

learns to exercise much patience ; for, if the girl is pretty, or the father—who always has a keen eye to business—observes that the swain is very devoted, a high price is fixed ; and the bridegroom-elect has to work for years, like Jacob for Rachel, till he has accumulated the required number of cows.

Daughters, being such a profitable source of capital, are of course much valued by the parents ; to whom, besides, in that sunniest of climates, a large family brings none of the cares and anxieties which it entails on the English labouring-man. The more children a Zulu has, the better he is pleased ; the birth of a girl especially being welcomed as gladly as is that of a son among the Jews, and indeed among Orientals generally.

English people settling in the Cape Colony usually start with a strong prejudice in favour of the coloured race. They think them ill-treated, bestow on them a good deal of unmerited sympathy, and credit them with many good qualities which they do not possess. By the time they have been a year or two in the country a reaction has set in ; they have discovered that the negro is a fraud ; they hate him, and cannot find anything bad enough to say of him. Then a still longer experience teaches them that the members of this childish race are, after all, not so bad, but that they require keeping in their places—treating in fact as you would treat children twelve years old. In intelligence, indeed, they never seem to advance much beyond that age. You must, of course, be just with them ; but always keep them at a distance. Above all, never let

either men or women servants know that you are pleased with them, or they will invariably presume.

It seems a hard thing to say, but it does not do to be too patient and indulgent; excessive leniency only spoils them, just as it does the Hindoo servants. One of our relatives, a kind and gentle chaplain in India, finding that he was worse waited on than any of his neighbours, and asking his head servant one day why the latter and all his subordinates worked so badly, paid so little attention to orders, etc., received the following candid answer from the man: "Why not *sahib* give plenty stick, and *mem-sahib* call plenty pig? Then we good servants."

A Boer gets much more work out of the natives than an Englishman. The latter is at one time too severe, and at another too lenient; but the Boer's treatment is uniformly just and firm. Perhaps the expression, "like a Dutch uncle," may have originated in the Cape Colony.

The Zulus and Kaffirs are by nature fine, generous characters, comparatively free from dishonesty and untruthfulness; though unfortunately they too soon acquire both these vices, as well as numerous others, when they come in contact with civilization, which in their case certainly seems, as Bret Harte has it, "a failure." On the Diamond Fields the best servants are invariably those who are taken fresh from their kraals; even the fact of their knowing a few words of English being found a disadvantage.

A Zulu is always somewhat of a gentleman, and

possesses a certain code of honour, although to us it seems rather a queer one. For instance, though he will on no account rob his own master, he will not hesitate to steal a sheep from a neighbouring farm, if he should happen to feel inclined for a "big feed"; on which occasion the amount of meat he is able to consume at one sitting is positively alarming. He evidently looks upon the sheep much as Queen Elizabeth is said to have regarded the goose, viz., as a creature of most inconvenient size, "too much for one, but not enough for two." When periodical rations of meat are served out to him he always eats up the whole of his allowance on the first evening, apparently oblivious of the fact that he will have to go without for the rest of the week. And then he subsists, contentedly enough, on mealies, till the joyful time comes for his next good square meal of goat or mutton. He is the happiest and best-tempered of souls, never bearing any animosity, and always ready to forgive; and although he seems incapable of any real attachment to his employers, and is most strangely destitute of all sense of gratitude, one cannot help liking him. Altogether the Zulus are quite the aristocracy of the negro race; and, even at their worst, contrast very favourably with the Hottentots and Bushmen, whose character has hardly a redeeming point, and seems made up of all the lowest and most ignoble qualities.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW WE FARED.

Angora goats—Difficulty of keeping meat—The plague of flies—Rations—Our store—Barter—Fowls—Chasing a dinner—Fowls difficult to rear—Secretary birds as guardians of the poultry-yard—Jacob in the Karroo—He comes down in the world—He dies—Antelopes—A springbok hunt—The Queen's birthday in the Karroo—Colonial dances—Our klipspringer—Superstition about hares—Game birds—*Paauw*—*Knorhaan*—Namaqua partridges—Porcupines—A short-lived pet—Indian corn—Stamped mealies—Wholemeal bread—Plant used for making bread rise—Substitutes for butter—*Prembesjes*—A useful tree—Wild honey—The honey bird—Enemies of bees—Moth in bees' nests—Good coffee—Sour milk.

“How did you live?” is a question we have very often been asked by friends, who, evidently thinking that our fare on that far-away South African farm must necessarily have been of the roughest, and that from a gastronomic point of view we were deeply to be pitied, have been quite surprised to hear that on the whole we lived very well.

To be sure there were drawbacks. In the first place, however simply you may live in the Cape Colony, you cannot possibly live cheaply; for import duties are ruinously heavy, and almost everything, with the exception of meat, has to be imported. Wheat, for

instance, has to be brought from Australia ; the poor, dry South African colony being quite unable to produce anything like a sufficient supply for its needs. Then, too, green vegetables are very far from being an everyday item in the *menu* ; and as for fresh fish, it is a still rarer luxury, indeed throughout all the long, hot summer it is absolutely unobtainable on the farms, and one almost forgets what it is like. Eggs and butter, too, have their long periods, first of excessive and increasing scarcity, and then of entire absence from kitchen and table.

But in the colonies people soon learn to accommodate themselves to circumstances, and contentedly to do without many of the things which in England seemed such necessary adjuncts to daily life. They even become accustomed to a very sad lack of variety in the matter of meat. From one year's end to another merino mutton and Angora goat are almost unchangingly the order of the day ; the bill of fare being varied by beef only on those rare occasions, during the very coldest weather, when one of the farmers—having ascertained beforehand that a sufficient number of neighbours are willing to share the meat—is enterprising enough to slaughter an ox. But the difficulties of keeping meat are such that sheep and goats are generally found to be quite large enough ; indeed, in the hot weather, they are very much too large, and one is continually wishing that a diminutive race of mutton-producing quadrupeds—say of the size of Skye terriers—were in existence for the benefit of housekeepers in sultry climates. Fortunately

you do not get so tired of perpetual mutton as might be expected, and it does not pall on the taste as beef or fowl would do under the same circumstances. As we had only a few sheep, but possessed a flock of several hundred Angoras, our standing dish was, of course, goat. Let not the traveller pity us who on his journeyings—in Southern Europe for instance—has had the misfortune to partake of the tough, stringy, and strongly-flavoured goat's flesh too often iniquitously substituted for mutton by unprincipled hotel-keepers. As different as black from white is that unholy viand from our delicious Angora meat; equal, if not superior, to the best mutton.

The goats are beautiful creatures, with a profusion of long, wavy hair, which is as soft and glossy as the finest silk, and which, in the thoroughbred animals, is of the purest white, and nearly touches the ground. In the evening it is a pretty sight to watch the goats coming down from the mountains, on whose steep and rocky sides they have browsed all day; and where, as they descend, they form a long line of snowy white against the red and green background of the aloes and *spekboom*. It is pleasant, too, to go out to the kraals when the little kids, which all arrive at about the same time, are only a few days old. These goats are prolific creatures, many of them having two, or even three young ones at once. The crowded enclosure is all alive with the merry, noisy little fellows, jumping and scampering about in all directions; and within a few days the number of the flock seems to have almost doubled.

Angora goats are now more profitable than ostriches ; although the hair, like feathers, has sadly decreased in value, the price having fallen from 4s. 6d. to 9d. per lb. It seems strange that Angora hair should remain at such a low price ; for a costly plush is now made from it, besides very beautiful rugs, many of them perfect imitations of leopard, tiger, and seal-skin—the latter hardly less expensive than real seal.

The morning on which a goat or sheep is killed—especially during very hot weather—ushers in a time of care and anxiety for the frugal housewife. From the moment when the animal expires under the black herd's hands, until the last joint has been brought to table, that meat is an incubus which sits heavy on her soul all day, and occasionally even haunts her dreams at night. She has to wage persistent war against adverse agencies, always in readiness to work its destruction, and, with all her vigilance, too often successfully robbing her of a good portion of it.

First and foremost of all enemies the flies are in the field. As soon as the dead goat or sheep is hung up out of doors, in as cool and shady a place as can be found—though this is by no means saying much—it must instantly be enclosed in a capacious, tightly-tied and carefully-mended bag of mosquito-net, large enough to cover the whole animal. For all around, buzzing excitedly, and eagerly looking out for an opening, however small, through which to squeeze in and do their deadly work, are crowds of big, noisy, determined blue-bottles—though, by the way, if I may be allowed

so Irish an expression, in the Karroo these abominations are all green, and—gorgeous as Brazilian beetles—flash like great emeralds in the sunshine.

Phillis, of course, cannot be trusted to go alone to that open-air larder, for she will invariably leave the bag unfastened, even if by her rough handling she does not tear a yawning rent in its side. In the house too, she does her utmost to further the evil designs of the flies, and, if she uses the meat-safe at all, makes a point of leaving it wide open till a host of "green-bottles" has collected inside; when she closes it, leaving them in blissful possession of their prize.

And oh, the house-flies! Truly the plague of flies is in every Karroo home; and, next to the servants, it is the greatest bane of farm life. And what flies they are! Their brethren in other parts of the world, though obnoxious enough, can almost by comparison be called well-behaved. For, except when eatables are about, they do seem to have some idea of keeping to themselves and minding their own business; which latter usually consists in dancing—in the air, and always in the very centre of the room—a kind of quadrille of many intricate figures, the accurate performance of which, holding them completely engrossed, keeps them, for a time at least, out of mischief. But the South African fly has no such resources of his own to keep him amused; consequently he devotes all his energy and the whole of his time to one object—that of making life a burden to the unfortunate human beings on whom he has chosen to quarter himself. Not

content with spoiling your appetite at meals by the exhibition of his repulsive little black body in every dish that comes to table, every cup of tea or glass of wine that is poured out—where, whether cooked to death, or yet alive and struggling, it is an equally unwelcome and disgusting sight—he makes it his business to see that throughout the whole day you do not, if he can help it, get one instant's peace. No matter how large the room may be, no place in it will suit him for a perch but just your nose, or the hand which happens to be busily engaged in some operation requiring extreme steadiness, to which a jerk would be fatal; and however many times he is rebuffed, he comes back, with the most unerring and fiendish precision, to exactly the self-same spot, till he has set up a maddening irritation, not only of the skin, but still more of the temper. For he possesses, in the very strongest degree, the quality which led those most observant of naturalists, the ancient Egyptians, to institute the military order of the Fly. A good general, they argued, is like a fly; for, however often he may be repulsed, he always returns persistently to the attack. So they invested the successful leader of their armies with a gold chain, from which, at intervals, hung several large flies of pure, beaten gold, about four inches broad across the closed wings. And in the Cairo Museum a very beautiful chain of this kind is to be seen.

That South African fly was, indeed, the torment of our lives, until one day we made a grand discovery. We found out that he could not stand Keating's insect-

powder. If only the smallest grain of it touched any part of his person he was doomed; and in about five minutes would be sprawling helplessly on his back, preparing to quit a world in which he had been so great a nuisance. "Peppering the flies" became a regular institution, the first business of each morning; and in all the rooms, most especially in the kitchen—where the whole atmosphere seemed one vast buzz—the foe would be driven, by the vigorous flapping of a cloth, into the well-sprinkled windows where his fate awaited him. Soon every fly would be dead; and as we gloated over the dustpans full of slain we invoked benedictions on the name of Keating.

By taking care to keep every door and window on the sunny side of the house either closed or covered with fine net, we managed, thanks to this delightful powder, to exist in peace, instead of being given over to the flies like our neighbours; many of whom would calmly submit to any nuisance rather than take a little trouble to get rid of it, and would sit quite contentedly in the midst of a buzzing cloud, with flies popping into their tea one after another, or struggling by dozens in the butter-dish. We found that one of the small bellows made for blowing tobacco-smoke into bee-hives became, when filled with Keating, a very formidable engine of destruction; a couple of puffs, sending the fine powder in all directions, would settle every fly in the room. In fact no one, even in the most tropical of climates, need be troubled with flies, if only this simple remedy is used. If I had but known of its efficacy a few years

before, when up the Nile on a *dahabieh* swarming with flies! And if, in that same Egypt, poor Menephtah had only known of it three thousand years ago! Mr. Keating's fortune would have been a colossal one if he had lived then.

But to return to our Angora. As soon as the meat has been cut up it is usually sprinkled very plentifully with salt, and wrapped up for a few hours in the skin; after which the greater portion of it is put into pickle. For in the hot weather only a very small quantity can be eaten unsalted, as it becomes tainted almost at once. Even in strong brine, and with the most careful rubbing and turning, the meat is sometimes quite uneatable on the second day, especially if the weather happens to be thundery. And thunder-storms, when they do come, almost invariably select the time when an animal has just been killed. N.B.—The "pope's eye" must always be carefully taken out as soon as the meat is cut up, or the joint will immediately become tainted.

Where the family is a small one it is a good plan, during the hot weather, to include meat among the men's rations. The herds on the farms receive weekly, as part of their pay, a certain quantity of meal, coffee, sugar, salt, tobacco, etc.; and the store where all these supplies are kept and weighed out on large and business-like scales, looks—with its piles of sacks and packing-cases, its numerous shelves, rows of bottles, tins of preserved meats and other provisions—not at all unlike the general shop of an English village, with a little in the chemist's and tobacconist's line as well.

It is the work of the mistress of the house to give out the rations; and her movements, while manipulating the scales, are watched in a very criticizing and suspicious manner by the black recipients, who always seem terribly afraid that she will give them short weight. In reality she is anxiously and almost nervously careful that every pound she gives them shall be a good one; and if she errs at all it is on their side, never on her own. In the matter of tobacco her heart is especially soft, and the spans she measures off those great coils of dark-brown rope—which surely must be akin to “pigtail tobacco”—are far longer than can be stretched by her hand, or indeed by any hand but that of a giant. But in this, as in every other item of the rations, she is most unjustly and ungratefully suspected of a systematic course of cheating. Sometimes “April” or “August,” struck with a sudden bright idea, comes up to the table, and, with many monkey-like gestures, makes a close investigation of the scales and weights; peeping beneath them and looking at them from all sides, to see by what artful device they have been made the means of tricking him. He fails to discover anything; but retires shaking his woolly head dubiously, and as far off as ever from believing in the honesty of his employers.

Sometimes a little barter is carried on, in quite a primitive, old-fashioned way, with Dutchmen travelling by in large waggons drawn by sixteen or eighteen oxen, and often bringing with them very good onions, oranges, *naatjes* or mandarines, nuts, dried peaches

and figs—both of which latter are excellent for stewing,—and many other things, which they are glad to exchange on the farms for coffee, sugar, etc. This barter is quite the usual way of doing business in the Karroo; and so many transactions are carried on without the aid of money, that the latter is hardly required, and indeed is seldom seen on the farms. If a man or woman servant comes to do an odd day's work, or a passing workman breaks his journey by staying a couple of days and making himself generally useful, payment is almost always made in meal, coffee, or other articles of food, instead of in money. Copper coins, being universally despised, are not in use; consequently the most trifling service performed, however badly, by one of the coloured race, must be rewarded with no smaller sum than threepence, or—to give it its familiar colonial name—a “tickey.”

Fowls, of course, with their obligingly convenient size, are an invaluable boon in the hot weather; and it is a delightful relief when, with an empty larder and consequent light heart, free for a while from the cares and anxieties of the meat, you prolong the respite, and—putting off till to-morrow the slaying of the next four-legged incubus—sacrifice in its stead the noisiest crower, or the most inveterate of the kitchen's feathered intruders. To be sure, hurried, as he is, straight from his last agonies, into the pot or the oven, you cannot expect him to be very tender; but an attempt at hanging him is too likely to result in the sudden discovery that he has hung a little too long, and you have learnt

by experience that it is best to eat him at once. And a dessert-spoonful of vinegar, administered half an hour before his execution, will always considerably mitigate his toughness.

Karoo fowls, living a free and active life, are exceedingly agile on their legs, and when their time comes for paying the debt of nature they are by no means easy to catch. But Toto took this duty upon himself, and very jealously asserted his right to perform it. All we had to do was to point out to him the selected victim. Then, with the true collie instinct, he would follow it up, never losing it or making any mistake; and, though it might take refuge in the midst of some twenty or thirty other fowls, Toto would pick it out from among the crowd without an instant's hesitation. And when caught, it was never pounced on roughly, but just quietly held down by the big, gentle paws, from which it would be taken, perfectly unhurt.

How I missed the aid of Toto one day when—he being far away in Kent, and we living near Tangier—I was at my wits' end for a dinner, and trying my hardest to catch a fowl! It was Ramadan—that terrible time when everything goes wrong and everybody is cross—and no wonder; the cruel fast, more strictly kept in orthodox Morocco than it is in most Oriental lands, forbidding the votaries of Islam, from sunrise to sunset, not only to touch food, but even to moisten their parched lips with water—and this in hot weather too! No wonder the sunset gun, instead of being to them the welcome signal for a feast, often

finds them so faint and exhausted that they are in no hurry to begin eating. And no wonder, too, that Moorish servants—never very far behind those of South Africa in stupidity—are at this time a greater trial of patience than ever. One does not like to be hard on them, and the minimum of work is given to them; but everything is done so badly that their services might almost as well be dispensed with until the fast is over. Altogether, during this time of woe, the tempers of employers and employed are about equally tried.

Mohammed, our genius, who at the best of times was sure to forget one or more important items of the day's marketing, had on this occasion omitted just everything that was necessary to make a dinner. The bread was there, to be sure, so too were figs and dates; but, all having been put loose into the donkey's panniers and well jolted along the roughest of roads, the eatables had become so hopelessly mixed up with a large dab of native soft soap, bought for the week's washing, that they were only disentangled with difficulty, and the most careful cleansing failed to make them fit for human food. An earthenware jar of honey had been bought; but, being unprovided with a stopper, and left to roll about in the pannier as it pleased, it had poured its contents as a libation along the road, and, when complacently handed to me by Mohammed, was perfectly empty. All the non-edible articles of the day's orders had been carefully remembered, and stowed well away from the soap; but of fish, flesh, or fowl there was no sign. The poor fasting man could not be sent all the

way back to Tangier to make good the deficiencies; yet a dinner had to be found somehow for T—— and for a gentleman guest, and with the aid of the servants I set to work to catch one of our own fowls.

But I little knew what I was attempting. Our garden, on the steep slopes of Mount Washington, with its many terraces and walks, flights of rough stone steps, and tangle of luxuriant vegetation, offered so many points of vantage to the active birds, that at the end of half an hour we were all exhausted with running, breathless and giddy with the heat; while the fowls, on the contrary, fresher and livelier than ever, seemed mocking all our efforts to catch them; and in despair I took from its hiding-place a little weapon of defence, provided in view of possible midnight visits from burglarious Moors.

Grasping the revolver in one hand, and with the other treacherously holding out a sieve of barley, I stalked one fowl after another in most unsportsman-like fashion; inviting the guileless creatures to feed, and then firing at them, sometimes so close that it seemed as if the intended victim must be blown to pieces. But no, there he was, when the smoke cleared away, going off with a triumphant chuckle; wilder and more wary with each unsuccessful shot.

What was to be done? Time was passing; T—— would be coming home hungry by dinner-time, ready for something better than a vegetarian repast; and *some* creature or other—I began to feel that I did not very much care what—had not only to be caught and

killed, but also cooked. Reckless and desperate, I began firing indiscriminately, even on my laying hens; but, gladly though I would have killed the best of them, not one could I hit. At last all the hunted birds were in a state of the wildest excitement; none were in sight, and an agonized chorus of cackling resounded from all parts of the garden, as if the largest and most venomous of snakes had been seen. Flinging down the revolver in disgust, I meditated the crowning baseness of snatching the poor old sitting hen from the eggs on which she had quietly sat throughout the commotion, when—joyful sight—Mohammed, who had mysteriously vanished, suddenly reappeared, triumphantly holding up by the neck a plucked fowl. It was but a poor, scraggy, spidery-looking thing, all legs and wings, and with an appearance of having kept Ramadan no less strictly than the Moorish owners from whose hut the poor fellow—anxious to retrieve his fault—had brought it. But it was something off which to dine; and never was the fattest Christmas turkey more welcome than was its timely appearance.

The rearing of fowls in South Africa is attended with endless difficulties and discouragements. Frequent epidemics of the fatal disease known as "fowl-sickness" decimate the poultry-yard, which, at the best of times, and with all care, can never be kept sufficiently stocked to supply the needs of the hot weather. Every possible foe of the gallinaceous tribe abounds in the Karroo; snakes invade the hen-house, and the blackmail which they levy on the eggs always amounts to what the

Americans call "a large order;" birds of prey of many different sorts are constantly sailing over head, with sharp eyes on the look-out for opportunities of plunder; and jackals, wild cats, lynxes—or, as the Dutch call them, *rooikats*—and numerous other four-legged freebooters pounce at night on those hens foolish enough to make their nests far from the comparative safety of the house; the occasional discovery, in some distant bush, of a collection of empty eggshells and a heap of drifted feathers proclaiming what has been the fate of some long-missing hen or turkey.

Altogether, the poultry-keeper's troubles are considerably multiplied by the surpassing imbecility of the Karroo hens, which have no idea of taking care of themselves, and, like the ostriches, stoutly oppose all efforts made for their own welfare and that of their offspring. Their insanely erratic conduct during sitting causes by far the larger proportion of nests to come to nothing; and when they have succeeded in hatching a few chickens, they look as if they did not quite know what to do with them.

Secretary birds are sometimes taught to be very useful guardians of the poultry-yard, especially against aerial enemies,—the long-legged, solemn-looking creature stalking about all day among his feeble-minded charges, with much consciousness of his own importance. He is accused of now and then taking toll in the shape of an occasional egg or young chicken—the latter being of course bolted, anaconda-fashion; but his depredations are not extensive, and one tolerates them as one does

those of the courier who, though himself not entirely above suspicion, takes good care that his master is robbed by no one else.

Our secretary, Jacob, whose education had been neglected in youth, refused to make himself useful as a protector of the poultry-yard. His character, never the most amiable, deteriorated rapidly after we brought him up-country, carefully packed for the long railway journey; the numerous bandages in which he was swathed to secure his long, slender legs from breakage giving him—but for his protruding, vulture-like head—the appearance of a gigantic ibis-mummy. Our first plan of making him trudge on foot along the road with the Walmer caravan of ostriches was given up, as we felt sure that, with his already-mentioned “cussedness,” he would give more trouble to the herds than all the rest of the troop together, and either get a knock on the head to settle him, or else escape, never to be heard of again. At any rate, he would be quite sure not to arrive at his destination.

Poor Jacob did not flourish in the Karroo, where kittens were scarce, and where no butcher’s cart brought daily and ample supplies for his colossal appetite; and an existence in which fresh meat was so rare a luxury must have been for him a kind of perpetual Lent.

With much resentment and plainly-expressed disgust at his reverse of fortune, he found himself obliged, late in life, to pick up a living for himself, and would wander dejectedly about the country for miles round, in search of the fat, succulent locusts, the frogs, small

snakes, lizards, and mice on which he fed. The latter he caught in a most ingenious manner. Walking up to a bush wherein he knew a mouse was concealed, he would strike a violent blow with his wing on one side; then, as the startled animal ran out in the opposite direction, Jacob would make a lightning-like pounce, and bring down his murderous foot with unerring aim. On the whole he did not fare badly; but of course, after his luxurious bringing-up among the fleshpots of Walmer, it was but natural that he should object to working for a living.

Even in prosperous days he loved to look ill-used, and no comic actor could have better represented the character of an ill-tempered old man nursing a grievance than did the well-fed Jacob croaking under the windows in mendacious pretence of starvation; but now his part was so absurdly overacted that it became a burlesque. Nature at the same time assisted him in his make-up for the part, and, moulting and tail-less, with bald head and general out-at-elbows appearance, he looked indeed the seediest and most disreputable of old beggars. At the best of times he looked like a wicked old man, but now—no longer a sleek, well-clothed old sinner—he seemed to have degenerated into a ruined gambler, going rapidly to the dogs. Whenever there was a big rain he would come and stand in front of the windows, wet through and shivering ostentatiously, with the water running in a little stream from the tip of his hooked bill, giving him the appearance of one of the ugly gargoyles on

an ancient cathedral. Obstinate refusing to come under cover, or even to keep himself comparatively dry by squatting under the kraal hedge, he would stand for hours out in the rain, looking ill-used and woe-begone; a picture of squalid, unlovely poverty.

We really pitied the old bird, and regretted our inability to give him daily the fresh meat which, in spite of frequent disappointments, he never failed to claim, noisily and importunately, as his right. He would come walking excitedly into the kitchen or bedroom, clamouring, with all the persistence of Shylock, for his pound of flesh; or would run after Wells as the latter went to chop wood, knocking against his legs, getting in his way to attract attention, and keeping up his horrible clock-work noise, till we wondered that that most patient and even-tempered of men, with the hatchet so handy, was not provoked into chopping off his head.

At last a long drought set in, and poor Jacob came still further down in the world; for, as the ground hardened, and vegetation dried up, the "mice and rats and such small deer" of the *veldt* became more scarce, and he had to travel longer distances in search of his prey. We did all we could for him, and kept quite a battery of mousetraps constantly set for his benefit; but, compared with his enormous demands, all we could give him was but as a drop in the ocean, and we felt that he despised us for our meanness. He grew daily more morose, and would vent his ill-humour by picking quarrels with the dogs and other creatures

about the place, especially with a pretty little *dwyker* antelope. This gentle and timid little favourite—a short-lived pet, which, wandering one day too far from home, was shot by a Boer in mistake for a wild animal—was several times attacked so savagely by the vengeful Jacob, that, if Wells had not beaten off the assailant, the little buck would have been killed. Fortunately Jacob, when excited, always made such a horrible noise, that we could hear when a battle was going on, and rush to the rescue. As the drought continued Jacob took to wandering further and further afield, coming to the house only on rare occasions, until at last he became almost like a wild bird; and we have little doubt that these roving propensities, at a time when water was only to be found at the few-and-far-between homesteads, led at last to the poor old fellow's death from thirst—a sad end for one of the most comical, if not the best-tempered of our pets.

Game, of course, forms a very welcome break in the monotony of constant goat and mutton. The antelopes, though by no means plentiful, are all excellent eating, and afford good sport. The graceful springbok, one of the most common, is capable of becoming very tame; and, with its slender limbs and bright-coloured, variegated coat, it is, but for its rather goat-like face, one of the prettiest of pet animals. On a large neighbouring farm the springbok were preserved, and now and then the somewhat even tenour of Karroo existence would be enlivened by a hunt, sometimes of several days' duration. The Queen's birthday is a favourite

occasion for these festive gatherings; and from far and wide, some from distances of two or three days' journey, travelling on horseback or in roomy American spiders and carts capable of accommodating large family parties, visitors arrive in rapid succession, till the house—which at these times seems endowed with even more than the usual elasticity of the hospitable colonial homes—appears like some large hotel overflowing with guests. In the extensive plains surrounding the house the chase goes on merrily throughout the whole day; many of the hunted bucks being observable from the verandah as they speed lightly along, with a bounding motion suggestive of india-rubber balls, and with the sunlight flashing upon the ridge of long white bristles along the back, invisible when the animal is in repose, but erected when it is startled.

In the evening the trophies of the battue, sometimes amounting to the number of thirty, are laid side by side in close ranks upon the ground in front of the house, forming a noble display. The day's adventures are recounted, with much chaffing of the by no means few who have been bucked off or who have otherwise come to grief; T—— on one occasion bearing off the palm as the butt of the most pitiless jokes, his horse, declining the superadded weight of a fine buck, having deposited him on his head, in which acrobatic posture he is reported to have remained standing long enough to give rise to much speculation among the onlookers as to whether he intended finally to land on face or back.

By-and-by the silence of the *veldt* is further broken by the unaccustomed sound of fireworks, and of loud cheers for the Queen from the stout lungs of her lieges beneath the Southern Cross; then come some capital theatricals and a dance, the latter prolonged a good way into the small hours of the morning. There are no better dancers anywhere than the Cape colonists; they are of course passionately fond of the art in which they so much excel; and thus, when a large and merry party have collected—not without considerable difficulties, and at the cost of the longest and roughest of journeys—they naturally like to keep it up as long as possible, and it is by no means an uncommon thing on these occasions for people not to go to bed at all, but for the morning sun, peeping in under the vines of the verandah, to find the dance still in full swing.

The Cape negroes, too, are all born dancers; and it needs but a few notes scraped on a fiddle or wheezed on an asthmatic accordeon to set a whole company of even the roughest and most uncouth Hottentots waltzing in perfect time, and in a quiet and almost graceful manner, strangely out of keeping with their ungainly forms.

Rarest among the antelopes is the klipspringer,* which is called the chamois of South Africa, and which, both in appearance and habits, closely resembles the Alpine animal. Its flesh, which is short and dark, with a flavour very like that of duck, is by far the best of all the venison; and its pretty coat is a marvel of soft-

* *Oreotragus saltatrix*.

ness and lightness, each hair being a wide tube as thick as a hedgehog's bristle, but soft as a feather. In spite of its light weight, this curious coat is wonderfully thick and durable, and saddle-cloths made from it are simply perfection.

A little klipspringer was brought to us, so young that for the first few weeks it was fed with milk from a baby's bottle. It soon grew tame, and it was very pretty to see the miniature chamois trotting confidently about the house, always on the extreme tips of those natural alpenstocks, its little pointed feet. These tiny ferules, all four of which would have stood together on a penny-piece, were evidently capable of giving a firm foothold even in the most impossible places. This little creature was one of our unlucky pets—by far the most numerous class in the collection,—and our hope of taking him to England, where he would have enjoyed the proud distinction of being the first of his kind ever imported, was doomed to disappointment. Whether it is really the fact, as one is always told in South Africa, that this buck cannot live in captivity, or whether an inveterate habit of eating the contents of the waste-paper basket, with an impartial relish for printed and written matter, shortened the life of our specimen, I do not know; but rapid consumption set in, and the pathetic, almost human attacks of coughing were so distressing to witness that it was a relief when the poor little patient succumbed.

Then, also among the smaller antelopes, there are the duyker and stenbok. Both these pretty little bucks

make forms like hares, and the stenbok, a wee thing very little larger than a hare, is not unlike that animal in flavour.

As for "poor Wat" himself, the uncanny reputation which in all lands he seems so unjustly to have acquired is here intensified; and among Boers, Kaffirs, and Hottentots he is the object of so superstitious a dread that none will venture to eat him. His inoffensive little body is firmly believed to be tenanted by the spirits of dead-and-gone relatives and friends; and even Phillis, by no means a dainty feeder—to whom a good epidemic of fowl-sickness is a welcome harvest, and the sudden and fatal apoplectic fit of the fattest turkey the occasion of a right royal feast and long-remembered red-letter day,—is indignant and insulted if you offer her what is left of a particularly delicious jugged hare. To have lent a hand in cooking the unholy beast was sacrilege enough, but there her not over-sensitive conscience draws the line. Most uncanny of all the hares is the *springhaas*. This creature, with disproportionately long hind-legs and kangaroo-like mode of progression, is never seen in the daytime, and can only be shot on moonlight nights.

The best game birds of the Karroo are those of the bustard tribe. Of the great bustard, or *paauw*, there are two kinds; one, a gigantic bird, sometimes weighing as much as seventy pounds. In hunting the *paauw*—as in stalking the wily mosquito—your first and special care must be not to let the object of your chase see you looking at him. With well-acted unconscious-

ness, and eyes carefully turned in any direction but towards the spot where the *paauw* squats in the grass, you ride round and round him in an ever-lessening circle, until you get within range. Then you jump off, make a run at him, and fire.

A smaller bustard, with beautifully-variegated plumage, is about the size of a large fowl. His Dutch name of *knorhaan*—which may be translated “scolding cock,” or “growling fowl”—is very justly bestowed on him to express his exceeding noisiness, and I do not think that throughout the whole length and breadth of the bird kingdom there exists such another chatterer. What a start he gives you sometimes when, on a brisk ride or drive through the *veldt*, you approach his hiding-place, and suddenly, before you have had time to see his slender dark neck and head peering out above the low bush, he springs up with a deafening clamour, as of a dozen birds instead of one; and, unless silenced by a shot, he continues his harsh, discordant noise, apparently without once stopping for breath, until his swift wings have borne him far away out of hearing. A whole chorus of blackbirds, suddenly disturbed from revels among ripe fruit, would be nothing in comparison with him.

The quaint, old-fashioned-looking little *dikkop*, smallest of the bustard tribe, is, in the opinion of epicures, the best of all. In the bustards the position of the white and dark meat is reversed, the flesh being dark on the breast and white on the legs. They possess certain feathers which are invaluable to the makers of flies for fishing.

Of partridges there are two kinds, the red-wing and grey-wing, the latter being found only on the mountains. The beautiful little "Namaqua partridges," which come in flights, are in reality a kind of grouse. It is a pretty sight when, at sundown, these neatest and most delicately-plumaged of little birds collect in large numbers to drink at the dams.

Of some of our queer dishes, such as *consomme d'autruche* and the mock-turtle afforded by the gigantic tortoises of the *veldt*, I have already spoken. Now and then, too, when a porcupine was killed, we would follow the example of the Algerian Arabs, and dine sumptuously off its flesh, which was not unlike English pork with extra-good crackling.

A baby porcupine, which was taken alive and unhurt, was for some weeks an amusing addition to the menagerie; and many were our regrets when—just as he was getting tame and friendly—he fell a victim to an unexpected cold night, against which, in his little box out of doors, we had ignorantly left him insufficiently protected. At first his temper, which was decidedly of the kind usually described as "short," gave us much amusement; and, when irritated by our approach, he would stamp his little feet, wheel round impetuously, and come charging at us backwards, with all his quills erect, and an absurd expression of energetic pugnacity depicted, not only on his small, snub-nosed countenance, but throughout the whole of his bristling body.

Unfortunately, "the pig with the sticks on his back,"

as the Kaffirs call the porcupine, is the worst of gardeners; and provoking indeed is the devastation wrought by his omnivorous appetite among potatoes, carrots, parsley, pumpkins, water-melons, and indeed all other plants which, in our most thankless of kitchen gardens, are grown and irrigated with such infinite toil and difficulty.

The crop which best repays cultivation in that arid soil is Indian corn. This most wholesome and nourishing food is much more suitable for hot climates than oatmeal, as it possesses none of the heating properties of the latter; and, although in one form or another it is a standing dish at nearly every meal in a Karroo house, one never tires of it. The nicest way of preparing it is in the form called "stamped mealies." The ripe yellow grains of the Indian corn are moistened and placed in a large and massive wooden mortar, generally consisting of the stump of a tree hollowed out. (The centre of an old waggon-wheel did duty very effectually as our mealie-stamper.) Then, with a heavy wooden pestle, they are bruised just sufficiently to remove the yellow husks, though not enough to break up the corn itself, as in the case of the American hominy. After a long and gentle boiling the mealies are as tender as young peas, and it is difficult for a stranger to believe that they have not been cooked in milk.

It would be a good thing if those who make it their study to provide cheap and nourishing food for the starving poor of London and other over-populated

towns would try stamped mealies. The small cost of the Indian corn and the simple and easy manner of its preparation would enable it to be supplied in large quantities; and the really excellent dish, if it once became known in England, could not fail to be popular. In some parts of South Africa the natives live almost entirely on Indian corn, especially the Zulus, than whom no finer race of men could be found.

If, among all the different competitions now set on foot, there were one for bread-makers of all countries, surely the Dutchwomen of the Karroo would bear away the prize for their delicious whole-meal bread, leavened with sour dough and baked in large earthenware pots. It is beautifully sweet and light; and as Phillis's bread—besides containing almost as plentiful a sprinkling of flies as there are currants in a penny bun—is in every way more often a failure than a success, it is as well for the lady settler promptly on arrival to take a lesson from some neighbouring *vrouw*, and herself to undertake the bread-making.

While on the subject of whole-meal bread, why is it that in England the nutritious, flinty part of the grain is almost invariably taken out and made into macaroni or used for other purposes, while the bread is made of flour from which all the goodness has been refined away? If whole-meal bread is ordered of the English baker, he throws a handful of bran into this same flour; and the brown loaf looks tempting enough, but both it and the white one are alike tasteless and insipid, and destitute of nutritious qualities. What is

really wanted for good bread is just simply the entire contents of the grain, as nature, who after all knows best, has given it to us.

Better than sour dough, yeast, and all the baking-powders in the world is a preparation made by the Kaffir women from a curious and rather rare little plant which grows in the Karroo. This plant is almost all root, the small portion which peeps above the ground consisting only of a few tight clusters of small, shiny knobs, of a dull leaden colour. There is nothing like it for making bread rise; but it is most difficult to get any of it, as the Kaffir women, besides being too lazy to relish the work of preparing it, which is a long and tedious business, make a mystery and a secret of it: no servant will own to understanding it, and somehow one never gets to see the whole process, and is only shown certain stages of it, one of which consists in the hanging up of the substance for a while in a bag exposed to the air, during which time it increases enormously in bulk, in a manner which seems almost miraculous.

Butter being so rare a luxury in the Karroo, a number of different substances have to be pressed into the service during long droughts to supply its place, such as lard, dripping, etc., and, for the table, the fat from the huge tails of sheep somewhat resembling those of Syria, though not, like the latter, kindly provided with little carts on which to drag the cumbersome weight. English jams, of course, like all other imported provisions, are ruinously expensive; and it is a

pity that the Natal preserves, plentiful as are both fruit and sugar in that most fertile of lands, are hardly less extravagant in price. But very good home-made jams can be obtained from the Cape gooseberry—a kind of small tomato, enclosed in a loose, crackling bag much too large for it; also from *priembesjes* (pronounced “primbessies”), a delicious wild fruit which grows on small trees along the lower slopes of the mountains. These trees only bear biennially; and, as if exhausted by the lavish profusion of fruit yielded each alternate season, produce nothing in the intermediate year. The pretty fruit, resembling a small, semi-transparent cherry, is at first completely enclosed in such a tight-fitting case that it looks like a soft, velvety green ball. As the fruit ripens this green covering divides in half, and gradually opens wider and wider, disclosing the vivid scarlet within. Amid the prevailing stiffness and sombreness of Karroo vegetation the pretty, rounded outline of these trees, and their bright, glossy, dark foliage—forming an effective background for the jewel-like fruit as it peeps from the delicate pale-green cases in all different stages of expansion—afford a pleasing contrast.

In search of *priembesjes* we made many delightful expeditions on horseback to the foot of the mountains; sitting in our saddles close to the trees and picking from our animals' backs, T—— occasionally standing up like a circus-rider to reach the higher boughs. Our horses became quite accustomed to the work, and, moving into the exact spot desired, would stand motionless as long as we chose while we filled our baskets.

The fruit is slightly acid and very refreshing; and the preserve, not unlike cherry jam, well repays the trouble of making, which is considerable, the enormous stones being quite out of proportion to the size of the fruit, and very difficult to separate from the pulp. Even these stones, however, possess their good qualities, and contain a delicate little kernel, as nice a nut as you could wish to eat, from which an excellent oil can be pressed. Then, too,—no small recommendation in the eyes of ladies,—they make the most delightful beads, being just soft enough to pierce with a good strong needle, though not so soft as to shrivel up afterwards. They are of all different shades of rich brown, and, when threaded into necklaces, remind one of the old Arab rosaries in Cairo, made from the “Mecca seeds,” and rubbed to a brilliant polish by devout Moham-medan thumbs. Jam, beads, oil, and nuts! Surely a tree with such numerous and varied ways of making itself useful to humanity seems quite worthy to have figured in the pages of “The Swiss Family Robinson.”

The wild honey of the Karroo is generally very good, though some is occasionally found to which un-wholesome flowers have imparted their evil qualities. If, for instance, “where the bee sucks” there is much euphorbia-blossom, the honey is pungent and burns the tongue. Sometimes it is even poisonous.

A most useful volunteer assistant in the taking of bees' nests is the honey-bird, an insignificant-looking little brown fellow who seems possessed of an almost uncanny amount of intelligence. Well does he know

that old tree or that hole in the ground where there is a goodly store of the sweet food into which he is longing to plunge his bill; but, unfortunately, he cannot get it out for himself, and must needs call in the aid of a human ally to take the nest. So he wanders hither and thither, and, hailing the first person he meets, flies close up to him, chirping and calling loudly to attract attention, and behaving altogether in such a confidently familiar and impudent manner that strangers unaccustomed to his ways would take him for a tame bird escaped from his cage. If you refuse to follow him he gets very angry, and shows his impatience by flying backwards and forwards, chirping excitedly; but if his guidance is accepted—although he may give you a very long, rough walk—he will lead you without fail to the nest.

As soon as the spot is reached he changes his note; and, while his featherless partner secures the prize, he sits close by, watching the proceedings with intense interest, and waiting for his share of the plunder. The natives are always superstitiously careful to leave him a liberal portion; for they credit him with a very vindictive disposition, and say that if any one is base enough to refuse him his well-earned reward, he will revenge himself on the next person he meets, however innocent the latter may be, and, under pretence of taking him to a bees' nest, will lure him to the lair of a leopard, the hole of a venomous snake, or some other equally undesirable spot.

One day T——, on a long homeward ride, was way-

laid by one of these birds, which, taking him under his protection in the usual business-like and patronizing manner, led him by a most roundabout route, and at last, with many fussy demonstrations, conducted him triumphantly to our own beehive, close to the house. Then he perched on a little bush from whence he could contemplate the bees; and T—— called me out to look at him as he sat chirping, immensely contented with himself, and scolding us loudly for our neglect of duty.

Among the numerous enemies of bees the pretty bird called the bee-eater is one of the most destructive; and wherever there is a hive or a nest several of these birds are almost sure to be seen, darting about swiftly and catching the poor little insects on the wing. A large kind of hornet is also continually on the watch for bees, which he slays apparently out of pure spite; and last, though by no means least, a horrid little red scorpion-like creature invades the hive itself, killing many of the inmates.

A large moth resembling the death's-head often takes up its abode in bees' nests, betraying its presence by a peculiar plaintive sound, and apparently living in a perfectly friendly and peaceful manner with its hosts. The natives, however, and indeed also many of the colonists, stand in great awe of it, as they imagine it to be possessed of a most deadly sting. Throughout the whole country one hears accounts of men, oxen, etc., being killed by this terrible moth; and T——, wishing to investigate the matter and find out whether there were any truth in the tale, sent several

specimens to England, where, on examination by an authority on entomology, they all proved to be destitute of stings.

You never get a bad cup of coffee in South Africa. That unholy ingredient, chicory, with which people in England persist in making their coffee undrinkable, is never used, and all, even on the roughest of farms, seem to understand the secret of preparing good coffee, which, after all, needs but the observance of a very simple rule; *i.e.*, never to roast or grind more at a time than is required for immediate use. The Dutch *vrouw's* coffee would be perfection if she would only refrain from making it the medium by which to express the depth of her kindly feelings towards her guests, and turning it to a sickly syrup by adding sugar in the proportion of Falstaff's "intolerable deal of sack." And Phillis, however hopelessly ignorant she may be on all other points of cookery, prepares the huge bowl of *café au lait*, which, in accordance with colonial custom, she brings to your bedside in the early morning, in a manner which partially atones for her multitude of sins.

Yet people at home do not seem to realize that coffee, if kept even for a little time after it is roasted, and—worse still—after it is ground, completely loses its flavour. As a rule they buy it ready ground, in large quantities, and keep it for weeks in the house and under such circumstances it is no wonder that even in the best hotels the coffee is not fit to drink, and that too often, but for the only flavour left in it

—that of the acrid chicory with which it has been bountifully doctored—it might be taken for weak tea. And yet there is no better “pick-me-up” after a long walk or tiring day’s work, nothing more warming and comforting on a cold day, than a cup of really good coffee. Such, for instance, as you get in any of the numerous Arab *cafés* in Algiers; a tiny cup of which, hardly larger than an egg-cup, does you more good than a glass of port wine. Indeed, wherever coffee is really well made—as in France and Spain—it does extensively take the place of intoxicating drinks; and it would be a good thing if in England, and especially among our poorer classes, this splendidly nutritious substance—food no less than drink—were as much used as it is abroad. The coffee-house where well-made, unadulterated coffee might be obtained would be a formidable rival to the gin-palace. As it is, however, the art of making coffee—if ever possessed at all in England—has been so completely lost that the increasing disuse of the beverage is no matter of surprise.

Angora milk is excellent with coffee, but, though abundant at times, it is hardly to be obtained at all during droughts; and for months you have to be contented with Swiss milk. The Boers and Kaffirs think fresh, sweet milk very unwholesome; a Dutchwoman never gives her child anything but sour milk to drink, and the Kaffirs always keep their milk in large gourds which have the property of rapidly turning it sour.

CHAPTER XII.

KARROO BEASTS, BIRDS AND REPTILES.

Leopard drowned in a well—Baboons—Egyptian sacred animals on Cape farms—"Adonis"—A humiliating retreat—A baby baboon—Clever tricks performed by baboons—Adonis as a *Voorlooper*—A four-handed pointsman—Sarah—A baboon at the Diamond Fields—Adonis's shower-bath—His love of stimulants—His revengeful disposition—Pelops the dog-headed—Horus—*Aasvogels*—Goat-sucker—The butcher-bird's larder—Nest of the golden oriole—The kapok bird—Snakes in houses—A puff-adder under a pillow—Puff-adder most dangerous of Cape snakes—Cobras—*Schaapsticker*—Ugly house-lizards—Dassie-adder—The dassie the coney of Scripture—Stung by a scorpion—Fight between tarantula and centipede—Destructive ants—The *Aardvaark*, or ant-bear—Ignominious fight of a sentry—Ant-lion—Walking-leaves—The Hottentot god—A mantis at a picnic.

ALTHOUGH the elephant and lion are now no longer found in the Karroo, there still remain a good number of leopards, or, as the colonists, in calm defiance of natural history, persist in calling them, "tigers." These animals, by the way, seem fated at both ends of the Dark Continent to be the victims of a misnomer, and in Algeria rejoice in the name of *panthère*. Though the South African leopards are now following the example of the larger and more formidable game, and gradually retreating before the advance of man, it is not

many years since three or four of them might be seen drinking together at night from the dam close to the Dutch house now transformed into the homestead of Swaylands. Even now, in the hills overlooking the Karroo, there are more of them about than the farmer likes; and sheep, calves, colts and young ostriches are occasionally killed by them.

One day, riding up to a well in an out-of-the-way part of the farm, we found that a magnificent full-grown leopard had fallen in and drowned himself. There he was, floating on the surface of the water only five feet below where we stood; his large body extended across the whole diameter of the well, and on the steep but rough and unbricked sides of the latter we could see the traces of his desperate though unavailing struggles to climb out. Unfortunately, the weather being very hot, his beautiful skin was already spoilt; and we rode home regretting the lovely rug "off our own farm," which we might have displayed to admiring friends at home if we had but found him one day earlier.

A wounded leopard is a very dangerous customer. One of our neighbours, an old hunter, bears many scars in remembrance of severe injuries received long ago in following up one of these animals which he had shot. The encounter was a terrible one, nearly costing the colonist his life.

Next to the leopard in ferocity comes the baboon. He is a big, deep-voiced, sturdy fellow; his short, gruff bark is as dog-like as his head, and there is no doubt that he is identical with the dog-headed ape of ancient

Egypt. Indeed, all the sacred animals and birds of Egyptian mythology, and many of the other creatures which are depicted in so life-like a manner on the walls of Nile temples and tombs, are to be found at this day in South Africa. Anubis the jackal; the grey ibis, now extinct in Egypt, but common enough in the Cape Colony, and—audacious insult to that learned god to whom he was sacred—irreverently and absurdly named by the colonials “oddida;” the hawk Horus, with just the same plump little body, round baby-face, and delicately-tinted plumage of softest French grey and white which you see again and again in those comical, toy-like little wooden images in the museum at Cairo; the wild geese, with the identical curious markings of those which, in the oldest picture in the world, may be seen in that same museum; the scarab, rolling his unwieldy ball with Atlas-like efforts;—all these are at home on the Karroo farms.

Cynocephalus, indeed, was very much more at home at Swaylands than we liked, and would often frighten the ostriches into a wild state of panic, with the usual inevitable result of broken legs. On mountain excursions you frequently hear his surly bark, and sometimes see him looking out defiantly at you from behind rock or bush, where possibly you have disturbed him in the midst of an exciting lizard-hunt, or careful investigation of loose stones in search of the centipedes, scorpions and beetles hidden beneath. These creatures, uninviting though they appear to us, are among his favourite dainties, and he catches them with

wonderful dexterity. In the silence of night his voice is so distinctly audible from the homestead that you would imagine him to be close by, though in reality he is far off in one of the kloofs of the mountains. One night, as we strolled up and down near the house, enjoying the bright moonlight, a loud chorus of distant baboons to which we were listening was suddenly interrupted, evidently by the spring of a hungry leopard, the moment's silence being followed by the agonized and prolonged yells of the victim.

Now and then *Cynocephalus*, or, as the Boers ironically call him, "Adonis," gets too troublesome, and war has to be carried into his camp. Of no avail against *him* are those neat little strychnine pills, enclosed in tempting pieces of fat, by means of which Anubis is so successfully sent to his account. No vegetable poison has the slightest effect on the baboon's iron constitution, and indeed, if there exists any poison at all capable of killing him, it is quite certain that with his superior intelligence he would be far too artful to take it; and when the fiat for his destruction has gone forth a well-organized attack has to be made on him with dogs and guns. He can show fight, too, and the dogs must be well trained and have the safety of numbers to enable them to face him; for in fighting he has the immense advantage of hands, with which he seizes a dog and holds him fast while he inflicts a fatal bite through the loins. Indeed, for either dog or man, coming to close quarters with Adonis is no trifling matter.

One of our friends, travelling on horseback, came upon a number of baboons sitting in solemn parliament on some rocks. He cantered towards them, anticipating the fun of seeing the ungainly beasts take to their heels in grotesque panic; but was somewhat taken aback on finding that—far from being intimidated by his approach—they refused to move, and sat waiting for him, regarding him the while with ominous calmness. The canter subsided into a trot, and the trot into a sedate walk—and still they sat there; and so defiant was the expression on each ugly face that at last the intruder thought it wisest to turn back and ride ignominiously away.

A Dutch boy—one of a family temporarily camping in their own waggon on the farm, and employed by T—, rambling one day in one of the far-off kloofs of the mountains, came near the haunt of a party of baboons. Though an occasional bark broke the stillness, only one of the animals was in sight, and that a little one, probably left alone for a while during the mother's search for food. With the baby baboon in his arms the boy was soon speeding at his best pace down the mountain; and, if fortune had but favoured his enterprise as it deserved, what a delightful "new chum" would that day have been added to our collection of animals! But too soon the whole troop of baboons, missing their youngest hope, were in full pursuit of the robber, on whom they gained so rapidly, and with gestures so unmistakeably portending mischief, that young Piet was only too glad to drop his prize and run for his life.

The baboon stands in no awe of women; he seems quite aware of their inferiority, in point of strength and courage, to the sterner sex, and despises them accordingly. At one place near Graaff-Reinet the women never dared to go and fetch water unless accompanied by men; for the baboons, which were very numerous, would always chase and threaten any daughter of Eve who ventured, without masculine escort, near their haunts.

Baboons captured in babyhood and brought up in human society are capable of becoming extremely tame. Like all other very intelligent animals, they vary much in disposition, a docile and tractable one soon learning to perform many clever tricks, and being an amusing companion, though too often a mischievous one. A gentleman at Willowmore owned two large, splendidly-trained performing baboons, which would have made the fortune of any circus-proprietor. They would together enact a series of complicated tricks, each going through his allotted part without a mistake. Both were most attentive and obedient to orders, and never by any chance would "Joe" so far forget his duty as to respond to the command given to "Jim," or *vice versa*.

Occasionally, too, Adonis—who cannot, even by his best friends, be called ornamental—is taught to make himself useful; he has in several instances been seen filling the post of *voorlooper* to the waggons of travelling Boers, acquitting himself on the whole quite as creditably as his Hottentot fellow-servants. And at one railway station in the colony a baboon was for a long

time employed to work the points. The man in charge of the latter—having in a railway accident lost one arm and part of the remaining hand—had taught the ape to move the levers. This he did most cleverly with three of his powerful hands, using one of the hinder ones; and the fact of the novel pointsman retaining his situation makes it evident that his duties were satisfactorily performed.

On the occasion of a raid with dogs and guns on the baboons infesting a friend's farm, one of the animals killed was the mother of a very young infant. When the captors came up to the spot they found the poor little creature crying piteously as it clasped the trunk of the tree beneath which lay its dead parent. They took it home, and our friend, a great lover of animals, was successful in rearing it. "Sarah," a gentle, amiable character, soon became a great favourite, and her comical ways were a source of constant amusement to her human friends. At the word of command she would stand erect, with her arms behind her, and her mouth wide open to catch the pieces of potato, etc., which were thrown into it; and when told to open "wider! wider!" she would distend her jaws almost to the point of breaking.

Of course she was occasionally—what member of the ape tribe is not?—the victim of practical jokes. One day her favourite dish, pumpkin, was presented to her, and, all-unconscious of the treachery which lurked within, she applied herself with gusto to her dinner, which, unlike most of her tribe, she always preferred to

eat direct from the dish without the intervention of her fingers. Alas! between two of those succulent slices of pumpkin cruel hands had spread a thick layer of mustard; and poor Sarah, eating greedily, soon experienced direful results on tongue, palate, throat, and eyes. She knew at once that she had been tricked; and never were contempt and indignation better expressed than by the lordly manner in which she kicked away the dish with all its remaining contents. After which she retired, much offended, to her bed, from whence she did not emerge for a long time.

On another occasion poor Sarah was made the subject of a still more unkind practical joke. She dearly loved sweets, which were often given to her wrapped up in a multitude of papers, one inside the other. It was amusing to watch the patient and deliberate manner in which she would unfold each paper in turn, taking the greatest care never to tear one, and proceeding with all the caution of a good Mohammedan fearful of inadvertently injuring a portion of the Koran. This time, instead of the expected tit-bit, a dead night-adder was wrapped up and presented. When she unfolded the innermost paper, and the snake slipped out, with a horrid writhe, across her hand, Sarah quietly sank backwards and fainted away, her lips turning perfectly white. By dint of throwing water over her, chafing her hands, and bathing her lips with brandy, she was revived from her swoon, though not without some difficulty.

Sarah has now been for a long time the inmate of an

English country rectory, where, let us hope, no unfeeling jokes at her expense embitter her declining years.

Of a far less docile disposition than Sarah was a large baboon kept by T—— at the Diamond Fields. The incessant damage wrought by this creature among his master's property and that of neighbours, and the frequent doctors' bills of which he was the occasion, made him rather an expensive pet. He was kept chained up, but would now and then break loose, on which occasions he never failed to make an excellent use of his opportunities and enjoy as good a "time" as possible before Nemesis overtook him in the form of recapture and well-deserved chastisement.

One day, for instance, T——, on returning to his tent, was considerably surprised to find his bed occupied by Mr. Adonis, who, after getting into the shower-bath, pulling the string, and receiving the consequent ducking, had retired in a drenched and dripping condition to the blankets, within which he had comfortably ensconced himself, and from whence he gazed impudently at his master. He no doubt thought that he had well earned the luxuries of bath and bed by his busy morning's work among the contents of T——'s canvas house; and indeed that once cosy little abode now offered to the owner's eye a very good representation of chaos on a small scale. A bottle of acid, in which were a number of diamonds, had been thrown outside and the contents scattered in the sand; T——'s watch had been pulled to pieces and flung through the window; and altogether every conceivable piece of

mischief had been done. On attempting to secure and tie up the offender, T—— received a severe bite through the leg; on which, naturally irate, he seized his gun, and capital punishment would then and there have been inflicted but for the discovery that the wily Adonis had balked retributive justice by carefully pulling every cartridge to pieces.

Among the numerous vices of this baboon was an incorrigible addiction to stimulants; and after indulging in his favourite drink—gin and ginger-beer—he might very profitably have been displayed on the platform of a temperance lecturer, as the Spartans exhibited their helots, in illustration of the evils of drunkenness. The manner in which, after a drop too much, he invariably persisted in walking upright was unpleasantly suggestive of drunken humanity; so too was his urgent need of soda-water to allay the parched condition of his mouth on the following morning. He would draw the cork with his strong teeth, holding the bottle close to his lips, and taking the greatest care to lose none of the refreshing gas.

He could throw stones with the unerring aim of a schoolboy; and, being of a revengeful disposition, and possessed of a wonderful memory, he never failed to requite any insult or injury received. Once a Zulu offended him by striking him with a stick. A long time passed, and then one day the man, who had quite forgotten all about it, came within reach of the baboon's tether, and—blissfully ignorant of the vengeful feelings lurking in the breast of the quadrumane—offered him

something to eat. But Adonis, who had not forgotten, and who was only too glad to pay off old scores, caught the man by the hand, and, drawing him towards him, bit and punished him severely.

Here is another tale of revenge, in which the poor ape played but a passive part in the hands of the "superior" animal. A colonist, having killed a baboon, and owing several of his neighbours a long-standing grudge, bethought him of a truly fiendish manner of revenging himself. Though it is unlikely that he had ever read of Tantalus, he proceeded somewhat after that classical example, and, cutting up the baboon, made him into a stew, in which savoury disguise he served him up as the *pièce de résistance* at a dinner to which all the obnoxious neighbours were bidden. The dish proved a delicious one, and all the visitors ate of Pelops Cynocephalus with great relish. The tableau may be imagined when, at the end of the banquet, the host told his guests what they had eaten.

It must require considerable hardness of heart to kill a baboon; for the creature is so horribly and uncannily human-looking, and, when wounded, cries in a pathetic manner which must appeal to all but the most callous of consciences. A hunter once told T—— that he felt like a murderer after shooting one of them, and seeing how in its dying agonies it pressed one finger upon the hole made by the bullet; crying like a child as it fixed its eyes on him with piteous looks of reproach.

Although the miniature Zoo at Swaylands never boasted of a tame cynocephalus, we numbered among

our feathered friends one of the gods of ancient Egypt in the shape of as tiny and chubby a little Horus as ever sat for his portrait to the sculptors of Philæ or Thebes. He was but a wee thing, about the size of a wild dove, but possessed an amount of intelligence which made him one of the most interesting even among Cape pets. Sad to say, the poor little fellow was minus one wing. T——, noticing him one day flying near the house, and not knowing what bird he was, brought him down with a small rifle bullet. The shot passed through the wing, so completely smashing it that the only thing we could do was to take it off close to the body. We tied it up at once and stopped the bleeding, the plucky little patient never uttering a sound, though his jewel-like eyes seemed really to blaze with anger. They were the most wonderful eyes imaginable, almost owl-like in size and roundness, and of a lovely red with an orange tinge. A ruby with a candle behind it is what I imagine would come nearest to them in colour. The plumage of Horus, instead of being speckled and barred with different shades of brown like that of the falcons one is accustomed to see, was of the loveliest silver-grey, darkest on the back and wing, and shading off gradually into very pale grey on the head, and into purest white on the breast and beneath the body; the breast feathers being soft and fluffy, like eider-down. The legs and feet were bright yellow, the bill dark grey, edged with yellow, and a circle of dark feathers round the eyes, drawn off into a long line at each side, gave a sphinx-like appearance

to the wise-looking little head. Altogether, Horus was one of the most beautiful little birds we have seen. We took it for granted that he was the sacred falcon; and it will be a disappointment to us if, one day, some learned ornithologist tells us we were quite wrong.

The little fellow recovered rapidly; and, although on the first day after the amputation we had to put food down his throat, getting viciously punished by his needle-pointed bill and claws, on the second he took meat from our hands, eating voraciously as much as we would give him, and even coming after us for more; though, not having yet learned to steer himself under his altered circumstances, he hobbled in a very clumsy and crab-like fashion, now and then making futile efforts to fly, and tumbling down on his side. Soon, however, he learned to walk straight, and would follow us about like a little dog, with the quaintest short steps. He was soon tame and friendly with all but the meerkat, for which he showed great animosity, and on which he would jump spitefully—or perhaps hungrily?—whenever it came near him. Possibly, in a wild state, small animals of this kind were his natural prey. He did not object to Toto, who indeed—with the sole exception of his rival and arch-enemy Bobby—has never failed to get on well with all his heterogeneous companions.

Horus, debarred by his infirmity from active exercise, and condemned to a somewhat humdrum life, sought consolation in the pleasures of the table, and developed an enormous appetite. He shared the spoils of the