

# JOURNEYS AND RESEARCHES

IN

## SOUTH AFRICA.

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### INTRODUCTION.

#### PERSONAL SKETCH.—VOYAGE TO THE CAPE AND ALGOA BAY.

My own inclination would lead me to say as little as possible about myself; but several friends have suggested that, as the reader likes to know something about an author, a short account of my origin and early life would lend additional interest to this book. Such is my excuse for the following egotism.

My great-grandfather fell at the battle of Culloden, fighting for the old line of kings; and my grandfather was a small farmer in Ulva, where my father was born. It is one of that cluster of the Hebrides thus alluded to by Walter Scott:—

“And Ulva dark, and Colonsay,  
And all the group of islets gay  
That guard famed Staffa round.”\*

My grandfather was intimately acquainted with all the legends which that great writer has since made use of in the ‘Tales of a Grandfather’ and other works. As a boy I remember listening to him with delight. Many of his never-ending stock of stories were wonderfully like those I have since heard while sitting by the African fires. My grandmother used to sing Gaelic songs, some of which, as she believed, had been composed by captive islanders languishing hopelessly among the Turks.

\* Lord of the Isles, canto iv.

My grandfather could give particulars of his ancestors for six generations before him; and the only point of the tradition I feel proud of is this. One of these poor islanders was renowned in the district for great wisdom; and when he was on his deathbed, he called his children around him and said, "I have searched carefully through all the traditions of our family, and I never could discover that there was a dishonest man among our forefathers. If therefore any of you should take to dishonest ways, it will not be because it runs in our blood. I leave this precept with you: Be honest." Should I in the following pages perchance fall into errors, I hope they will be regarded as unintentional, and not as indicating that I have forgotten our ancient motto. This event took place at a time when the Highlanders, according to Macaulay, were much like the Cape Caffres, and any one could escape punishment for cattle-stealing by presenting a share of the plunder to his chieftain. Our ancestors were Roman Catholics; they were made Protestants by the laird coming round with a man who carried a yellow staff, and the new religion went long afterwards, perhaps it does so still, by the name of "the religion of the yellow stick."

Finding his farm in Ulva insufficient to support a numerous family, my grandfather removed to Blantyre Works, a large cotton manufactory on the beautiful Clyde, above Glasgow; and his sons, who had received the best education the Hebrides afforded, were gladly taken as clerks by the proprietors, Monteith and Co. He himself was highly esteemed for his unflinching honesty, and was employed in the conveyance of large sums of money from Glasgow to the works. In his old age, according to the custom of that company, he was pensioned off, so as to spend his declining years in ease and comfort.

My uncles all entered His Majesty's service during the last French war, either as soldiers or sailors; but my father remained at home, and, though too conscientious ever to grow rich as a small tea-dealer, yet by his winning ways he made the heartstrings of his children twine around him as firmly as if he could have bestowed upon them every worldly advantage. He reared us in connection with the Kirk of Scotland—an establishment which has been an incalculable blessing to that country—but he afterwards left it, and for the last twenty

years of his life held the office of deacon of an independent church in Hamilton. He deserved my lasting gratitude for presenting me from infancy with a consistent example of piety like that which is so beautifully portrayed in Burns' 'Cottar's Saturday night.' He died in February, 1856, in peaceful hope of mercy through the death of our Lord and Saviour. I was then on my way below Zumbo, anticipating no greater pleasure than sitting by his cottage fire and telling him my travels. I revere his memory.

The earliest recollection of my mother recalls a picture often seen among the Scottish poor—that of the anxious housewife striving to make both ends meet. At the age of ten I went to the factory as a "piecer." With a part of my first week's wages I purchased Ruddiman's 'Rudiments of Latin,' and studied that language for many years with unabated ardour, at an evening school which met between the hours of eight and ten. I continued my labours when I got home till twelve o'clock, or later, if my mother did not interfere by snatching the books out of my hands. I had to be back in the factory by six in the morning, and my work lasted, with intervals for breakfast and dinner, till eight o'clock at night. I read in this way many of the classical authors, and knew Virgil and Horace better at sixteen than I do now. Our schoolmaster was supported in part by the company; he was attentive and kind, and so moderate in his charges that all who wished for education could obtain it. Some of my schoolfellows are now in positions far above what appeared likely then; and if the system were established in England, it would prove a never-ending blessing to the poor.

I read everything I could lay my hands on except novels. Scientific works and books of travels were my especial delight; though my father, believing, with many of his time who ought to have known better, that the former were inimical to religion, would have preferred to see me poring over the 'Cloud of Witnesses,' or Boston's 'Fourfold State.' My difference of opinion reached the point of open rebellion, and his last application of the rod was on my refusal to peruse Wilberforce's 'Practical Christianity.' This dislike to religious reading continued for years; but having lighted on those admirable works of Dr. Thomas Dick, 'The Philosophy of

Religion,' and 'The Philosophy of a Future State,' it was gratifying to find that he had enforced my own conviction, that religion and science were friendly to each other.

Great pains had been taken by my parents to instil the doctrines of Christianity into my mind, and I had no difficulty in understanding the theory of free salvation by the atonement of our Saviour, but it was only about this time that I began to feel the necessity of a personal application of the doctrine to my own case. The change was like what it may be supposed would take place were it possible to cure a case of "colour blindness." The fullness with which the pardon of all our guilt is offered in God's book drew forth feelings of affectionate love to Him who bought us with His blood, which in some small measure has influenced my conduct ever since. But I shall not again refer to the inner spiritual life which I believe then began, nor do I intend to specify with any prominence the evangelistic labours to which the love of Christ has since impelled me: this book will speak not so much of what has been done, as of what still remains to be performed before the gospel can be said to be preached to all nations.

In the glow of love which Christianity inspires, I soon resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery. I felt that to be a pioneer of Christianity in China might lead to the material benefit of some portions of that immense empire; and therefore set myself to obtain a medical education, in order to be qualified for that enterprise.

In identifying the herbs mentioned in my first medical treatise, that extraordinary old work on astrological medicine, Culpeper's 'Herbal,' I had the guidance of a book on the plants of Lanarkshire, by Patrick. Limited as my time was, I managed to scour the whole country-side, "collecting simples." Deep and anxious were my studies on the still more perplexing profundities of astrology, and I got as far into that abyss of fantasies as my author said he dared to lead me. It seemed perilous ground to tread on farther, for the dark hint appeared to my youthful mind to loom towards "selling soul and body to the devil." These excursions, often in company with brothers, one now in Canada, and the other a clergyman in the United States, gratified my intense love of nature; and though we generally returned so hungry and fatigued that the

embryo parson shed tears, we yet discovered so many interesting things that he was always eager to join us.

On one of these exploring tours—long before geology was so popular as it is now—we entered a limestone quarry. It is impossible to describe the wonder with which I began to collect the shells of the carboniferous limestone which crops out in High Blantyre and Cambuslang. A quarryman looked at me with that pitying eye which the benevolent assume when viewing the insane. “How ever,” said I, “did these shells come into these rocks?” “When God made the rocks, He made the shells in them,” was the damping reply.

My reading in the factory was carried on by placing the book on a portion of the spinning jenny, so that I could catch sentence after sentence as I passed at my work; I thus kept up a pretty constant study undisturbed by the roar of the machinery. To this part of my education I owe my power of completely abstracting my mind from surrounding noises, so as to read and write with perfect comfort amidst the play of children or the dancing and songs of savages. The labour of cotton-spinning, to which I was promoted in my nineteenth year, was excessively severe on a slim lad, but it was well paid, and enabled me to support myself while attending medical and Greek classes in Glasgow in winter, and the divinity lectures of Dr. Wardlaw in summer. Looking back now on that period of toil, I cannot but feel thankful that it formed such a material part of my early education; and were I to begin life over again, I should like to pass through the same hardy training. I never received a farthing from any one, and should have accomplished my project of going to China as a medical missionary by my own efforts, had not some friends advised my joining the London Missionary Society on account of its unsectarian character. It “sends neither episcopacy, nor presbyterianism, nor independency, but the gospel of Christ to the heathen” This exactly agreed with my ideas of what a Missionary Society ought to do; but it was not without a pang that I offered myself, for it was not agreeable to one accustomed to work his own way to become in a measure dependent on others.

Time and travel have not effaced the feelings of respect I imbibed for the inhabitants of my native village. For mo-

rality, honesty, and intelligence, they were in general good specimens of the Scottish poor. In addition to the common run of men, there were some characters of sterling worth and ability, who exerted a most beneficial influence on the youth of the place by imparting gratuitous religious instruction.\* Much intelligent interest was felt by the villagers in all public questions, and they furnished a proof that education did not render them an unsafe portion of the population. They much respected those of the neighbouring gentry who, like the late Lord Douglas, placed some confidence in their sense of honour. Through the kindness of that nobleman, the poorest among us could stroll at pleasure over the ancient domains of Bothwell, and other spots hallowed by venerable associations; and few of us could view the dear memorials of the past without feeling that these monuments were our own. The mass of the working people of Scotland have read history, and are no levellers. They rejoice in the memories of "Wallace and Bruce and a' the lave," who are still much revered as the former champions of freedom. While foreigners imagine that we want the spirit to overturn aristocracy, we in truth hate those stupid revolutions which sweep away time-honoured institutions, dear alike to rich and poor.

Having finished the medical curriculum and presented a thesis on a subject which required the use of the stethoscope for its diagnosis, I unwittingly procured for myself an examination rather more severe than usual, in consequence of a difference of opinion between me and the examiners as to whether this instrument could do what was asserted. However, I was admitted a Licentiate of Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, and it was with unfeigned delight I became a member of a profession which with unwearied energy pursues from age to age its endeavours to lessen human woe.

But though now qualified for my original plan, the opium war was raging, and it was deemed inexpedient for me to pro-

\* The reader will pardon my mentioning the names of two of these most worthy men—David Hogg, who addressed me on his death-bed with the words, "Now, lad I make religion the every-day business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts; for if you do not, temptation and other things will get the better of you;" and Thomas Burke, an old Forty-second Peninsula soldier, who has been incessant and never weary in good works for about forty years. Men like these are an honour to their country and profession.

ceed to China. I had hoped to gain access to that then closed empire by means of the healing art; but there being no prospect of an early peace, I was induced to turn my thoughts to Africa; I embarked in 1840, and reached the Cape after a voyage of three months. I shortly afterwards went to Algoa Bay, and soon proceeded inland to the Kuruman mission station in the Bechuana country. This station is about seven hundred miles from Cape Town, and had been established, nearly thirty years before, by Messrs. Hamilton and Moffat. The mission-houses and church are built of stone. The gardens, irrigated by a rivulet, are well stocked with fruit-trees and vines, and yield European vegetables and grain readily. The pleasantness of the place is enhanced by the contrast it presents to the surrounding scenery, and the fact that it owes all its beauty to the manual labour of the missionaries. Externally it presents a picture of civilised comfort to the adjacent tribes; and the printing-press, worked by the original founders of the mission, and several younger men who have entered into their labours, gradually diffuses the light of Christianity through the neighbouring region. This oasis became doubly interesting: to me, from something like a practical exposition of the text, *Mark x. 29*; for after nearly four years of African life as a bachelor, I screwed up courage to put a question beneath one of the fruit-trees, the result of which was that in 1844 I became united in marriage to Mr. Moffat's eldest daughter, Mary. Having been born in the country, and being expert in household matters, she was always the best spoke in the wheel at home; and when I took her with me on two occasions to Lake Ngami, and far beyond, she endured more than some who have written large books of travels. In process of time our solitude was cheered by three boys and a girl, and I think it useful to mention that we never had the least difficulty in teaching them to speak English. We made it a rule never to talk to them, nor allow them to talk to us, except in our own tongue. Indeed they rarely attempted to use the native language, though they spoke it perfectly. When they went on board ship they refused to utter another word of it, and have now lost it entirely.

In consequence of droughts at our station further inward, we were mainly dependent for supplies of food on Kuruman, and were often indebted to the fruit-trees there and to Mrs.

Moffat's kind foresight for the continuance of good health. When visitors arrive at most mission stations, the best of everything is provided for them; but having heard that some graceless fellows, who had been feasted, went back to the colony, saying, "These missionaries live like fighting cocks," we never made any change in our fare even for our friends.

I have spent the sixteen years from 1840 to 1856 in medical and missionary labours in Africa, and my life has not been favourable to literary pursuits. This has made composition irksome to me, and I think I would rather cross the African continent again than compose another book. It is far easier to travel than to write. I intended on going abroad to continue my studies; but as I could not brook the idea of entering into other men's labours, I undertook, in addition to teaching, building and other handicraft work, which left me generally as much exhausted and unfit for study in the evenings as when I was a cotton-spinner. The want of time for self-improvement was the only regret I experienced during my African career. The reader remembering this will make allowances for the deficiencies of a student who has the vanity to think himself "not yet too old to learn."

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## CHAPTER I.

RESIDENCE AT KURUMAN, LEPELOLE, AND KOLOBENG.—SKETCH OF CAREER OF SECHELE, CHIEF OF THE BAKWAINS, AND NOTICES OF HIS TRIBE.

THE instructions I received from the Directors of the London Missionary Society led me, as soon as I reached Kuruman or Lattakoo, their farthest inland station from the Cape, to turn my attention to the north. Without waiting longer than was necessary to recruit the oxen, which were pretty well tired by the long journey from Algoa Bay, I proceeded, in company with another missionary, to the Bakuéna or Bakwains, who are a section of the people called Bechuanas.

The Bechuanas are divided into numerous tribes, named

after certain animals, which probably indicates that in former times they were addicted to animal-worship like the ancient Egyptians. The term *Bakatla* means "they of the monkey;" *Bakuena*, "they of the alligator;" *Batlápi*, "they of the fish." When you wish to ascertain what tribe they belong to, you say, "What do you dance?" from which it may be inferred that dancing was also a part of their ancient rites. Each tribe has a superstitious dread of the animal after which it is called, and never eats its namesake. They use the term "*ila*,"—hate or dread—in reference to killing it. We find traces of many extinct tribes in individual descendants—such as the *Batáu*, "they of the lion;" the *Banóga*, "they of the serpent;" though no such tribes now exist. The use of the personal pronoun *they*, *Ba-Ma*, *Wa*, *Va*, or *Ova*, *Am-Ki*, &c., prevails very extensively in the names of tribes in Africa. A single individual is indicated by the terms *Mo* or *Le*. Thus *Mokwáin* is a single person of the Bakwain tribe, and *Lekóá* is a single white man or Englishman. *Makóá* is the name for Englishmen.

We did not stay long on our first visit to the Bakwains, but retraced our steps to Kuruman. As the object I had in view was not, however, to be attained by a temporary excursion, I determined to make a fresh start into the interior as soon as possible. Accordingly, after resting three months at Kuruman, which is a kind of head station, I went to a spot called *Lepelóle* (now *Litubarúba*). Here I secluded myself from all European society for about six months, in order to obtain a knowledge of the native tongue, and gained by this ordeal an insight into the habits, ways of thinking, laws, and language of the Bakwains, which has proved of incalculable advantage in my intercourse with them ever since.

In this, my second journey to *Lepelole*—so called from a cavern of that name—I began preparations for a settlement, by making a canal to irrigate gardens, from a stream then flowing copiously, but now quite dry. When the work was well advanced, I went northwards to the *Bakáá*, *Bamangwáto*, and *Makaláka* tribes, living between 22° and 23° south lat. The *Bakáá* mountains had before been visited by a trader, who, with his people, all perished from fever. Most of my journey beyond *Shokuane* was performed on foot, in consequence of the draught oxen being sick. Some of my companions, who

had recently joined us, and did not know that I understood a little of their language, were overheard by me discussing my appearance: "He is not strong, he is quite slim, and only appears stout because he puts himself into those bags (trousers); he will soon knock up." This made my Highland blood rise, and I kept them all at the top of their speed for days together, until I heard them express a favourable opinion of my pedestrian powers.

I returned to Kuruman, to bring my luggage to our proposed settlement, and was followed by the news that the tribe of Bakwains, who had shown themselves so friendly towards me, had been driven from Lepelole by the Barolongs. Thus my prospect of forming a settlement there was for the present at an end. One of the periodical wars, for the possession of cattle, had burst forth in the land, and had so changed the relations of the tribes to each other, that I was obliged to set out anew to look for a suitable locality for a station. As we journeyed north again, a comet blazed on our sight, exciting the wonder of every tribe we visited. That of 1816 had been followed by an irruption of the Matebéle, a tribe of Caffres, and the most cruel enemies the Bechuanas ever knew. The present prodigy they thought might prove as portentous, or might only foreshadow the death of a principal personage. As some of the Bamangwato people had accompanied me to Kuruman, I was obliged to restore them and their goods to their chief Sekómi. This made it necessary to go back to his residence, and, for the first time, I travelled a distance of some hundred miles on ox-back. Returning towards Kuruman, I selected the beautiful valley of Mabotsa (lat. 25° 14' south, long. 26° 30' ?) as the site of a missionary station; and thither I removed in 1843. Here an occurrence took place, which, but for the importunities of friends, I meant to have kept to tell my children when in my dotage.

The Bakátla of the village Mabotsa were troubled by lions, which leaped into the cattle-pens by night and destroyed their cows. They even attacked the herds in open day. This was so unusual an occurrence that the people believed themselves bewitched—"given," as they said, "into the power of the lions by a neighbouring tribe." They went once to attack the animals, but, being rather cowardly in comparison with

the Bechuanas in general, they returned without slaying any. It is well known that if one in a troop of lions is killed the remainder leave that part of the country. The next time, therefore, the herds were attacked, I went with the people to encourage them to rid themselves of the annoyance by destroying one of the marauders. We found the animals on a small hill covered with trees. The men formed round it in a circle, and gradually closed up as they advanced. Being below on the plain with a native schoolmaster named Mebalwe, I saw one of the lions sitting on a piece of rock within the ring. Mebalwe fired at him, and the ball hit the rock on which the animal was sitting. He bit at the spot struck, as a dog does at a stick or stone thrown at him; and then leaping away, broke through the circle and escaped unhurt. If the Bakatla had acted according to the custom of the country, they would have speared him in his attempt to get out, but they were afraid to attack him. When the circle was reformed, we saw two other lions in it; but dared not fire lest we should shoot some of the people. The beasts burst through the line, and, as it was evident the men could not be prevailed on to face their foes, we bent our footsteps towards the village. In going round the end of the hill I saw a lion sitting on a piece of rock, about thirty yards off, with a little bush in front of him. I took a good aim at him through the bush, and fired both barrels into it. The men called out, "He is shot, he is shot!" Others cried, "He has been shot by another man too; let us go to him!" I saw the lion's tail erected in anger, and, turning to the people, said, "Stop a little till I load again." When in the act of ramming down the bullets I heard a shout, and, looking half round, I saw the lion in the act of springing upon me. He caught me by the shoulder, and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat. The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first gripe of the cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess, in which there was no sense of pain nor feeling of terror, though I was quite conscious of all that was happening. It was like what patients partially under the influence of chloroform describe; they see the operation, but do not feel the knife. This placidity is probably produced in all animals

killed by the carnivora; and if so, is a merciful provision of the Creator for lessening the pain of death. As he had one paw on the back of my head, I turned round to relieve myself of the weight, and saw his eyes directed to Mebalwe, who was aiming at him from a distance of ten or fifteen yards. His gun, which was a flint one, missed fire in both barrels. The animal immediately left me to attack him, and bit his thigh. Another man, whose life I had saved after he had been tossed by a buffalo, attempted to spear the lion, upon which he turned from Mebalwe and seized this fresh foe by the shoulder. At that moment the bullets the beast had received took effect, and he fell down dead. The whole was the work of a few moments, and must have been his paroxysm of dying rage. In order to take out the charm from him, the Bakatla on the following day made a huge bonfire over the carcase, which was declared to be the largest ever seen. Besides crunching the bone into splinters, eleven of his teeth had penetrated the upper part of my arm. The bite of a lion resembles a gun-shot wound. It is generally followed by a great deal of sloughing and discharge, and ever afterwards pains are felt periodically in the part. I had on a tartan jacket, which I believe wiped off the virus from the teeth that pierced the flesh, for my two companions in the affray have both suffered from the usual pains, while I have escaped with only the inconvenience of a false joint in my limb. The wound of the man who was bit in the shoulder actually burst forth afresh on the same month of the following year. This curious point deserves the attention of inquirers.

From 1840 to 1845 I was employed in preparatory labours, and associated with other missionaries at Kuruman and Mabotsa. From 1845 to 1849 I worked at Chonuane and Kolobeng, aided only by Mrs. Livingstone and two native teachers. I attached myself to the tribe called Bakuena, or Bakwains, the chief of which, named Sechele, was then living with his subjects at a place called Shokuane. I was from the first struck by his intelligence, and by the especial manner in which we felt drawn to each other. He was tall, rather corpulent, had large eyes, and more of the negro features than is common. As this remarkable man has not only

embraced Christianity, but expounds its doctrines to his people, I will here give a brief sketch of his career.

His great-grandfather Mochoaséle was a great traveller, and the first that ever told the Bakwains of the existence of white men. In his father's lifetime two white men, whom I suppose to have been Dr. Cowan and Captain Donovan, passed through the country (in 1808), and descended the river Limpopo: They and their party all died of fever. The rain-makers, fearing lest their waggons might drive away the rain, ordered them to be thrown into the stream. A son of the chief at whose village they perished remembered, when a boy, partaking of one of the horses, and said it tasted like zebra's flesh. The Bakwains were then rich in cattle; and it is one of the many evidences of the subsequent desiccation of the country, that streams are pointed out where thousands and thousands of cattle formerly drank, and in which water now never flows.

When Sechele was still a boy, his father, also named Mochoasele, was murdered by his own people for taking to himself the wives of his rich underchiefs. The children were spared, and their friends invited Sebituáne, the chief of the Makolólo, who was then in those parts, to reinstate them in the chieftainship. He undertook the task, and surrounded the town of the Bakwains by night. Just as it began to dawn his herald proclaimed in a loud voice that he had come to revenge the death of Mochoasele. His followers, who encircled the place, beat loudly on their shields, and the panic was tremendous. There was a rush like that from a theatre on fire, while the Makololo used their javelins on the terrified fugitives with a dexterity which they alone can employ. Sebituane had given orders that the sons of Mochoasele should be spared. One of the men, meeting Sechele, put him in ward by giving him such a blow on the head with a club as to render him insensible. The usurper was killed, and Sechele was restored to the chieftainship.

He married the daughters of three of his underchiefs who, on account of their blood relationship, had stood by him in his adversity. This is one of the modes adopted for cementing the allegiance of a tribe. They are fond of the relationship to great families. If you meet a party of strangers, and the

head-man's connection with a chief is not proclaimed by his attendants, you may hear him whispering, "Tell him who I am." This usually involves a counting on the fingers of a part of his genealogical tree; and ends in the important announcement that he is half-cousin to some well-known ruler. The government is patriarchal, each man being, by virtue of paternity, chief of his own children, and the greater their number the more his importance increases. The towns are formed of numerous circle of huts, and near the centre of each circle there is a spot called a "kotla," with a fireplace; here they work, eat, or sit and gossip over the news of the day. A poor man attaches himself to the kotla of a rich one, and is considered a child of the latter. The circle of an underchief is girt by a number of subsidiary circles, and in the middle of all is the great circle of the principal chief, composed of the huts of his wives and blood relations.

On the first occasion in which I ever attempted to hold a public religious service, Sechele remarked that it was the custom of his nation to put questions when any new subject was brought before them. He then inquired if my forefathers knew of a future judgment. I replied in the affirmative, and began to describe the scene of the "great white throne, and Him who shall sit on it, from whose face the heaven and earth shall flee away," &c. "You startle me," he replied; "these words make all my bones to shake; I have no more strength in me: but my forefathers were living at the same time yours were, and how is it that they did not send them word about these terrible things sooner? They all passed away into darkness without knowing whither they were going." I explained the geographical barriers in the North, and the gradual spread of knowledge from the South, to which we first had access by means of ships; adding my belief that, as Christ had declared, the whole world would be enlightened by the Gospel. Pointing to the great Kalahári desert, he replied, "You never can cross that country to the tribes beyond; it is utterly impossible even for us black men, except in certain seasons, when more than the usual supply of rain falls, and an extraordinary growth of water-melons follows."

As soon as he had an opportunity of learning, he set himself to read with such close application that, from being

comparatively thin, the effect of being addicted to the chase, he became corpulent from want of exercise. He acquired the alphabet on the first day of my residence at Chonuane, and I never went into the town but I was pressed to hear him read some chapters of the Bible. Isaiah was a great favourite with him; and he was wont to exclaim, "He was a fine man, that Isaiah; he knew how to speak."

He seconded my anxiety that his subjects should become converts to Christianity, and said, "Do you imagine these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them? I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them; and if you like, I shall call my head-men, and with our whips of rhinoceros-hide we will soon make them all believe together." The idea of using persuasion to subjects, whose opinion he would not have condescended to ask on any other matter, was especially surprising to him. He considered that they ought to be happy to embrace Christianity at his command. During the space of two years and a half he continued to profess to his people his full conviction of its truth, and acted uprightly in all the relations of life. He felt the difficulties of his situation, and often said, "O, I wish you had come to this country before I was entangled in the meshes of our customs!" In fact, he could not get rid of his superfluous wives without appearing to be ungrateful to their parents, who had done so much for him in his adversity.

In the hope of inducing others to accept his new faith, he asked me to have family worship in his house. This I did, and by-and-by I was surprised to hear how well he conducted the prayer in his own simple and beautiful style, for he was a thorough master of his language. At this time we were suffering from the effects of a drought, which was ascribed by the natives to Christianity, and none except his family, whom he ordered to attend, came near his meeting. "In former times," said he, "when a chief was fond of hunting, all his people got dogs and became fond of hunting too. If he was fond of dancing or music, all showed a liking to these amusements too. If the chief loved beer, they all rejoiced in strong drink. But in this case it is different. I love the Word of God, and not one of my brethren will join me."

He continued to make a consistent profession for about

three years. Perceiving the difficulties of his case, and feeling compassion for the poor women, who were by far the best of our scholars, I had no desire that he should be in a hurry to make a full profession by baptism, and put away all his wives but one. His principal wife, too, was the most unlikely person in the tribe to partake his views. I have seen him again and again send her out of church to put on her gown, and she walked away with her lips shot out, the very picture of unutterable disgust at his new-fangled notions.

When he at last applied for baptism, I asked him how, being acquainted with the Bible, he thought he ought to act. He went home, and gave each of his supernumerary wives new clothing, together with all the goods they had been accustomed to keep in their huts for him. He then sent them to their parents with an intimation that he had no fault to find with them, but that he wished to follow the will of God. When he and his children were baptized, great numbers came to see the ceremony. Some thought, from a stupid story which had been circulated by the enemies to Christianity in the south, that the converts would be made to drink an infusion of "dead men's brains," and were astonished to find that only water was used. Seeing several old men in tears during the service, I afterwards asked them the cause of their weeping. They were crying to see their father, as the Scotch remark of a case of suicide, "*so far left to himself.*" They seemed to think that I had thrown the glamour over him and that he had become mine. All the friends of the divorced wives now became the opponents of our religion. The attendance at school and church dwindled down to very few besides the family of the chief. They all continued to treat us with respectful kindness, but to Sechele himself they uttered things which, had they ventured on in former times, would, as he often remarked, have cost them their lives.

I pass from the chief to give a rapid sketch of our dealing with his people, the Bakuená, or Bakwains. When first we went to reside at Chonuane about 5*l.* worth of goods were given for a small piece of land sufficient for a garden. This purchase seemed strange to a tribe with whom the idea of buying land was entirely new; but we explained to them that we wished to avoid any cause of future dispute when ground had

become more valuable. They readily acquiesced, and agreed that a similar piece should be allotted to any other missionary, at any other place to which the tribe might remove.

In our relations with this people we exercised no authority whatever. Our control depended entirely on persuasion; and, having taught them by kind conversation as well as by public instruction, I expected them to do what their own sense of right and wrong dictated. Five instances are known to me in which by our influence on public opinion war was prevented; and where, in individual cases, we failed to do good, the people at least behaved no worse than before. In general they were slow, like all the African people, in coming to a decision on religious subjects; but in questions affecting their worldly affairs they were keenly alive to their own interests. They were stupid in matters which had not come within the sphere of their observation, but in other things they showed more intelligence than our own uneducated peasantry. They are knowing in cattle, sheep, and goats, and can tell exactly the kind of pasturage suited to each. They distinguish with equal judgment the varieties of soil which are best suited to different kinds of grain. They are familiar with the habits of wild animals, and are well up in the maxims which embody their ideas of political wisdom.

During the first year of our residence at Chonuane we were visited by one of those droughts which occur from time to time in even the most favoured districts of Africa. The belief in the power of *rain-making* is one of the most deeply-rooted articles of faith in this country. The chief Sechele was himself a noted rain-doctor, and he often assured me that he found it more difficult to give up this superstition than anything else which Christianity required him to abjure. I pointed out to him that the only way to water the gardens was to select some never-failing river, make a canal, and irrigate the adjacent lands. The whole tribe moved accordingly to the Kolobeng, a stream about forty miles distant. The Bakwains made the canal and dam in exchange for my labour in assisting to build a square house for their chief. They also erected their school under my superintendence. Our house at the river Kolobeng, which gave a name to the settlement, was the third I had reared with my own hands.

A native smith taught me to weld iron; and having acquired some further information in this art as well as in carpentering and gardening from Mr. Moffat, I was becoming handy at most mechanical employments in addition to medicine and preaching. My wife could make candles, soap, and clothes; and thus we had nearly attained to the indispensable accomplishments of a missionary family in Central Africa,—the husband to be a jack-of-all-trades without doors, and the wife a maid-of-all-work within.

In our second year again scarce any rain fell. The third was marked by the same extraordinary drought, and during these two years the whole downfall did not amount to ten inches. The Kolobeng ran dry, and so many fish died that the hyænas from the country round collected to the feast, and were unable to clear away the putrid mass. A large old alligator was left high and dry in the mud among the victims. The fourth year was equally unpropitious, the rain being insufficient to bring the grain to maturity. Needles lying out of doors for months did not rust; and a mixture of sulphuric acid and water, used in a galvanic battery, parted with all its moisture to the air, instead of imbibing more from the atmosphere as would have happened in England. The leaves of the trees drooped, and were soft and shrivelled, though not dead. Those of the mimosæ were closed at midday, the same as at night. I put the bulb of a thermometer three inches under the soil in the sun at midday, and found that the temperature was from  $132^{\circ}$  to  $134^{\circ}$ . When certain kinds of beetles were placed on the surface, they ran about for a few seconds and expired. But this broiling heat only augmented the never-tiring activity of the long-legged black ants. Where do they get their moisture? Our house was built on a hard ferruginous conglomerate, in order to be out of the way of the white ant. Their black brethren got in despite the precaution; and not only were they able to moisten soil to the consistency of mortar for the formation of galleries, which they do by night, that they may be screened in the day from the observation of birds as they are passing and repassing towards any vegetable matter they may wish to devour, but their inner chambers were surprisingly humid, though dew there was none, and, our dwelling being placed on a

rock, they could have no subterranean passage to the river, which ran about three hundred yards below the hill. Can it be that they have the power of combining by vital force the oxygen and hydrogen of their vegetable food so as to form water? \*

Rain, however, would not fall; the Bakwains believed that I had bound Sechele with some magic spell, and I received deputations of the old counsellors, entreating me to allow him to make only a few showers: "The corn will die if you refuse, and we shall become scattered. Only let him make rain this once, and we shall all, men, women, and children, come to the school and sing and pray as long as you please."

The method by which the natives imagine they can charm the clouds to pour out their refreshing treasure is by burning a variety of preparations, such as charcoal made of bats; inspissated renal deposit † of the mountain coney (*Hyrax capensis*), which is also used in the form of pills as a good anti-spasmodic; jackals' livers, baboons' and lions' hearts, hairy calculi from the bowels of old cows, serpents' skins and vertebræ, and every kind of tuber, root, and plant to be found in the country. Conscious that civility is useful everywhere, you kindly state that you think they are mistaken as to their power; the rain-doctor selects a particular bulb, pounds it, and administers a cold infusion to a sheep, which in five minutes afterwards expires in convulsions. Part of the same bulb is converted into smoke, and ascends towards the sky; rain follows in a day or two. The inference is obvious. Were we as much harassed by droughts, the logic would be irresistible in England in 1857.

The Bakwains still went on treating us with kindness, and I am not aware of ever having had an enemy in the tribe; but as they believed that there must be some connection between the presence of "God's Word" in their town and these successive droughts, they looked with no good will at the church-bell. "We like you," said the uncle of Sechele, a very influential and sensible person, "as well as if you had been born among us; you are the only white man we can

\* When we come to Angola I shall describe an insect there which distils several pints of water every night.

† By the action of the sun it becomes a black pitchy substance.

become familiar with; but we wish you to give up that everlasting preaching and praying; we cannot become familiar with that at all. You see we never get rain, while those tribes who never pray as we do obtain abundance." This was a fact; and we often saw it raining on the hills, ten miles off, while it would not look at us "even with one eye."

The rain-makers believe that medicines act by a mysterious charm, and they are all ready with such arguments as the following.

*Medical Doctor.*—Hail, friend! How very many medicines you have about you this morning! Why, you have every medicine in the country here.

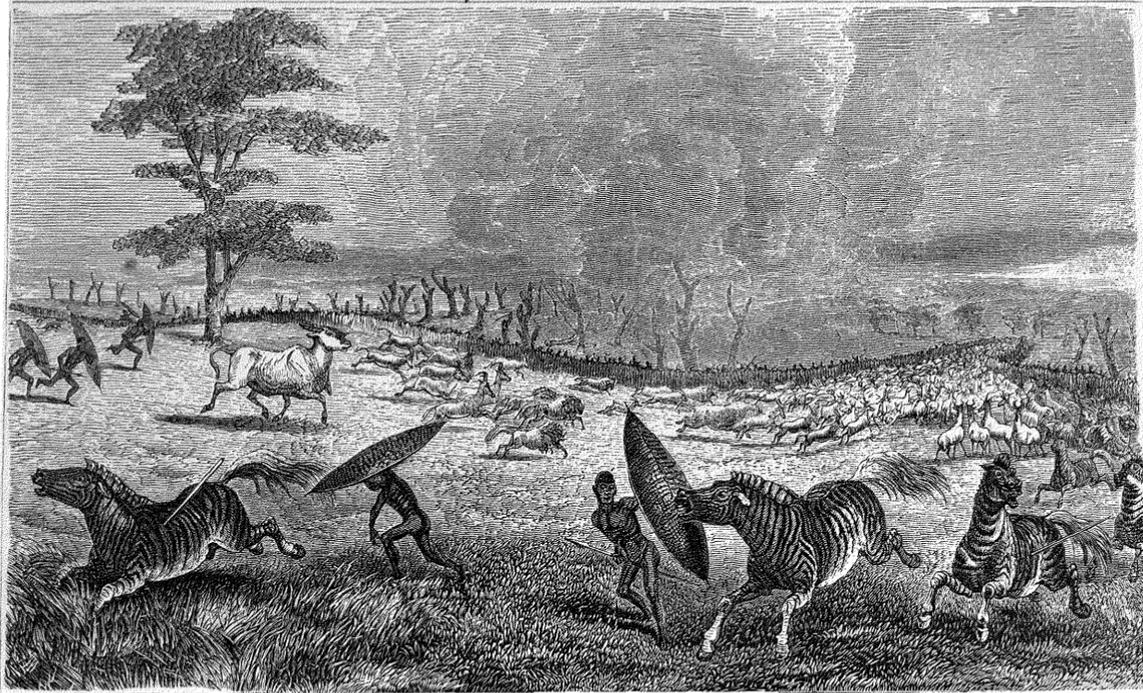
*Rain Doctor.*—Very true, my friend; and I ought; for the whole country needs the rain which I am making.

*M. D.*—So you really believe that you can command the clouds? I think that can be done by God alone.

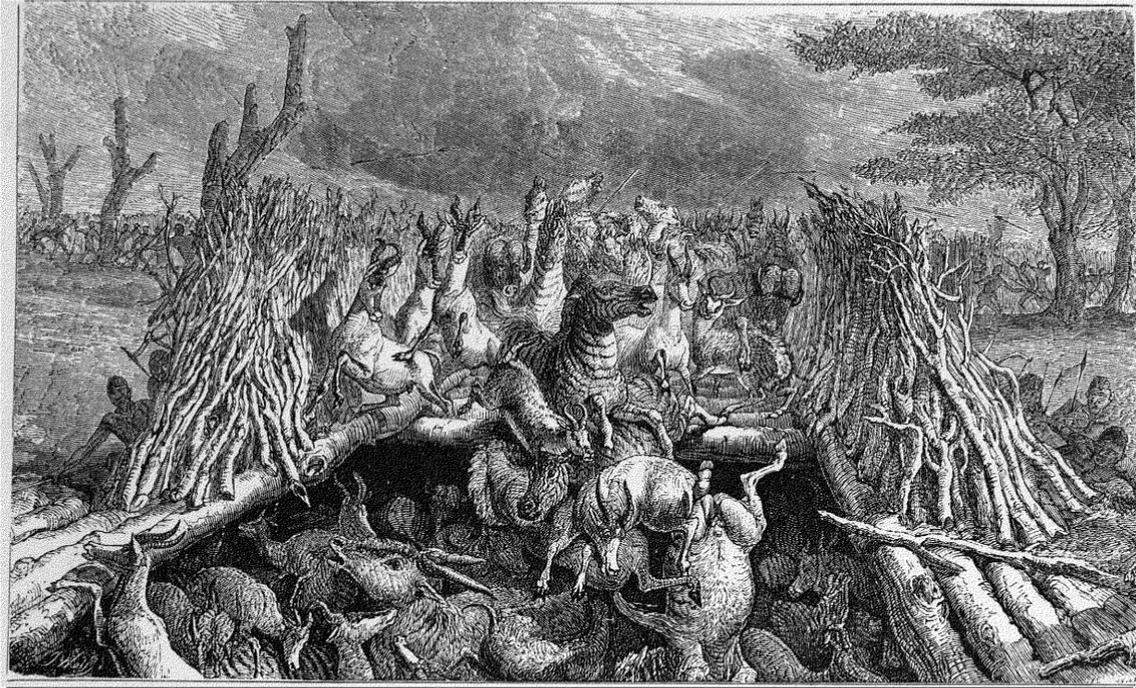
*R. D.*—We both believe the very same thing. It is God that makes the rain, but I pray to Him by means of these medicines, and, the rain coming, of course it is then mine. It was I who made it for the Bakwains for many years, when they were at Shokuane; through my wisdom, too, their women became fat and shining. Ask them; they will tell you the same as I do.

*M. D.*—But we are distinctly told in the parting words of our Saviour that we can pray to God acceptably in His name alone, and not by means of medicines.

*R. D.*—Truly! but God told us differently. He made black men first, and did not love us, as he did the white men. He made you beautiful, and gave you clothing, and guns, and gunpowder, and horses, and waggons, and many other things about which we know nothing. But toward us He had no heart. He gave us nothing except the assegai, and cattle, and rain-making; and He did not give us hearts like yours. We never love each other. Other tribes place medicines about our country to prevent the rain, so that we may be dispersed by hunger, and go to them, and augment their power. We must dissolve their charms by our medicines. God has given us one little thing which you know nothing of. He has given us the knowledge of certain medicines by which we can make rain. We do not despise those things which



THE HOPO, OR TRAP FOR DRIVING GAME.



**THE PIT AT THE EXTREMITY OF THE HOPO.**

you possess, though we are ignorant of them. *You* ought not to despise our little knowledge, though you are ignorant of it.

This is a brief specimen of their mode of reasoning, which is often remarkably acute. I never succeeded in convincing a single individual of the fallacy of his belief, and the usual effect of discussion is to produce the impression that you yourself are not anxious for rain.

During this long-continued drought the women parted with most of their ornaments to purchase corn from more fortunate tribes. The children scoured the country in search of the numerous bulbs and roots which can sustain life, and the men engaged in hunting. Great numbers of buffaloes, zebras, giraffes, tsessebes, kamas or hartebeests, kokongs or gnus, pallas, rhinoceroses, &c., congregated at some fountains near Kolobeng, and the trap called "*hopo*" was constructed for their destruction. The *hopo* consists of two hedges in the form of the letter V. They are made very high and thick near the angle, where they do not however touch, and at the extremity is a pit six or eight feet deep, and twelve or fifteen in breadth and length. Trunks of trees are laid across the margins of the pit, and form an overlapping border, so as to render it almost impossible for the animal to leap out. The whole is carefully decked with short green rushes. As the hedges are frequently about a mile long, and about as much apart at the opening, a tribe which makes a circle round the country adjacent, and gradually closes up, is almost sure to sweep before it a large body of game. It is driven up with shouts to the narrow part of the *hopo*, where men are secreted who throw their javelins into the affrighted herds. The animals rush to the narrow opening presented at the converging hedges, and fall into the pit. Some escape by running over the others, as a Smithfield market dog runs over the backs of the sheep. It is a frightful scene. The men, wild with excitement, spear the lovely animals with mad delight: others, borne down by the weight of their dead and dying companions, will every now and then make the whole mass heave by their struggles.

The Bakwains often killed between sixty and seventy head of large game at the different *hopos* in a single week; and as every one, both rich and poor, partook of the prey, the meat

prevented the bad effects of an exclusively vegetable diet. The district being destitute of salt, the rich alone could afford to buy it, and, when the poor, who had none, were forced to live entirely on roots, they were often troubled with indigestion. The native doctors, aware of the cause of the malady, usually prescribed some of that condiment with their medicines. Either milk or meat was equally remedial, though not so rapid in its effects as salt. Long afterwards, when at two distinct periods I was myself deprived of it for four months, I felt no craving for it, but had a great longing for milk and meat. This continued as long as I was confined to a vegetable diet, and when I procured a meal of flesh, though boiled in perfectly fresh rain-water, it tasted pleasantly saltish.

In addition to other adverse influences, the necessity of frequent absence for the purpose of either hunting game or collecting roots and fruits, proved a serious barrier to the progress of the people in knowledge. Sending the Gospel to the heathen must include much more than is implied in the usual picture of a missionary, which is that of a man going about with a Bible under his arm. The promotion of commerce ought to be specially attended to, as this, more speedily than anything else, demolishes that sense of isolation which heathenism engenders, and makes the tribes feel themselves mutually dependent on each other. Those laws which still prevent free commercial intercourse among civilized nations seem to be nothing but the remains of our own heathenism. By commerce we may not only put a stop to the slave-trade, but introduce the negro family into the body corporate of nations, no one member of which can suffer without the others suffering with it. This, in both Eastern and Western Africa, would lead to a much larger diffusion of the blessings of civilization than efforts exclusively spiritual and educational confined to any one tribe. These should of course be carried on at the same time at large central and healthy stations. Neither civilization nor Christianity can be promoted alone. In fact, they are inseparable.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE BOERS: THEIR INFAMOUS TREATMENT OF NATIVES.—THE KALAHARI DESERT.—BUSHMEN AND BAKALAHARI.

ONE of the difficulties with which the mission had to contend was the vicinity of the Boers of the Cashan Mountains, otherwise named "Magaliesberg." The word Boer simply means "farmer," and is not synonymous with our word boor. The Magaliesberg Boers are not to be confounded with the Cape colonists, who sometimes pass by the name, and who for the most part are sober, industrious, and hospitable. Those, however, who have fled from English law, and have been joined by every variety of bad character, are of a very different stamp. Many of them felt aggrieved by the emancipation of their Hottentot slaves, and determined to remove to distant localities where they could erect themselves into a republic, and pursue without molestation the "proper treatment of the blacks." This "proper treatment" has always involved the essential element of slavery,—compulsory unpaid labour.

One section of this class of persons penetrated the interior as far as the Cashan Mountains, whence a Zulu or Caffre chief, named Mosilikátze, had been expelled by the well-known Caffre Dingaan. They came with the prestige of white men and deliverers; but the Bechuanas, who had just escaped the hard sway of the tyrannical Caffres, soon found, as they expressed it, "that Mosilikatze was cruel to his enemies, and kind to those he conquered; but that the Boers destroyed their enemies, and made slaves of their friends." The tribes, while retaining the semblance of independence, are forced to perform gratuitously all the labour of the fields, and have at the same time to support themselves. I have myself seen Boers come to a village, and, according to their custom, demand twenty or thirty women to weed their gardens. These poor creatures accordingly proceeded to the scene of unrequited toil, carrying their own food on their heads, their

children on their backs, and instruments of labour on their shoulders. "We make the people work for us," said the Boers, "in consideration of allowing them to live in our country." During the several journeys I made to the enslaved tribes I was invariably treated by the whites with respect; but it is most unfortunate that they should have been left uncared for by their own Church till they have become as degraded as the blacks, whom the stupid prejudice against colour leads them to detest.

This new and mean species of slavery which they have adopted serves to supply the lack of field-labour only. The demand for domestic servants must be met by forays on tribes which have good supplies of cattle. The individuals among the Boers who would not engage in the raid for the sake of capturing slaves can seldom resist the two-fold plea of an intended uprising of the doomed tribe, and the prospect of a handsome share of the pilfered herds. It is difficult to conceive that men possessing the common attributes of humanity (and these Boers are by no means destitute of the better feelings of our nature) should set out, after caressing their wives and children, and proceed to shoot down men and women whose affections are as warm as their own. It was long before I could give credit to the tales of bloodshed told by native witnesses; but when I heard the Boers either bewailing or boasting the bloody scenes in which they had themselves been actors, I was compelled to admit the validity of the testimony. They are all traditionally religious, and trace their descent from some of the best men (Huguenots and Dutch) the world ever saw. In their own estimation they are the chosen people of God, and all the coloured race are "black property" or "creatures"—heathen given to them for an inheritance. Living in the midst of a much more numerous native population and at fountains removed many miles from each other, the Boers feel themselves insecure; and when they receive reports against any tribe from some dissatisfied black the direst vengeance appears to the most mildly disposed among them a simple measure of self-defence. However bloody the massacre, no qualms of conscience ensue. Indeed the leader, the late Mr. Hendrick Potgeiter, believed himself to be the great peacemaker of the country. There is not, how-

ever, a single instance of the Bechuanas attacking either the Boers or the English. They have defended themselves when assailed, but have never engaged in offensive war with Europeans. We have a different tale to tell of the Caffres, and the result has been that from the hour they obtained fire-arms not one Boer has attempted to settle in Caffreland, or even to face the enemy in the field. These magnanimous colonists have manifested a marked antipathy to anything but "long-shot" warfare, and, sidling away in their emigrations towards the more effeminate Bechuanas, have left their quarrels with the Caffres to be fought out by the English, and the wars to be paid for by English gold.

The Bakwains at Kolobeng had the spectacle of various tribes enslaved before their eyes. The Bakatla, the Batlókua, the Bahúkeng, the Bamosétla, and two other tribes were all groaning under the oppression of unrequited labour. This would not have been felt as so great an evil, but that the young men, as the only means of rising to importance, were in the habit of sallying forth to procure work in the Cape Colony. After labouring there three or four years, in building stone dykes and dams for the Dutch farmers, they were content if they could return at the end of that time with as many cows. On presenting one to their chief they ranked ever afterwards as respectable men in the tribe. These volunteers were highly esteemed among the Dutch, under the name of Mantátees, and received a shilling a day and a large loaf of bread between six of them. The system was distasteful to the Boers of the Cashan or Magaliesberg country. "If they want," it was said, "to work, let them work for us their masters," though these masters boasted that they would not pay for the services rendered. A law was made, in consequence, to deprive these poor fellows of their hard-earned cattle, and compel them to labour gratis at home. Fraud becomes as natural to the slave-owner as "paying one's way" is to the rest of mankind.

Wherever a missionary lives, traders are sure to come; they are mutually dependent, and each aids the other; but experience shows that the two employments cannot well be combined in the same person. Nothing would be more fair, and apostolical too, than that the man who devotes his time

to the spiritual welfare of a people should derive temporal advantage from upright commerce; but the present system of missions renders it inexpedient. No missionary with whom I ever came in contact traded; and while the traders, whom we introduced into the country, waxed rich, the missionaries have invariably remained poor. The Jesuits in Africa were wiser in their generation. They were a large community, and went on the plan of devoting the abilities of every one to that pursuit in which he was most likely to excel. One studied natural history, another literature, and a third, skilful in barter, was sent in search of ivory and gold-dust, that while pushing forward the mission to distant tribes he might yet afford pecuniary aid to the brethren whom he had left at the central settlement.\* We Protestants provide missionaries with a bare subsistence, and are unsparing in our praise of them for not being worldly-minded when our niggardliness compels them to live as did the prodigal son. I do not need to speak for myself, and for that very reason I feel at liberty to interpose a word in behalf of others. It is quite possible to find men whose devotion to the work of spreading the Gospel will make them ready to submit to any sacrifice. What, however, can be thought of the justice of Christians who not only work their agents at the lowest terms, but regard what they give as charity!

English traders had sold the Bakwains what the Boers most dread,—arms and ammunition. When the guns amounted to five, so much alarm was excited among our neighbours that an expedition of several hundred whites was seriously planned to seize these weapons. Knowing that their owners would have fled to the Kalahari Desert rather than deliver them up, I proceeded to the commandant, Mr. Gert Krieger, and prevailed upon him to defer the attack. He wished in return that I should act as a spy over the people. I explained the impossibility of compliance, even if my principles had not stood in the way, by referring to an instance in which Sechele had gone, unknown to me, with his whole force, to punish a

\* The Dutch clergy, also, are not wanting in worldly wisdom. A fountain is bought, and the lands which it can irrigate parcelled out and let to villagers. As they increase in numbers the rents rise and the Church becomes rich. The government adds 200*l.* per annum, and the total salary amounts to 400*l.* or 500*l.* a-year.

rebellious under-chief. This happened when we had just come to live with the Bakwains. Sechele consulted me, and I advised mild measures. The messengers he despatched to the rebel were answered by a taunt: "He only pretends to wish to follow the advice of the teacher: Sechele is a coward; let him come and fight if he dare." On the next offence Sechele told me he was going to hunt elephants; and asked the loan of a black-metal pot to cook with. I knew nothing further until we saw the Bakwains carrying home their wounded, and heard some of the women uttering the loud wail of sorrow for the dead, while others pealed forth the clear scream of victory. It was then clear that Sechele had attacked and driven away the rebel.

Having made this statement to the commandant, I had soon an example how quickly a story can grow among idle people. The five guns were, within one month, multiplied into five hundred, and the cooking-pot, now in a museum at Cape Town, was magnified into a cannon; "I had myself confessed to the loan." Where the five hundred guns came from it was easy to divine; for, as I used a sextant, my connection with Government was a thing of course; and, as I must know all Her Majesty's counsels, I was questioned on the indistinct rumours which had reached them of Lord Rosse's telescope. "What right," said they, "has your government to set up that large glass at the Cape to look after us behind the Cashan Mountains?" Many of the Boers visited us afterwards at Kolobeng, some for medical advice, and others to trade in those very muskets and powder which their own laws and policy forbade them to sell to the natives. Many attempts were made during these visits to elicit the truth respecting the guns and cannon. Espionage, which is a proof of barbarism, is as well developed among the savages as in Austria or Russia, and every man in a tribe feels himself bound to tell the chief all that comes to his knowledge. Sechele was therefore acquainted with every question put to his people, and asked me how they ought to answer. My reply was, "Tell the truth." Every one then declared that no cannon existed; and our friends, judging of the denial by what they themselves would have said in similar circumstances, were only confirmed in the opinion that the Bakwains possessed artillery.

This was in some degree beneficial to us; the fear it inspired prevented any foray in our direction for eight years.

During the whole of that period no winter passed without some of the tribes in the East country being plundered of both cattle and children by the Boers. It is only in winter, when horses can be used without danger of dying from disease, that these expeditions can take place. One or two friendly tribes are forced to accompany a party of mounted Boers, and are ranged in front to form "a shield." The Boers then coolly fire over their heads till the devoted people flee and leave cattle, wives, and children to the captors. This was done in nine cases during my residence in the interior, and on no occasion was a drop of Boer blood shed. Letters were repeatedly sent by them to Sechele ordering him to surrender himself as their vassal, and stop English traders from proceeding into the country with firearms for sale. He replied, "I was made an independent chief and placed here by God, and not by you. I was never conquered by Mosilikatze, as those tribes whom you rule over; and the English are my friends. I get everything I wish from them. I cannot hinder them from going where they like."

I attempted to benefit the tribes among the Boers of Magaliesberg by placing native teachers at different points. "You must teach the blacks," said Mr. Hendrick Potgeiter, the commandant in chief, "that they are not equal to us." Other Boers said, "I might as well teach the baboons on the rocks as the Africans." These sneerers declined my proposition to examine whether they or my native attendants could read best. When Sir George Cathcart proclaimed the independence of the Boers, a treaty was made with them by which they undertook to allow the English a free passage to the country beyond, and to abolish slavery. "But what about the missionaries?" they inquired. "*You may do as you please with them,*" is said to have been the answer of the "Commissioner." This remark, if uttered at all, was probably made in joke. The general belief in its seriousness doubtless led to the destruction of three mission stations immediately after. The Boers, four hundred in number, were sent by the late Mr. Pretorius to attack the Bakwains in 1852, and, besides slaughtering a considerable number of adults, carried off two

hundred of our school-children into slavery. The people under Sechele defended themselves till the approach of night enabled them to flee to the mountains; and having killed a number of the enemy, the first ever slain by Bechuanas, I had the credit of having taught them to destroy Boers! My house was plundered in revenge. English gentlemen, who had come in the footsteps of Mr. Cumming to hunt in the country beyond, and had left large quantities of stores in the keeping of the natives, were robbed of everything; and when they came back to Kolobeng found the skeletons of the guardians strewed about the place. The books of a good library—my solace in our solitude—were torn to pieces and scattered about. My stock of medicines was smashed; and all our furniture and clothing were carried off and sold by public auction to pay the expenses of the foray.

A short sketch of African housekeeping may not prove uninteresting. The entire absence of shops obliged us to make everything we needed from the raw materials. If you want bricks to build a house you must proceed to the field, cut down a tree, and saw it into planks to make the brick-moulds. The people cannot assist you much; for, though willing to labour for wages, the Bakwains have a curious inability to make things square. As with all Bechuanas, their own dwellings are round. I erected three large houses at different times, and every brick and stick had to be put square by my own hand. A house of decent dimensions, costing an immense amount of manual labour, is necessary to secure the respect of the natives.

Bread is often baked in an extempore oven constructed by scooping out a large hole in an anthill, and using a slab of stone for a door. Another plan is to make a good fire on the ground, and when it is thoroughly heated to place the dough in a short-handled frying-pan, or simply on the hot ashes. A metal pot is then put over it, and a small fire is kindled on the top.

We made our own candles, and soap was procured from the ashes of the plant *salsola*, or else from wood-ashes, which in Africa contain so little alkaline matter that the boiling of successive leys has to be continued for a month or six weeks before the fat is saponified. There was not much hardship in

being thus dependent on our own ingenuity, and married life is all the sweeter when so many comforts emanate directly from the thrifty housewife's hands.

We rose early, because, however hot the day, the evening, night, and morning at Kolobeng were deliciously refreshing. You can sit out till midnight with no fear of coughs or rheumatism. After family worship and breakfast between six and seven, we kept school, men, women, and children being all invited. This lasted till eleven o'clock. The missionary's wife then betook herself to her domestic affairs, and the missionary engaged in some manual labour, as that of a smith, carpenter, or gardener. If he did jobs for the people, they worked for him in turn and exchanged their unskilled labour for his skilled. Dinner and an hour's rest succeeded, when the wife attended her infant-school, which the young liked amazingly, and generally mustered a hundred strong; or she varied it with sewing-classes for the girls, which was equally well relished. After sunset the husband went into the town to converse, either on general subjects or on religion. We had a public service on three nights of the week, and on another instruction on secular subjects aided by pictures and specimens. In addition to these duties we prescribed for the sick and furnished food to the poor. The smallest acts of friendship, even an obliging word and civil look, are, as St. Xavier thought, no despicable part of the missionary armour. Nor ought the good opinion of the most abject to be neglected when politeness may secure it. Their good word in the aggregate forms a reputation which procures favour for the Gospel. Show kindness to the reckless opponents of Christianity on the bed of sickness, and they never can become your personal enemies. Here, if anywhere, love begets love.

When at Kolobeng, during the droughts we were entirely dependent on Kuruman for supplies of corn. Once we were reduced to living on bran, which we had to grind three times over to reduce it to fine meal. We were much in want of animal food, which here seems essential to health. We craved as large a quantity as in England, and no bilious effects follow the free use of flesh as in other hot climates. A vegetable diet causes acidity and heartburn. Sechele had by

right of chieftainship the breast of every animal slaughtered either at home or abroad, and he obligingly sent us a liberal share during the whole period of our sojourn. But these supplies were so irregular, that we were sometimes fain to accept a dish of locusts. They have a strong vegetable taste, which varies with the plants on which they feed. There is a physiological reason why locusts and honey should be eaten together: the laxative properties of the last correct the astringent qualities of the first. Locusts are often roasted and pounded into meal, when they will keep for months. Boiled they are disagreeable; but when roasted I much prefer them to shrimps, though I would avoid both if possible. The scarcity of meat was felt more especially by my children; and the natives, to show their sympathy, often gave them a large kind of caterpillar, which they seemed to relish. These insects could not be unwholesome, for the natives devoured them in large quantities themselves.

Another dainty of which our children partook with eagerness was the enormous frog called "Matlamétlo."\* When cooked it looks like a chicken. These creatures are supposed by the natives to fall down from thunder-clouds, because, after heavy storms, the pools, being filled with water which is retained a few days, become instantly alive with this loud-croaking game. As they rush forth into the hollows into which the rain is falling, and the Bechuanas are cowering under their skin garments, the sudden chorus struck up from all sides seems to indicate a descent from the heavens. The phenomenon takes place in the driest parts of the desert, where to an ordinary observer there is not a sign of life. I afterwards learned from the Bushmen that the matlametlo makes a hole at the root of certain bushes, and there ensconces himself during the months of drought. As he seldom emerges, a large variety of spider takes advantage of the hole, and makes its web across the orifice. No one but a Bushman would think of searching beneath a spider's web for a frog.

It is remarkable that more attempts have not been made to domesticate some of the African animals in England. The

\* The *Pyxicephalus adspersus* of Dr. Smith. Length of head and body, 5½ inches; fore legs, 3 inches; hind legs, 6 inches. Width of head posteriorly, 3 inches; of body, 4½ inches.

eland, the most magnificent of antelopes, would grace the parks of our nobility, and its excellent flesh be a delicacy at their tables. The noble esculent frog might prove a welcome addition to the eatables of France.

The scavenger beetle is one of the most useful of insects, for it effectually answers the object indicated by the name. Where they abound, as at Kuruman, the villages are clean. No sooner are animal excretions dropped than, attracted by the scent, the scavengers are heard coming booming up the wind. They roll away the droppings of cattle in round pieces often as large as billiard-balls till they reach a place proper by its softness for excavating. They then dig the soil out from beneath the ball, and, when it is let down into the ground and covered, they lay their eggs within the mass. The larvæ devour the inside of their little globe before coming up to the surface to begin life for themselves. The beetles with their gigantic balls look like Atlas with the world on his shoulders. Their progression, however, is backwards, and, keeping their heads down, they push with the hind legs, as if a boy should roll a snowball with his feet, while standing on his crown.

In trying to benefit the tribes living under the Boers of the Cashan mountains, I twice performed a journey of about three hundred miles to the eastward of Kolobeng. Sechele had become so obnoxious to the whites, that, though anxious to accompany me, he dared not trust himself among them. His independence and love of the English were his only faults. In my last journey he gave me two servants on parting, "to be," as he said, "his arms to serve me," and expressed his regret that he could not go himself. "Suppose we went north," I said, "would you come?" This was the first time I had thought of crossing the Desert to Lake Ngami.\*

When I reached the Boers and spoke to Mr. Hendrick Potgeiter of the danger of hindering the Gospel of Christ among these poor savages, he became greatly excited. He

\* Several words in the African languages begin with the ringing sound heard in the end of the word "coming." If the reader puts an *í* to the beginning of the name of the lake, as Ingami, and then sounds the *í* as little as possible, he will have the correct pronunciation. Every vowel is sounded in all native words, and the emphasis in pronunciation is put upon the penultimate.

threatened to attack any tribe that might receive a native teacher, yet promised to use his influence to prevent those under him from throwing obstacles in our way. I plainly perceived that nothing more could be done, and commenced collecting information about the Desert, with the intention of crossing it. Sekomi, the chief of the Bamangwato, was acquainted with a route which he kept carefully concealed, because the Lake country abounded in ivory, which he obtained in large quantities at small cost to himself. Sechele, who valued highly everything European, and was always alive to his own interest, was anxious to get a share of the trade. In age and family he was the superior of Sekomi; for when the original tribe broke up into Bamangwato, Bangwaketse, and Bakwains, the latter retained the hereditary chieftainship. If the two were travelling or hunting together, Sechele would take, by right, the heads of the game shot by Sekomi.

Sechele, by my advice, sent men to Sekomi, to ask leave for me to pass along his path. This request was accompanied with the present of an ox. Sekomi's mother, who possesses great influence over him, refused permission, because she had not been propitiated. An ox was therefore sent for both Sekomi and his mother, but with no better success. "The Matebele," it was said, "the mortal enemies of the Bechuanas, are in the direction of the lake, and should they kill the white man we shall incur great blame from all his nation."

The exact position of the Lake Ngami had, for half a century at least, been correctly pointed out by the natives, who had visited it when rains were more copious in the Desert than in recent times. Many attempts had since been made to reach it, but this was found impossible, even by Griquas, who may be supposed to be more capable of enduring thirst than Europeans. It was clear that our only chance of success was by going round the Desert instead of through it. I communicated my intention to an African traveller, Colonel Steele, and he made it known to another gentleman, Mr. Oswell. He undertook to defray the entire expenses of the guides, and fully executed his generous intention. When he joined me he brought Mr. Murray with him.

Before narrating the incidents of the journey I must give

D

some account of the great Kalahari Desert. The space from the Orange River in the south, lat.  $29^{\circ}$ , to Lake Ngami in the north, and from about  $24^{\circ}$  east long. to near the west coast, has been called a desert because, though intersected by the beds of ancient rivers, it contains no running water, and very little in wells. Far from being destitute of vegetation, it is covered with grass and creeping plants; and there are large patches of bushes and even trees. It is remarkably flat, and prodigious herds of antelopes, which require little or no water, roam over the trackless plains. The Bushmen and Bakalahari prey on the game and on the countless rodentia and small species of the feline race. In general the soil is light-coloured soft sand, nearly pure silica. The beds of the former streams contain much alluvial soil, which being baked hard by the burning sun, rain-water in some places stands in pools for several months in the year.

The quantity of grass which grows on this remarkable region is astonishing, even to those who are familiar with India. It usually rises in tufts with bare spaces between, or the intervals are occupied by the creeping-plants, the roots of which, being buried far beneath the soil, feel little the effects of the scorching sun. The number of these which have tuberous roots is very great; a structure which is intended to supply moisture during the long droughts. One of the cucurbitaceæ, which produces a small scarlet-coloured eatable cucumber, though not generally tuber-bearing, becomes so here, where that appendage is necessary to act as a reservoir for preserving its life. The same thing occurs in Angola with a species of grape-bearing vine. A vegetable, named *Leroshua*, is a blessing to the inhabitants of the Desert. It is a small plant, with linear leaves, and has a stalk not thicker than a crow's-quill; but on digging down a foot or eighteen inches beneath the soil we come to a tuber often as large as the head of a young child. When the rind is removed we find a mass of cellular tissue, filled with fluid much like that in a young turnip, and which, owing to the depth it grows beneath the surface, is generally deliciously cool. Another kind, named *Mokuri*, is met with in other parts of the country, and produces a number of tubers, some as big as a man's head, in a circle, of which the circumference is a yard or more from the

stem. The natives strike the ground with stones, and the nature of the sound tells them where to dig.

But the most surprising plant of the Desert is the water-melon, "Kengwe or Kēme" (*Cucumis caffer*). When more than the usual quantity of rain falls, vast tracts of the country are literally covered with these melons. This happens commonly every ten or eleven years. Then animals of every sort and name, including man, rejoice in the rich supply. The elephant, true lord of the forest, and the different species of rhinoceros, revel in the fruit, although naturally so diverse in their choice of pasture. The various kinds of antelopes feed on them with avidity, and lions, hyænas, jackals, and mice, all seem to appreciate the common blessing. These melons are not, however, all eatable; some being sweet, and others bitter. The natives select them by striking them with a hatchet, and applying the tongue to the gashes. This peculiarity of one species of plants bearing both sweet and bitter fruits occurs also in a cucumber. It is about four inches long, and about an inch and a half in diameter, and is of a bright scarlet colour when ripe. Even melons in a garden may be made bitter by a few bitter kengwe in the vicinity, for the bees convey the pollen from one to the other.

The inhabitants of this tract consist of Bushmen and Bakalahari. The former are probably the aborigines of the southern portion of the continent, the latter the remnants of the first emigration of Bechuanas. The Bushmen live in the Desert from choice, the Bakalahari from compulsion, and both possess an intense love of liberty. The Bushmen are distinct in language, race, habits, and appearance, and are the only real nomads in the country. They never cultivate the soil nor rear any animal, save wretched dogs. They are intimately acquainted with the habits of the game, and chiefly subsist upon their flesh, eked out by the roots and beans and fruits of the Desert. Those who inhabit the hot sandy plains have generally thin, wiry forms, and are capable of great exertion and of severe privations. Many are of low stature, though not dwarfish. The specimens brought to Europe have been selected, like costermongers' dogs, on account of their extreme ugliness. That they are, to some extent, like baboons is true, just as these are in some points frightfully human.

The Bakalahari are supposed to be the oldest of the Bechuana tribes, and are said to have possessed enormous herds of the large horned cattle mentioned by Bruce, until they were driven into the Desert by a fresh migration of their own nation. Living for centuries on the same plains with the Bushmen, subjected to the same influences of climate, enduring the same thirst, and subsisting on similar food, they seem to supply a proof that locality is not always sufficient to account for difference in races. The Bakalahari retain in undying vigour the Bechuana love for agriculture and domestic animals. They hoe their gardens annually, though often all they can hope for is a supply of melons and pumpkins. They carefully rear small herds of goats, and I have seen them lift water for them out of small wells with a bit of ostrich egg-shell. They generally attach themselves to influential men in the different Bechuana tribes, adjacent to their desert home, in order to obtain supplies of spears, knives, tobacco, and dogs, in exchange for the skins of the animals they may kill. These include two species of jackal, the dark and the golden; the former, "motlose" (*Megalotis capensis* or *Cape fennec*), has the warmest fur the country yields; the latter, "pukuye" (*Canis mesomelas* and *C. aureus*), is very handsome when made into the mantle called karoes. Next in value follow the "tsipa" or small ocelot (*Felis nigripes*), the "tuane" or lynx, the wild cat, the spotted cat, and others. They procure in addition great numbers of *puti* (*düiker*) and *puruhuru* (*steinbuck*) skins, besides those of lions, leopards, panthers, and hyænas. During the time I was in the Bechuana country between twenty and thirty thousand skins were made up into karosses. Part of them were worn by the inhabitants, and part sold to traders: many, I believe, find their way to China. The Bakwains bought tobacco from the eastern tribes, purchased skins with it from the Bakalahari, tanned them, and sewed them into karosses. When made up they carried them south and purchased heifer-calves with them, cows being the highest form of riches known. I have often been asked "if Queen Victoria had many cows." Injustice is often perpetrated by one tribe of Bechuanas compelling the Bakalahari of another tribe to deliver up skins which they may be keeping for their friends. They are a timid race, and in bodily development often resemble the aborigines of Australia.

They have thin legs and arms, and large protruding abdomens, caused by the coarse indigestible food they eat. Their children's eyes lack lustre. I never saw them at play. A few Bechuanas may go into a village of Bakalahari, and domineer over the whole with impunity; but when these same adventurers meet the Bushmen, they are fain to change their manners to fawning sycophancy. They know that, if the request for tobacco is refused, these free sons of the Desert may settle the point by a poisoned arrow.

The dread of visits from Bechuanas of strange tribes causes the Bakalahari to reside far from water; and they not unfrequently hide their supplies by filling the pits with sand and making a fire over the spot. When they wish to draw water the women come with a bag or net on their backs, in which are twenty or thirty ostrich egg-shells, with a hole in the end of each of the size of a finger. Tying a bunch of grass to one end of a reed about two feet long, they insert it in a hole dug as deep as the arm will reach, and ram the wet sand firmly round it. The grass absorbs the water, which is then sucked up by the woman through the reed. A straw goes from her mouth to one of the egg-shells on the ground, and, as she draws mouthful after mouthful from below, she makes the water trickle along the *outside* of the straw into the shell. I have visited villages where, had we acted a domineering part and rummaged every hut, we should have found nothing; but by waiting with patience the people were led to form a favourable opinion of us, and would bring out a shellful of the precious fluid.

Besides supporting multitudes of animals, the so-called Desert contributes something to the market of the world, and has proved a refuge to many a fugitive tribe when their lands were overrun by the tribe of true Caffres called Matebele. The Bakwains, the Bangwaketze, and the Bamangwato all fled thither; and the Matebele marauders, who came from the well-watered east, perished by hundreds in their attempts to follow them. One of the Bangwaketze chiefs, more wily than the rest, sent false guides to lead them on a track where, for hundreds of miles, not a drop of water could be found, and they were parched to death in consequence. Many of the Bakwains themselves sunk under the privation, and their old

men, who could have told us ancient stories, died in these flights. An intelligent Mokwain informed me that a party of his tribe came in a state of burning thirst to a village of Bushmen and demanded water. The Bushmen replied that they never drank any. Their visitors watched them to no purpose night and day. The Bakwains at last were compelled to exclaim, "Yak! yak! these are not men; let us go." Probably the Bushmen had contrived to draw secretly upon a store which was hidden under ground.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### CROSSING THE DESERT.—THE ZOUGA.—DISCOVERY OF LAKE NGAMI.— RETURN TO KOLOBENG.

SUCH was the Desert which we were now preparing to cross,—a region formerly terrible to the Bechuanas from the numbers of serpents which infested it, and from the intense thirst which these people often endured when their water-vessels were insufficient to hold the requisite supply till the next well could be reached. Just before the arrival of my companions a party of the people of the lake came to Kolobeng to ask me to visit their country. They brought flaming accounts of the quantities of ivory to be found there, and talked of cattle-pens made of elephants' tusks of enormous size.

We started for the unknown region on the 1st of June, 1849. Passing through a range of tree-covered hills to Shokuane, formerly the residence of the Bakwains, we soon after entered on the high road to the Bamangwato, which lies mainly in the bed of an ancient river or wady that must formerly have flowed N. to S. The adjacent country is perfectly flat. The soil is sandy, and there are here and there indications that at spots which now afford no water there were formerly wells and cattle-stations. The land is covered with open forest, bush, and abundance of grass. The trees are mostly a kind of acacia called "Monáto," which appears a little to the south of this region, and is common as far as Angola. A large caterpillar, called "Nato," feeds by night on the leaves, and

hides itself by day at the root in the sand, in order to escape the piercing rays of the sun. The people are fond of it when roasted, on account of its pleasant vegetable taste. When about to pass into the chrysalis state it buries itself in the soil, and comes forth, if left undisturbed, a beautiful butterfly. I sometimes referred to the transmutation with good effect as an illustration of our own resurrection.

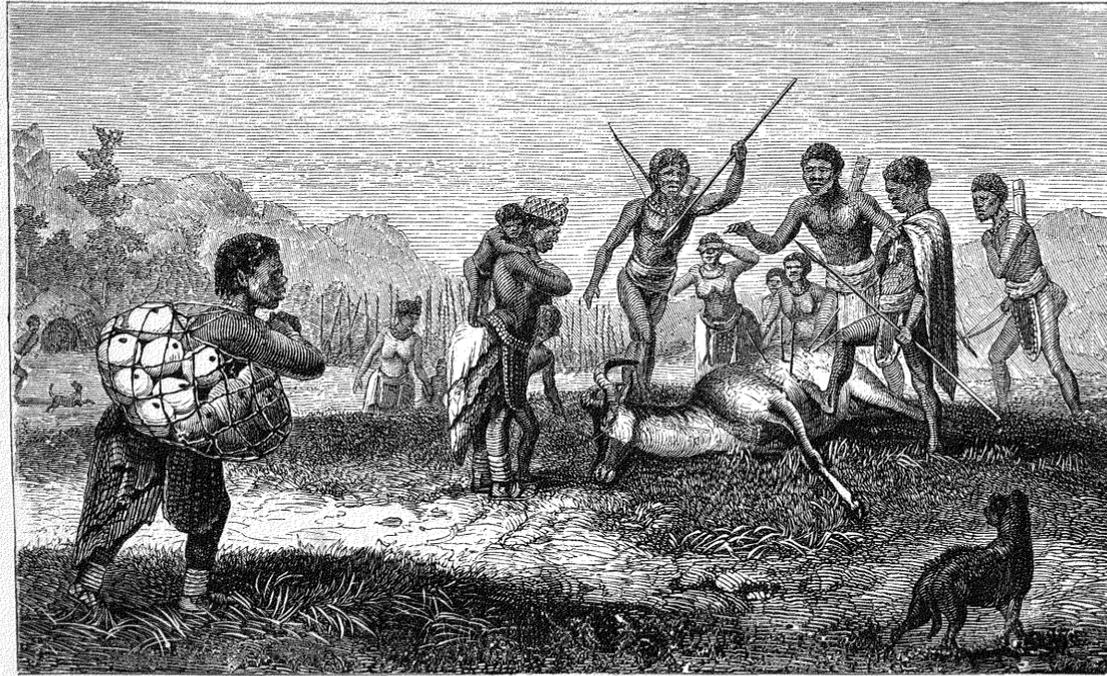
Boatlanáma, our next station, is a lovely spot in this otherwise arid region. The wells from which we had to lift the water for our cattle were deep, but well filled. A few villages of Bakalahari were found near them, and great numbers of pallahs, springbucks, guinea-fowl, and small monkeys.

Lopépe came next, and afforded another proof of the desiccation of the country. The first time I passed here there was a large pool with a stream flowing out of it to the south, and now it was with difficulty that we could get our cattle watered, by digging down in the bottom of a well.

At Mashūe we came upon a never-failing supply of pure water in a sandstone rocky hollow. Here we left the road to the Bamangwato hills, and struck away to the north into the Desert. Having watered the cattle at a well called Lobotáni, we next proceeded to Serotli, a real Kalahari fountain. The country around is covered with bushes and trees of a kind of leguminosæ, with lilac flowers. The soil is soft white sand, very trying to the strength of the oxen, as the wheels sink into it over the felloes. At Serotli we found only a few hollows like those made by the buffalo and rhinoceros when they roll themselves in the mud. In a corner of one of these there was a little water, which would have been quickly lapped up by our dogs, had we not driven them away. This was all the apparent supply for some eighty oxen, twenty horses, and about a score of men, and it was to serve for the next seventy miles—a journey of three days with the waggons. Our guide, Ramotóbi, who had spent his youth in the Desert, declared that there was plenty of water at hand. By the aid of spades and fingers two of the holes were cleared out till they formed pits six feet deep and about as many broad. Our guides were earnest in their injunctions to us not to break through the hard stratum of sand at the bottom, in which case “the water would go away.” The value of the advice was

proved in the case of an Englishman who insisted upon digging through the flooring of incipient sandstone in the wells at Mohotluáni, when the water immediately disappeared downwards. On reaching the stratum the water flowed in at the line where the soft sand came into contact with it. Enough accumulated for the horses that evening; but as there was not sufficient for the oxen, we sent them back to Lobotani, where they got a good supply, after thirsting four full days or ninety-six hours. Next morning we found the water ran in faster than at first, as invariably happens in these reservoirs, owing to the passages widening by the flow. The supply, which at the beginning may be only enough for a few men, becomes in a few days sufficient for the oxen as well. The Bakalahari are dependent on these wells, and, as they are generally in the hollows of ancient river-beds, they are probably the deposits from rains gravitating thither. In some cases they may be the actual fountains which formerly replenished the river, though they now no longer rise to the surface.

The buried fluid was perfectly inaccessible to the elands. Yet large numbers of them fed around us; and, when killed, they were not only in good condition, but their stomachs actually contained considerable quantities of water. I examined the alimentary canal to see if there were any peculiarity which would account for this animal subsisting for months together without drinking. I found nothing. The düiker (*Cephalopus mergens*) or puti (of the Bechuanas), the steinbuck (*Tragulius rupestris*) or puruhuru, the gemsbuck (*Oryx capensis*) or kukama, and the porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), are all able to exist without water for months by living on bulbs and tubers containing moisture. They have sharp-pointed hoofs well adapted for digging, and there is little difficulty in comprehending their mode of subsistence. The tolo or koodoo (*Strepsiceros capensis*), the springbuck (*Gazella euchore*), and the ostrich are also in a great degree independent of pools and streams. I believe, however, that they can subsist only when there is moisture in the vegetation on which they feed; for in a year of unusual drought we saw herds of elands and flocks of ostriches crowding to the Zougá from the Desert, and many of the latter were killed in pitfalls on the banks. The rhinoceros, the buffalo, and gnu (*Catoblepas*



From a sketch at Stafford House in possession of the Duke of Sutherland.

**HOTTENTOTS.—WOMEN RETURNING FROM THE WATER, AND MEN AROUND A DEAD HART-BEEST.**

gnu), the giraffe, the zebra, and pallah (*Antilope melampus*), are never seen but in the vicinity of water. Their presence is a sure indication that it will be found within seven or eight miles.

In the evening of our second day at Serotli a hyæna appeared suddenly among the grass and raised a panic among our cattle. This false mode of attack is the plan this cowardly creature always adopts, for his courage only permits him to fall upon animals which are running terrified away. Seventeen of our draught oxen fled into the hands of Sekomi, who was unfriendly to our expedition. He sent them back with a message strongly dissuading us from attempting to cross the Desert. "Where are you going? You will be killed by the sun and thirst, and then all the white men will blame me for not saving you." We replied by assuring the messengers that the white men would attribute our deaths to our own stupidity, "as we did not intend to allow our companions and guides to return till they had put us into our graves." We sent a handsome present to Sekomi, with a promise that, if he allowed the Bakalahari to keep the wells open for us, we would repeat the gift on our return.

All around Serotli the country is perfectly flat, and composed of soft white sand. There is a peculiar glare of bright sunlight from a cloudless sky over the entire scene; and one clump of trees and bushes, with open spaces between, looks so exactly like another, that if you leave the wells, and walk a quarter of a mile in any direction, it is difficult to return. Oswell and Murray went, accompanied by one of the Bakalahari, to procure an eland. The perfect sameness of the country caused even the son of the Desert to lose his way, which gave rise to a ludicrous misconception. One of the commonest phrases of the people is "Kia ituméla," *I thank you, or I am pleased*; but there is a word very similar in sound, "Kia timéla," *I am wandering*. The perfect of this latter term is "Ki timétse," *I have wandered*, which again resembles the word for water, "metse." Hence Mr. Murray and Mr. Oswell mistook the verb "wander," for "to be pleased," and "water," and a colloquy went on at intervals between them and their guide during the whole of a bitterly cold night in somewhat the following style:—

*Englishman.*—"Where are the waggons?"

*Real answer of guide.*—"I don't know. I have wandered. I never wandered before. I am quite lost."

*Supposed answer.*—"I don't know. I want water. I am glad, I am quite pleased. I am thankful to you."

*Englishman.*—"Take us to the waggons, and you will get plenty of water."

*Real answer of guide* (looking vacantly around).—"How did I wander? Perhaps the well is there, perhaps not. I don't know. I have wandered."

*Supposed answer.*—"Something about thanks; he says he is pleased, and mentions water again."

The guide's vacant stare, while trying to remember, is thought to indicate mental imbecility, and the repeated thanks were supposed to indicate a wish to deprecate their wrath.

*First Englishman.*—"Well, Livingstone *has* played us a pretty trick, giving us in charge of an idiot. Catch us trusting him again. What can this fellow mean by his thanks and talk about water? O, you born fool! take us to the waggons, and you will get both meat and water. Wouldn't a thrashing bring him to his senses again?"

*Second Englishman.*—"No, no, for then he will run away, and we shall be worse off than we are now."

The hunters regained the waggons next day by their own sagacity, which becomes wonderfully quickened by a sojourn in the Desert.

I sometimes felt annoyed at the low estimation in which some of my hunting friends were held; for believing that the contest with wild beasts is well adapted for fostering that coolness in emergencies which we all admire, I was anxious that the natives should entertain a higher opinion of my countrymen. "Have these hunters, who come so far and work so hard, no meat at home?"—"Why, these men are rich, and could slaughter oxen every day of their lives."—"And yet they come here, and endure so much thirst, for the sake of this dry meat, none of which is equal to beef?"—"Yes, it is for the sake of the play\* it affords." This produces a laugh, as much as to say, "Ah, you know better;" or, "Your friends are fools." When they can get a man to kill large quantities

\* There is no term in their language to express the idea of sport.

of game for them, whatever *he* may think of himself or of his achievements, *they* pride themselves in having turned to good account the folly of an itinerant butcher.

When we had procured sufficient water we left Serotli. The sun, even in winter, is always powerful, and we could only travel in the mornings and evenings. A single day in the hot sun and heavy sand would have knocked up the oxen. The second night our trocheamer\* showed that we had made but twenty-five miles from Serotli. Ramotobi was angry at the slowness of our progress, and told us that, as the next water was three days in front, we should never get there at all. Cracking of whips, screaming, and beating, got only nineteen miles out of the poor beasts the following day, and they were more exhausted by the sandy ground, and the thirst, than if they had travelled double the distance over a hard road where they could drink. At this season the grass becomes so dry as to crumble to powder in the hands. Without taking a single fresh mouthful, the oxen stood wearily chewing, and lowed painfully at the smell of the water in our waggons.

The knowledge retained by Ramotobi of the trackless waste of scrub through which we were passing was surprising. For sixty or seventy miles beyond Serotli one clump of bushes and trees seemed exactly like another. Yet, as we walked together, he remarked, "When we come to that hollow we shall light upon the highway of Sekomi; and beyond that again lies the river Mokoko." After breakfast some of the men, who had gone forward on a little path which showed upon it footprints of water-loving animals, returned with the joyful tidings of "*metse*," and exhibited the mud on their knees in confirmation of the news. This pool of rain-water was called Mathuluáni. The thirsty oxen rushed in until the delicious drink was nearly level with their throats, when they drew slowly in the long refreshing mouthfuls, until their collapsed sides distended as if they would burst. After giving the cattle a rest at this spot we proceeded down the dry bed of the river Mokoko. There are permanent wells

\* This is an instrument which, when fastened on the waggon-wheel, records the number of revolutions made. By multiplying this number by the circumference of the wheel the actual distance travelled over is at once ascertained.

in several parts of it, and Ramotobi assured us that we should suffer no more from thirst. The adjacent country is covered with grass, low thorny scrub, and here and there clumps of the "wait-a-bit thorn," or *Acacia detinens*. At Lotlakáni (a little reed), another spring further on, we met with twenty-six palmyra-trees, the first we had seen in South Africa.

The ancient Mokoko must have been joined by other rivers lower down, for it becomes broad, and expands into a large bed, of which the lake to which we were travelling formed but a very small part. Wherever an anteater had made his hole, shells were thrown out identical with the species now alive in the lake. When we left the Mokoko Mr. Oswell happened to spy a Bushwoman running away in a bent position to escape observation. He took her for a lion, and galloped up to her. She thought herself captured, and offered to deliver up her property, which consisted of a few traps made of cords. When I explained that we only wanted water, and would pay her if she led us to it, she walked briskly before our horses for eight miles, and brought us to Nchokotsa. We rewarded her with a piece of meat and a good large bunch of beads. At the sight of the latter she burst into a merry laugh.

At Nchokotsa we came upon the first of a great number of salt pans, covered with an efflorescence of lime, probably the nitrate. When the pan, which is twenty miles in circumference, burst upon our view, the setting sun was casting a beautiful blue haze over the white incrustations, and caused the expanse to look exactly like a lake. Oswell threw up his hat in the air at the sight, and shouted out a huzza which made the poor Bushwoman and the Bakwains think him mad. I was as much deceived as he. We did not dream that the long-looked-for lake was more than three hundred miles distant. The mirage on these salinas is truly marvellous. The waves danced, and the shadows of the trees were reflected in such a perfect manner, that the loose cattle, horses, dogs, and even Hottentots, whose thirst had not been sufficiently slaked by the brackish water of Nchokotsa, hastened towards the deceitful pools. A herd of zebras in the mirage looked exactly like elephants, and Oswell began to saddle a horse in order to hunt them. A sort of break in the haze dispelled the illusion.

On the 4th of July we went forward on horseback, and again

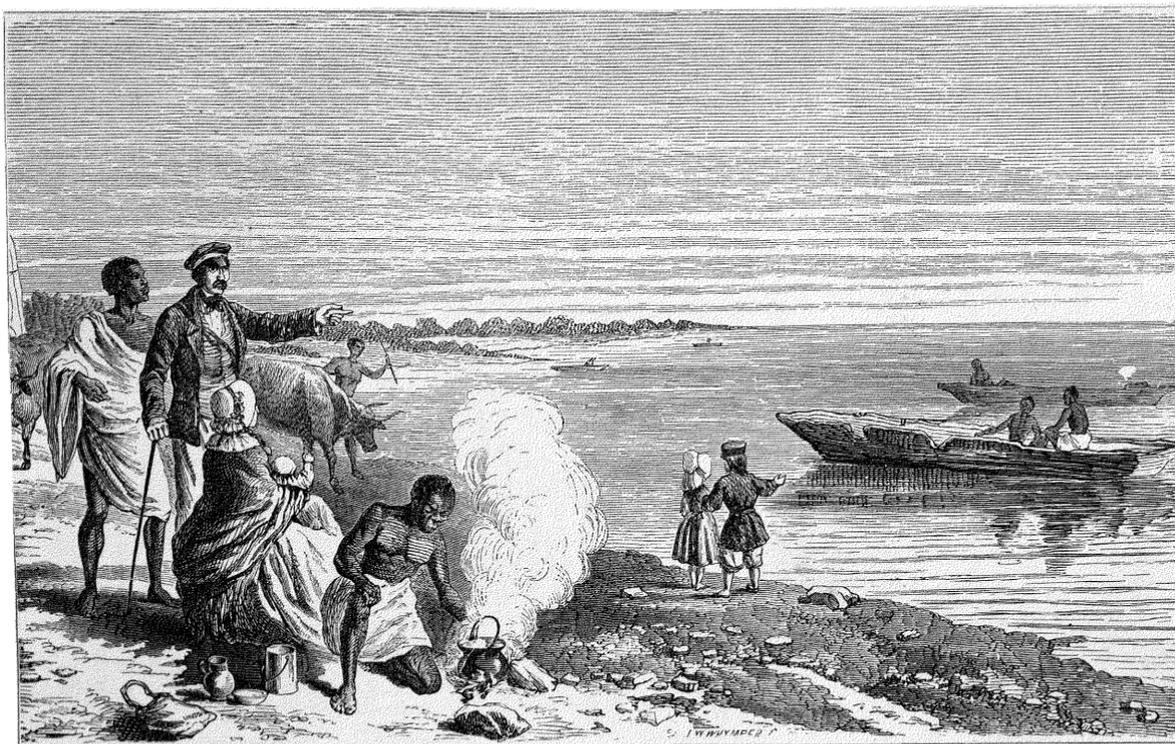
and again did we seem to see the lake. At last we came to the Zougá, and found it to be a river running to the N.E. A village of Bakurutse lay on the opposite bank, and the people informed us that the stream came out of the Ngami. The news gladdened all our hearts. We had the river Zougá at our feet, and by following it we should at last reach the broad water.

Next day two of the Bamangwato, who had been sent on before us by Sekomi to drive away all the Bushmen and Bakalahari from our path, that they might not assist or guide us, came and sat down by our fire. They seemed to feel no enmity, but, on leaving us and ascending the Zougá in our front, they circulated the report that our object was to plunder all the tribes living on the river and lake. When they had proceeded some way the principal man sickened of fever, turned back and died. His death had a good effect, for the villagers connected it with the injury he was attempting to do to us, and, though at first they came to us armed, kind treatment soon produced perfect confidence.

When we had gone up the bank of this beautiful river about ninety-six miles from the point where we first struck it, the Bechuana chief of the Lake region, who had sent the glowing account of the stores of ivory to Sechele, ordered the people to assist us. We were received by a community whose language clearly shows that they bear an affinity to the tribes in the north. They call themselves Bayeiye, *i. e.* men; but the Bechuanas call them Bakoba, a term which carries with it some idea of slaves. They have a tradition that their forefathers, in their first essays at war, made their bows of the Palma-Christi; and when these broke they gave up fighting. They have never been known to use arms, and have invariably submitted to the rule of every horde which has overrun the countries adjacent to the rivers on which they specially love to dwell. They are thus the Quakers of the body politic in Africa. A long time after our visit, the chief of the Lake furnished them with shields. "Ah!" they exclaimed, "we never had these before; that is the reason we have always succumbed. Now we will fight." They were soon visited by a marauding party from the Makololo, and the "Friends" at once paddled night and day down the Zougá, nor ever dared to look behind them till they reached the end of the river.

The canoes of these inland sailors are primitive craft, hollowed with iron adzes out of the trunks of single trees. If the tree has a bend, so has the canoe. I found they regarded their rude vessels as the Arab does his camel. They have always fires in them, and prefer sleeping in them while on a journey to spending the night on shore. "On land," say they, "you have lions, serpents, hyænas, and your enemies; but in your canoe, behind a bank of reed, nothing can harm you."

While ascending the beautifully-wooded river, we arrived at a large stream flowing into it. This was the Tamunak'le. I inquired whence it came. "Oh, from a country full of rivers—so many no one can tell their number—and full of large trees!" This was a confirmation of what I had heard from the Bakwains, that the country beyond was not "the large sandy plateau" of the philosophers. The notion that there might be a highway, capable of being traversed by boats, to an unexplored and populous region, grew from that time stronger and stronger in my mind; and when we actually came to the lake this idea was so predominant that the actual discovery seemed of little importance. It was on the 1st of August that we reached the north-east end of the Ngami; and for the first time this fine sheet of water was beheld by Europeans. The direction of the lake seemed to be N.N.E. and S.S.W. by compass. The southern portion is said to bend round to the west, and to receive the Teoughe from the north at its north-west extremity. We could detect no horizon where we stood; nor could we form any idea of its extent except from the reports of the people, who professed to go round it in three days, which, at the rate of twenty-five miles a-day, would make it seventy-five miles in circumference. It is shallow, and can never be of much value as a commercial highway. In the months preceding the annual supply of water from the north, it is with difficulty the cattle can approach to drink through the boggy, reedy banks. These are low on all sides. On the west there is a space devoid of trees, which shows that the waters have retired thence at no very ancient date—another proof of the desiccation that has been going on throughout the country. We were informed by the Bayeiye, who live on the lake, that, when the annual inundation begins, not only trees of great size, but antelopes, such as the springbuck and tsessebe



From a Drawing made on the spot 1830 by the late Alfred Ryder Esq.

**LAKE NGAMI, DISCOVERED BY OSWELL, MURRAY, AND LIVINGSTONE.**

(*Acronotus lunata*), are swept down by its rushing waters. The trees are gradually driven by the winds to the opposite side, and become embedded in mud.

The water of the lake is fresh when full, but brackish when low. This region, compared with that from which we had come, was clearly a hollow, the lowest level being Lake Kumadau. The point of the ebullition of water, as shown by one of Newman's barometric thermometers, was only between  $207\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  and  $206^{\circ}$ , which gives an elevation of not much more than two thousand feet above the level of the sea. We had descended above two thousand feet in coming from Kolobeng. A little of that water from the tropical rains, which inundates large tracts of country farther north, flows as far south as  $20^{\circ} 20'$ , and falls into the lake as into a reservoir. It is brought by the Embarras, which divides into the rivers Tzō and Teoughe, and the Tzō again divides into the Tamunak'le and Mababe. Of these the Tamunak'le discharges itself into the Zouga, and the Teoughe into the lake. The flow begins either in March or April, and the descending waters find the channels of all the rivers dried up, except in certain pools in their beds, which have long dry spaces between them. The lake itself is very low.

The Zouga is only a prolongation of the Tamunak'le, and an arm of the lake reaches up to the point where the latter ends and the former begins. The Zouga is broad and deep when it leaves the Tamunak'le, but becomes gradually narrower as it descends for about two hundred miles. It then flows into the Kumadau, a small lake about three or four miles broad and twelve long. The water does not make much progress in filling this lake till the end of June. In September the rivers cease to run. When the supply has been more than usually abundant a little water gets beyond the Kumadau, and if the quantity were larger it might go further in the dry rocky bed of the Zouga. The channel is perfect, but, before the water finds its way much beyond Kumadau, the upper supply ceases to run, and the rest becomes evaporated. There is, I am convinced, no such thing in the country as a river becoming lost in the sand. This fancied phenomenon haunted me for years; but I have failed in discovering anything beyond a most insignificant realisation of it.

Near the lake was a half-tribe of the Bamangwato, called Batauána. Their chief was a young man named Lechulatébe. His uncle had ransomed him after Sebituane had conquered his father. He had just come into power, and, to show his independence, acted directly contrary to everything his uncle advised. The latter recommended him to treat us handsomely, and therefore, when we wished to purchase some goats or oxen, Lechulatebe, in a spirit of opposition, offered us elephants' tusks. "No, we cannot eat these; we want something to fill our stomachs." "Neither can I; but I hear you white men are all very fond of these bones, so I offer them; I want to put the goats into my own stomach." A trader, who accompanied us, purchased ivory at the rate of ten large tusks for a musket worth thirteen shillings. I myself saw eight instances in which the tusks had been left to rot with the bones where the elephant fell. In less than two years not a man of the Batauana could be found who was not keenly alive to their value.

My principal object was to visit Sebituane, the great chief of the Makololo, who was reported to live some two hundred miles beyond Lake Ngami. The day after our arrival I applied to Lechulatebe for guides. He objected, fearing lest other white men should go thither also and give Sebituane guns; whereas he hoped by obtaining a monopoly of firearms to get the ascendancy. He at last unwillingly promised to give us guides, then again declined, and sent men to the Bayeiye with orders to refuse us a passage across the river. I tried hard to form a raft, but the dry wood was so wormeaten that it would not bear the weight of a single person. I worked many hours in the water, for I was not then aware of the number of alligators in the Zouga, and never think of my labours without feeling thankful that I escaped their jaws. The season was now far advanced; and as Mr. Oswell volunteered to go to the Cape and bring up a boat, we resolved to make our way south again.

Coming down the Zouga, we had time to look at its banks. They are very beautiful, and resemble in many parts the river Clyde above Glasgow. The side to which the water swings is perpendicular, the other is sloping and grassy. The Bayeiye dig pitfalls on these declivities to entrap the

animals as they come to drink. The holes are seven or eight feet deep, about as long at the mouth, and three or four feet wide. They gradually decrease as they descend, till they are only about a foot in width at the bottom. This occasions the animal to wedge himself firmly in by his weight and struggles. They are usually in pairs, with a wall a foot thick between the ends of each, in order that, if the beast, when he feels his fore legs descending, should try to save himself, he may spring forward into the second. All the excavated earth is removed to a distance, so as not to excite suspicion in the animals. Reeds and grass are laid across the top; and are then strewn with sand, which is watered, that it may appear exactly like the surrounding ground. Some of our party plumped, more than once, into these pitfalls, even when searching for them that they might open them and prevent the loss of our cattle. Old elephants have been known to precede the herd and whisk off the coverings of the traps on each side the whole way down to the water.

The trees which adorn the banks of the Zouga are magnificent. Two enormous baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*), or mowanas, grow near its confluence with the lake. The largest was 76 feet in girth. The palmyra appears here and there. The mokuchong or moshoma bears an edible fruit of indifferent quality, but the tree itself would be a fine specimen of arboreal beauty in any part of the world. The trunk is often converted into canoes. The motsouri, which produces a pink plum containing a pleasant acid juice, resembles an orange-tree in its dark evergreen foliage, and a cypress in its form. It was now winter-time, and we saw nothing of the flora. Wild indigo abounded, as indeed it does over large tracts of Africa. It is called mohetólo, or the "changer," by the boys, who colour their ornaments of straw with the juice. There are two kinds of cotton in the country, and the Mashona, who convert it into cloth, dye it blue with this plant.

We found the elephants in prodigious numbers on the southern bank. They come to drink by night, and throw large quantities of water over their bodies. While enjoying the luxury they may be heard screaming with delight. They evince their horror of pitfalls by proceeding in a straight line to the Desert, and never diverge till they are eight or ten