here we met a "smouse," or trader, coming down the country with a drove of about a hundred and fifty very large well-conditioned oxen. He offered me a span at 3*l.* a head; they would have been worth 12*l.* each in England. I felt the sun rather oppressive.

About two P.M. we inspanned, and, having ascended a long and very steep hill, entered upon a new line of country, of wide undulating open plains of rank waving grass, dotted over with the mud-built habitations of white ants; we held on for three hours after sundown, and halted for the night at an uninhabited dilapidated mansion, in which we lighted a fire and cooked our dinner. Having secured our oxen on the yokes, instead of permitting them to graze during the night, we were enabled to march next morning some time before the break of day; and as the rising sun gradually unveiled the landscape, I had the pleasure of beholding for the first time several small herds of springboks scattered over the plain. This exquisitely graceful and truly interesting antelope is very generally found throughout Southern Africa, and is more numerous there than any other variety; it is very nearly allied to the ariel gazelle of Northern Africa, and in its nature and habits reminded me of the saisin of India. A few herds of springboks are still to be met with on the plains in the district of Somerset, on which I had now entered; but as this is one of the nearest to the abodes of men where this species remains, it is of course much hunted, and is annually becoming scarcer. The gentlemen farmers of the surrounding country keep a good breed of greyhounds, with which they have excellent sport in pursuing these antelopes. On beholding the springboks I instantly directed my two horses to be saddled, and, desiring the Hottentots to proceed to a farm in advance, and there outspan, I rode forth with Cobus, taking my two-grooved rifle to endeavour to obtain a shot. I found them extremely wild, and after expending a considerable deal of ammunition, firing at distances of from six to eight hundred yards, I rejoined my waggons, which I found drawn up on a Dutchman's farm, and left the antelopes scathless.

Owing to exposure to the sun while working at the Fish River drift on the preceding days, and also to having discarded coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth since leaving Grahams-town, my arms, neck, and shoulders were much swollen and severely blistered, causing me much pain, and at night preventing me from sleeping. The kind-hearted noë, commiserating my condition, and wishing to alleviate my pain,

informed me that she had an excellent recipe for sunburn, which she had often successfully administered to her husband and sons. One of the chief ingredients of the promised balsam was green tea, which was to be reduced to powder, of which she directed me to send her a little by one of my servants. I did not hear what the other components might have been, but I well know that, on applying the ointment to the raw and swollen parts, it stung me as though it had been a mixture of salt and vinegar, giving me intense pain, and causing me to wish the Boer noë and her ointment in the realms of Pluto, and to hop and dance about like one demented, to the infinite delight and merriment of my sympathising Hottentots.

A peculiar expression in the eyes of these gentlemen, and their general demeanour, inclined me to think that their potations had consisted of some more generous beverage than water during the morning's march; and on examining one of my liquor-cases, I found that I was minus a bottle and a half of gin since yesterday. This is a common failing among this monkey-faced race, nineteen in every twenty Hottentots being drunkards; and they have, moreover, not the slightest scruple of conscience as to who is the lawful proprietor of the liquor, so long as they can get access to it. No locks nor bolts avail; and thus on the Bay-road, the high road between Algoa Bay and Grahamstown, a constant system of pilfering is maintained. In this pursuit these worthies, from long practice, have arrived at considerable skill, and it is usually accomplished in the following manner:—If the liquor is in a cask, a gimlet is inserted, when, a bucket or two of spirit having been drawn off, the aperture is filled with a plug, and, the hoop being replaced, no outward mark is visible. The liquor thus stolen, if missed, and inquiries are made, is very plausibly set down to the score of leakage. A great deal of gin arrives in Grahamstown in square case-bottles, packed in slight red wooden cases. To these the Hottentots devote marked attention, owing to the greater facility of getting at them. Having carefully removed the lid and drained several of the bottles, by drinking, or pouring their contents into the water-casks belonging to the waggons, they either replace the liquor with water, and repack the case as

they found it, or else break the bottles which they have drained and replace them in the case, at the same time taking out a quantity of the chaff in which they had been packed. This is done to delude the merchant into the idea that the loss of liquor occurred owing to breakage from original bad packing; the risk and damage entailed on the proprietors of waggons and owners of merchandise, from the drivers indulging in such a system on the precarious roads of the colony, may be imagined.

After breakfast we continued our march, when I was again tempted to saddle up and give chase to a troop of springboks, one of which I shot: we journeyed on until sundown, when we halted beside a pool of rain-water. Here we found some young Boers and Hottentots, belonging to a neighbouring farm, actively employed in digging out a nest of wild bees; several of them had their eyes nearly closed from the stings which they had received. The spoils of the "bike," however, repaid their pains by twenty pounds of honey. On approaching the nest a large cluster of bees chose my sunburnt arm as a place of rendezvous, from which I could not remove them until I had obtained a bunch of burning grass.

Our march on the following day lay through a mountainous country abounding with rich pasture, covered in many places with picturesque thorny-mimosa trees, detached and in groups, imparting to the country the appearance of an English park. In the forenoon we halted for a couple of hours in a broad well-wooded hollow, where I found abundance of bustard, guinea-fowl, black koran, partridge, and quail. At sundown we encamped at a place called Daka-Boer's Neck, on high ground, where the road crosses a bold and precipitous mountain-range. The mountain-road, along which we trekked the following morning, was extremely steep and rugged: on my right, and high above me, I observed a herd of upwards of a hundred horses, consisting chiefly of brood mares and their foals, pasturing on the hillside. Three more marches brought us to the village of Cradock, which we reached at dawn of day on Saturday the 2nd of November, having twice again had occasion to cross the Great Fish River.

The country we passed through was bold, mountainous, and barren, excepting along the banks of the river, which were adorned with groves of mimosa, willow, and whitethorn, clad with a profusion of rich yellow blossoms yielding a powerful and fragrant perfume. It was now the spring of the year, and, this season having been peculiarly favoured with rains, a vernal freshness robed these sometimes arid regions, and I consider that I first saw them under very favourable circumstances. On the northern bank, at one of the drifts where we crossed the Fish River, I observed the dry dung in an old sheep-kraal burning; it was smouldering away after the manner of Scotch peat; and on my return from the interior about eighteen months after, on my way to Grahamstown, the dunghill was still burning, and had been so all the time, and nevertheless only two-thirds were consumed. The immense time which these dunghills require to burn is very singular; it is quite a common occurrence for one of them to smoulder for three or four years; and I have been informed by several respectable farmers of Lower Albany, on whose veracity I could rely, that in that district one of these "middens," as they are termed in Scotland, burnt for seven years before it was consumed. The heaviest and most protracted rains seem to affect but little, rarely if ever extinguishing them.

Cradock is a pretty little village situated on the eastern bank of the Great Fish River, by which it is supplied with water and the gardens irrigated; it is inhabited by Dutch and English, and a goodly sprinkling of Hottentots, Mozambiques, and Fingoes. The principal street is wide and adorned with shady trees on every side, among which I observed numbers of peach-trees covered with green fruit. The houses are large and well-built, generally of brick, some in the old Dutch and some in the English style; and each has a considerable garden attached to it: these are tastefully laid out, and contain all the vegetables most used in an English kitchen. Apples, pears, oranges, quinces, nectarines, and grapes abound. The view is bounded on every side by barren, arid, rocky hills and mountains. I marched right through the town and outspanned about a quarter of a mile

beyond it; and after breakfast returned on foot to purchase necessaries for myself and servants. Numbers of Dutch Boers with their wives and families were assembling to hold their "Nachmahl" or sacrament.

About eleven A.M. we inspanned, and continued our journey about five miles, crossing the Great Fish River twice, when I halted for some hours upon its bank on account of my oxen, the grass in the vicinity of the town having been very bare. This was the fifth and last time we crossed the Great Fish River. Here about a dozen waggons passed us on their way to Cradock, containing Dutch Boers with their fraus and families. Several of these were horse-waggons, drawn by eight or ten horses in each waggon, harnessed two abreast, and drawing by straps across their breasts, instead of collars. These straps are generally manufactured of the skin of the lion when it is to be obtained, that being reckoned tougher and more enduring than any other. These long teams are well managed and dexterously driven by the Boers, one man holding the reins and another the whip. In the afternoon I again inspanned, and continued my march till sundown. The road since I left Cradock had improved, and was now fine and level, leading through a wide, open, undulating strath along the north-eastern bank of the Fish River. The surrounding country presented in every direction endless chains of barren stony mountains; the bold range of the Rhinaster Berge standing forth in grand relief to the westward; not a tree was to be seen except a few thorny mimosas in some of the more favoured hollows of the hills and along the banks of the river; the country being covered with grass and heaths, dwarfish shrubs, and small thorny bushes.

The sun during the day was powerful, but a cool breeze prevailed from the south. Ever since I left Grahamstown the weather had been very pleasant, and seldom oppressively hot, except in the low-lying hollows, where the breezes are not felt. South Africa, though its climate is dry and sultry, is nevertheless very salubrious, being surrounded on three sides by the sea, off which a healthy breeze prevails through out the greater part of the year. At certain seasons, however, northerly breezes prevail, which are termed by the colonists

“hot winds.” On these occasions the wind feels as though it had passed through a furnace in a glass-foundry, being heated in its passage over the burning sands of the Great Kalihari desert.

In Cradock I engaged another Hottentot, named Jacob, in the capacity of after-rider. Having followed the course of the Fish River for a distance of about nine miles, our road inclined to the right in a more northerly direction, and we here bade that stream a final adieu. Two more marches through a succession of wide, undulating, sterile plains, bounded on all sides by bleak and barren mountains, brought us to the borders of the immense flats surrounding the Thebus Mountain.

Having followed along its eastern bank an insignificant little stream dignified by the appellation of the Brak River, I arrived at the farm of Mynheer Besta, a pleasant hospitable Boer, and a field-cornet of the district, which means a sort of resident magistrate. Here we halted to breakfast, and Besta, who is a keen sportsman, entertained me with various anecdotes and adventures which had occurred to him during the earlier days of his sporting career in Albany, where he had once resided. He informed me that the black wildebeest and springbok were extremely numerous on the plains immediately beyond his farm, which made me resolve to saddle up and go in quest of them as soon as I had breakfasted. The flesh of these animals forms one of the chief articles of food among the Boers and their servants, who inhabit the districts in which they are abundant; and the skulls and horns of hundreds of black wildebeest and springbok were to be seen piled in heaps and scattered about the outhouses of the farm. Adjoining the house was a well-watered garden with very green trees and corn in it, a most pleasing contrast to the surrounding barren country.

Having directed my men to proceed to the next farm along the banks of the Brak River, I rode forth with Cobus and held a northerly course across the flats. I soon perceived herds of springbok in every direction, which, on my following at a hard gallop, continued to join one another until the whole plain seemed alive with them. Upon our crossing a sort of

ridge on the plain, I beheld the whole country, as far as my eye could reach, actually white with springboks, with here and there a herd of black gnooks or wildebeest, prancing and capering in every direction, whirling and lashing their white tails as they started off in long files on our approach. Having pursued them for many hours, and fired about a dozen shots at these and the springboks, at distances of from four to six hundred yards, and only wounded one, which I lost, I turned my horse's head for camp. The evening set in dark and lowering, with rattling thunder and vivid flashes of lightning on the surrounding hills, and I accordingly rode hard for my waggon, which I just reached in time to escape a deluge of rain which lasted all night. The Brak River came down a red foaming torrent, but fell very rapidly in the morning. This river is called Brak from the flavour of its waters, which, excepting in the rainy season, are barely palatable. My day's sport, although unsuccessful, was most exciting. I did not feel much mortified at my want of success, for I was well aware that recklessly jaging after the game in the manner in which I had been doing, although highly exhilarating, was not the way to fill my bag. Delight at beholding so much noble game in countless herds on their native plains was uppermost in my mind, and I felt that at last I had reached the borders of those glorious hunting-lands, the accounts of which had been my chief inducements to visit this remote corner of the globe; and I rejoiced that I had not allowed the advice of my acquaintances to influence my movements.

As I rode along in the intense and maddening excitement of the chace, I felt a glad feeling of unrestrained freedom, which was common to me during my career in Africa, and which I had seldom so fully experienced; and, notwithstanding the many thorns which surrounded my roses during the days and nights of toil and hardship which I afterwards encountered, I shall ever refer to those times as by far the brightest and happiest of my life. On the following morning I rode through the Brak River to visit Mynheer Pocheter, with the intention of buying some horses of him, but he had none to dispose of. I met the old fellow coming in from the "feldt," with his long single-barrelled roer and enormous

flint-lock, with the usual bullock's horn powder-flask dangling at his side. He had gone out with his Hottentot before the dawn of day, and taken up a position in a little neck in an uneven part of the plain, through which the springboks were in the habit of passing before sunrise. It is in spots of this description that the Boers build little watching-places with flat stones, from which they generally obtain a shot every morning and evening, and at such distances as to insure success; to use their own words, "they secure a buck from these places, skot for skot," meaning a buck for every shot. On this occasion, however, our friend had been unfortunate, returning without venison, although I had heard the loud report of his "roer" a short time previously. The report made by these unwieldy guns of the Boers, charged with a large handful of coarse gunpowder, is to be heard at an amazing distance through the calm atmosphere of the high table-lands: and during my stay on the flats adjoining Thebus Mountain, scarcely an hour elapsed at morning, noon, or eve, but the distant booming of a Dutchman's gun saluted the ear.

Mynheer Pocheter asked me in to take some breakfast with him, which I did, Cobus acting as interpreter, mine host not understanding a word of English, and I not having at that time acquired the Dutch language, with which I subsequently became thoroughly conversant. After breakfast I took leave of Mynheer Pocheter, and having directed the waggon to strike out of the direct road to Colesberg, and hold across country to the abode of a Boer named Hendrick Strydom, where the game was represented to me as being extremely plentiful, I again rode forth, accompanied by Cobus, to wage war with the springboks. We pricked over the plain, holding an easterly course, and found them, as yesterday, in thousands, with here and there a herd of black wildebeest. Finding that by jaging on the open plain I could not get within four or five hundred yards of them, I left my horses and after-rider, and set off on foot to a low range of rocky hills, where I performed two difficult stalks upon a springbok and a wildebeest, both of which I wounded severely, but lost. When stalking in upon the springbok I took off my shoes, and had very great difficulty in finding them again. I suffered much

from thirst. The sun was very powerful, and, notwithstanding the heavy rains of the preceding evening, a drop of water was nowhere to be found.

In the afternoon I came to a pool of mud; the little water it contained was almost boiling; I was, however, most thankful to find it, and tears of delight came into my eyes on discovering it. How trifling was this to the trials from thirst which I have often since undergone! Shortly after this I fell in with my servant, who, astonished at my long absence, had come in search of me with the horses. I was right glad to fall in with him, and, having got into the saddle, I rode hard across the plain for my waggon. On my way thither I took up a position behind a ridge, and directed Cobus to jag a herd of springbok towards me, which he did most successfully, sending upwards of a hundred of them right in my teeth. I, however, was still unfortunate, firing both barrels into the herd without doing any apparent injury. On reaching my waggon, which I found outspanned at the desolate abode of Mynheer Hendrick Strydom, I took a mighty draught of gin and water, and then walked, followed by my interpreter carrying glasses and a bottle of Hollands, to the door of Strydom, to cultivate the acquaintance of himself and frau, and wearing the garb of old Gaul, in which I generally hunted during my first expedition, to the intense surprise of the primitive Boers. Shaking Strydom most cordially by the hand, I told him that I was a "Berg Scot," or Mountain Scotchman, and that it was the custom in my country, when friends met, to pledge one another in a bumper of spirits; at the same time, suiting the action to the word, I filled him a brimming glass. This was my invariable practice on first meeting a Boer. I found it a never-failing method of gaining his good-will, and he always replied that the Scotch were the best people in the world.

The Boers are rather partial to Scotchmen, although they detest the sight of an Englishman. They have an idea that the Scotch, like themselves, were a nation conquered by the English, and that, consequently, we trek in the same yoke as themselves; and further, a number of their ministers are Scotchmen. Hendrick Strydom was a tall, sunburnt, wild-

looking creature, with light, sandy hair, and a long, shaggy red beard. He was a keen hunter, and himself and household subsisted, in a great measure, by the proceeds of his long single-barrelled roer. His frau was rather a nice little woman, with a fresh colour, and fine dark eyes and eyebrows, and displayed her good taste by taking a fancy to me, but perhaps the tea and coffee which she found I bestowed with a liberal hand might account for her partiality. These were Boers of the poorer order, and possessed but little of this world's goods, and their abode was in keeping with their means; it was a small mud cottage, with a roof which afforded scanty protection from the heavy periodical rains. The fire burnt on the hearthstone, and a hole in the roof served at once for a window and chimney; the rafters and bare mud walls were adorned with a profusion of skins of wild animals, and endless festoons of "biltongue" or sun-dried flesh of game. Green fields or gardens there were none whatever; the wild Karroo plain stretched away from the house on all sides; and during the night the springboks and wildebeests pastured before the door.

The servants consisted of one old Bushman and his wife, and the whole of their worldly possessions were an old waggon, a span of oxen, a few milch cows, and a small herd of goats and sheep. Strydom's revenue seemed principally to be obtained by manufacturing ashes, with which he was in the habit of loading up his waggon and trekking many days' journey into other districts, where he sold them to richer Boers. The manner of obtaining this ash is first to dig up the bushes and collect them on the plains. There they are left until sufficiently dry to burn, and, a calm day being selected, they are set on fire, and the ashes subsequently stowed away in large sacks made of the raw skins of wildebeests and zebras, when they are fit for immediate use. These ashes are in great demand amongst the Boers, as being an indispensable ingredient in the manufacture of soap; every Boer in South Africa makes his own soap. The low, succulent, green bush from which the ashes are obtained is only found in certain districts, and in these plains it was very abundant.

Strydom, having sympathised with me on my continued run of ill-luck, remarked that it was quite a common thing when "jaging" on the principle which I had followed. He was, he said, aware that in hunting on that system an immense amount of ammunition was expended with little profit, and that he, being a poor man, very rarely indulged in it, but that, if I would accompany him after I had taken my coffee, there being still about two hours of daylight, he would show me his method, and he thought it very probable that we should get a buck that evening. Accordingly, having partaken of coffee, Strydom and I stalked forth together across the wild and desolate-looking plain, followed by two Hottentots with large herds of graceful springboks pasturing on every side. He placed me behind a small green bush, about eighteen inches in height, upon a wide open flat, instructing me to lie on my breast; and having proceeded some hundred yards, and taken up a similar position, he sent the Hottentots round a herd of springboks which were feeding on the plain, to endeavour to move them gently towards us. It was a very beautiful thing altogether, and succeeded well. The whole herd came on slowly, right towards where I lay, until within a hundred yards, when I selected a fine fat buck, which I rolled over with a ball in the shoulder. This was the first fair shot that I had obtained at a springbok on these plains. I have always been reckoned, by those who know my shooting, to be a very fair rifle-shot, whether standing or running, but I do not profess to make sure work much beyond one hundred and ten paces, or thereabouts. The springbok is so termed by the colonists on account of its peculiar habit of springing or taking extraordinary bounds, rising to an incredible height in the air, when pursued; the extraordinary manner in which they are capable of springing is best seen when they are chased by a dog. On these occasions away start the herd, with a succession of strange perpendicular bounds, rising with curved loins high into the air, and at the same time elevating the snowy folds of long white hair on their haunches and along their back, which imparts to them a peculiar fairy-like appearance, different from any other animal. They bound to the height of ten or twelve feet, with

the elasticity of an India-rubber ball, clearing at each spring from twelve to fifteen feet of ground, without apparently the slightest exertion. In performing this spring they appear for an instant as if suspended in the air, when down come all four feet again together, and, striking the plain, away they soar again, as if about to take flight. The herd only adopt this motion for a few hundred yards, when they subside into a light elastic trot, arching their graceful necks and lowering their noses to the ground, as if in sportive mood; presently pulling up, they face about, and reconnoitre the object of their alarm. In crossing any path or waggon-road on which men have lately trod, the springbok invariably clears it by a single bound; and when a herd of perhaps many thousands have to cross a track of the sort, it is extremely beautiful to see how each antelope performs the surprising feat, so suspicious are they of the ground on which their enemy, man, has trodden. They bound in a similar manner when passing to leeward of a lion, or any other animal of which they entertain an instinctive dread.

The accumulated masses of living creatures which the springboks exhibit on the greater migrations is utterly astounding, and any traveller witnessing it as I have, and giving a true description of what he had seen, can hardly expect to be believed, so marvellous is the scene. They have been well and truly compared to the wasting swarms of locusts, so familiar to the traveller in this land of wonders. Like them they consume everything green in their course, laying waste vast districts in a few hours, and ruining in a single night the fruits of the farmer's toil. The course adopted by the antelopes is generally such as to bring them back to their own country by a route different from that by which they set out. Thus their line of march frequently forms something like a vast oval, or an extensive square, of which the diameter may be some hundred miles, and the time occupied in this migration may vary from six months to a year.

Two days before this I brought down a koran flying with a single ball. Our chances for this evening being now over, and night setting in, I returned to the farm with Strydom in high spirits.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM HENDRICK STRYDOM'S TO COLESBERG.

At an early hour on the morning of the 6th, while I was yet in bed, Hendrick Strydom and his frau were standing over the fire, alongside of my waggon, with a welcome supply of sweet milk, and hurrying on the indolent Hottentots to prepare my breakfast, and rouse their slothful master—the earliest dawn being, as he affirmed, the best time to go after the springboks. On hearing their voices I rose, and, having breakfasted, we shouldered our roers, walked nearly a mile across the plain, and took up positions behind two very low bushes, about three hundred yards apart, having instructed our Hottentots to endeavour to drive the springboks towards us. We had two beats, but were unlucky both times, each of us wounding and losing a springbok. In the evening we went out again to hunt on the same system, on a wide flat to the west of his house, where we lay down behind very low bushes, in the middle of the bucks. We lay here on our breasts for two hours, with herds of springboks moving all round us, our Hottentots manœuvring in the distance. One small troop came within shot of me, when I sent my bullet spinning through a graceful doe, which bounded forward a hundred yards, and, staggering for a moment, fell over and expired. A little after this, I suddenly perceived a large paow or bustard walking on the plain before me. These birds are very wary and difficult to approach; I therefore resolved to have a shot at him, and lay like a stone until he came within range, when I sent a bullet through him. He managed, however, to fly about a quarter of a mile, when he alighted; and on going up to the place half an hour after, I found him lying dead, with his head stuck into a bush of heath.

Strydom had two family shots, and brought down with each a well-conditioned buck. In high good-humour with our success, we proceeded to gralloch or disembowel the quarry, after which, each of us shouldering a buck, we returned home in heavy marching order. On the following day I had the pleasure of beholding the first flight of locusts I had seen since my arrival in the colony. We were standing in the middle of a plain of unlimited length, and about five miles across, when I observed them advancing; on they came like a snow-storm, flying slow and steady, about a hundred yards from the ground. I remained looking at them until the air was darkened with their masses, while the plain on which we stood became densely covered with them. Far as my eye could reach—east, west, north, and south—they stretched in one unbroken cloud; and more than an hour elapsed before their devastating legions had swept by. I was particularly struck with this most wonderful and truly interesting sight, and I remember at the time my feeling was one of self-gratulation at having visited a country where I could witness such a scene. On this day and on the morrow Strydom and I continued to wage successful war against the springboks; we crossed the small stream called the Thebus River, and hunted on the plains to the east. On one occasion Hendrick brought down two fat bucks at one shot, which he assured me was not an uncommon event with him.

On the morning of the 9th, Strydom and I having resolved over night to go in quest of a troop of ostriches which his Hottentot reported as frequenting the plains immediately adjacent to the Thebus Mountain, we started our men two hours before the dawn of day; and after an early breakfast saddled up, and rode direct for the Thebus Mountain. This remarkable mountain, which I shall ever remember as the leading feature on the plains where I first really commenced my African hunting, is of peculiar shape, resembling a cone depressed at the apex, and surmounted by a round tower. It is also remarkable as being considerably higher than the surrounding mountains with which the plains are bounded and intersected. As we rode along, a balmy freshness pervaded the morning air; we passed through herds of