

expected, I felt it to be compulsory upon me to resume my journey.

Close by was outspanned a Boer waggon ; to it, I carefully bore the unfortunate, and placing him in charge of its owner, then left him comfortably reclining on the grass between its wheels.

That he was not hurt I am convinced ; for in occasional snatches, sung in the most modulated and quavering of tones, he indulged in odd lines of his favourite national hymn, the " *Wacht am Rhein.*"

Once more I threw myself into the saddle. Town Hill was soon reached. An hour more took me to its summit, and by three o'clock I halted in front of the stables of Ford's Hotel, Howick.

Another stage might easily have been made that night, but that I discovered my horses' shoes to be in a most unsatisfactory state, and therefore determined to remain here till all had been supplied with a fresh set.

The Castle Hotel, now the property of Mr. Prefer, I found both clean and comfortable, and the repose which surrounded it was truly grateful after all the bustle and excitement of life in Maritzburg.

At break of day next morning, after paying for the keep of my nags for the night, the charge for which was enough to frighten an English traveller, I pursued my course to Currie's post, a distance of about fourteen miles, where I breakfasted ;

that is to say, if cold coffee and old salted treck-bullock can be called by such a name.

About mid-day I resumed my journey, and soon after came up to Marshall's Volunteers, encamped by the roadside, on their way to join Lord Chelmsford at Dundee. Here I tiffined, and my horses were fed and well looked after. Soon after two p.m. I remounted.

The next object of interest that occurs is the truly magnificent valley of Kars Kloof. It differs so much from the general appearance of the rest of the neighbouring country, that it may be said to have an individuality of its own.

Between grassy slopes, in portions well wooded, and rendered more picturesque by jutting rocks and crags, flows a rapid stream, not exceeding in magnitude what would be designated a 'burn' in Scotland, and just such a one as the truant school-boy or juvenile sportsman would frequently succeed in obtaining a good basket of trout from.

I am not singular in my admiration of this spot, many of the Natal merchants are evidently of my way of thinking, for they have selected this site to build cottages and bungalows, to which they retire during the heat of summer, or to recover from the fatigues resulting from an excess of business.

The road that descends and ascends from the apex of the valley is wondrous steep, and it is rarely that the traveller passes this locality without seeing numerous bullock-waggons stuck fast,

from want of power in the oxen to drag them up the incline.

A mile from here is a most picturesque waterfall, said to be three hundred feet high. Time did not permit me to visit it. Thus its altitude I am not able to vouch for. At the top of the valley, on the north side, is a house built out of corrugated iron; it once was a canteen, but now is deserted by its owner for fear of the Zulu. My friend Morris and myself, on my former journey, christened it "Rest and be thankful."

The remainder of my journey to Mooi River was much interrupted by the long trains of transport-waggons toiling along towards the front. My knowledge of African travelling informed me, at a glance, that all of these were overloaded—a most injudicious course to pursue, as it is certain to result in the oxen getting worn out before they have accomplished half the work that otherwise might be expected from them. In this part of the road there are several exceedingly bad ruts, consequent upon the washing away of the soil by the heavy rains at the end of spring; and when any of these were reached, the wheels of the cumbrous vehicles were certain to get embedded in the soft ground up to the hub, when the most fearful whipping matches would ensue.

If one driver did not succeed in getting his span of cattle to extricate its load, he would call several of his companions to his assistance, when each would double thong their whips, and flog

the poor brutes in the most inhuman and barbarous manner.

After a quarter of an hour of such work, if success had not been awarded to their exertions, a span from another waggon would be hitched alongside, when the flogging process would recommence, and if the treck-tow did not smash, the probability was that they would overcome the difficulty they had to contend with.

There is not an animal in the world, that I know of, which has to endure such frightful cruelty as a Natal ox. Their coloured drivers seem to delight in punishing them; and the severity with which it is done may be well imagined when I inform the reader that an expert, with one of these formidable whips, can bring blood at every cut he delivers. If some of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals could only visit this distant part of the earth, they would find plenty of subjects on which to exercise their philanthropy. Oxen, as a rule, are stupid, perverse, and obstinate; but I believe that much of this is produced by the inhuman manner in which they are used, as well as by the fact that their strength is usually overtaxed.

At sundown I dismounted in front of the hotel, and after seeing my horses fed and well bedded down, I wandered forth to visit the lions of the place.

There is a pretty little episcopal church here, several attractive farmhouses, and a large store.

Close by flows the Mooi River, a branch of the Tugela, over which is thrown a handsome and serviceable bridge. The neighbourhood is celebrated for its pasture, consequently it has become a favourite stock and horse raising locality. The stream is about the size of the Severn at Shrewsbury, and is a succession of pools and rapids, guarded on either side by a wide extent of meadow land. Strange as it may appear, I have been informed that no fish are to be found in its waters.

That night the racket at the hotel was almost unendurable, from the number of transport riders who patronized the bar.

At all hours they appeared to arrive, yet none seemed to go away. Their thirst might have been excused if a drink would have satisfied it; but I believe, with this class of people, a verification of the French adage takes place—" *L'appétit vient en mangeant.*"

Flesh and blood could stand this treatment no longer, so I dressed and turned out. To my satisfaction I found that the day was breaking.

Numerous brilliant clouds in the east proclaimed a magnificent sunrise. The whole of the distant peaks were illuminated with a golden flood of light, but the valley beneath still remained in comparative darkness, and heavy mists rolled up from the river bed, telling of fever and other miasmatic diseases.

After some trouble and a considerable trial of

temper, I found my boy. From his appearance and manner, he, too, had been keeping it up all night; in fact, when roused and called forth into the light of day, he was still far from sober. Believing that there is nothing like action to work off dissipation, I ordered him forthwith to feed and clean the horses, and remained to see that his work was properly performed.

In a maudlin way he went about his labour; and one of the horses, taking advantage of his inactivity, skilfully planted its two heels under his ribs, sending him to mother earth as thoroughly as would have done the blow of a prize-fighter.

Hurriedly picking himself up, he seized a pitchfork, and brimming over with passion, was about to resent the indignity he had suffered, when I interfered and abruptly put an end to his intention, pointing out to him at the same time that he alone was to blame, and that the horse would not have kicked him had he been sober and performed his duties in a rational way. My admonition he apparently did not like, and his expression denoted that he would prefer to dispute my authority; in fact, he went so far as to commence an angry tirade; but believing that he detected a look in my eye expressing that I was not a person to be trifled with, he grumblingly renewed his labours. For several days that boy was better behaved than he had been heretofore.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ROAD.

SOON after my boy had finished his labours, I mounted, passed over the bridge, and pursued my route up the adjoining hills. The road here is, in parts, very steep and tortuous, immense boulders, in many places, projecting and threatening that when the first rains fall they will precipitate themselves into the road and bar further progression. Away to the westward stretch a magnificent range of mountains, towering to an altitude of seven or eight thousand feet; they appear near at hand, yet they are not less than sixty miles off. They compose the eastern boundary of Bassutoland, and are near the scene of the engagement with Langabalele, where several of the Natal Carbineers were killed, and the late Colonel Durnford (who fell at Insanwala) was wounded. Peace to his ashes, for a braver soldier never drew sabre or bestrode charger, and I have a right to know, for I was acquainted with him from childhood. The surrounding country, although well covered with grass, is monotonous in the extreme; for each hill seemed to resemble the other, the only perceptible

difference being that as you progressed northward they appeared to increase in elevation. That this country will, at some future day, be covered with farm-houses, I doubt much ; for pastoral, and not agricultural pursuits, it is alone suited.

My horses I am well pleased with. Tommy, the favourite, is a splendid little animal, possessed of great endurance and pluck combined with the most amiable temper. All his paces are excellent, and so willing is he that spur has not yet made acquaintance with his flanks. Moreover he is a beauty, pleasing the observer so much that you cannot help looking at him again and again. I scarcely ever saw a horse with such an expressive countenance ; this, I imagine, arises from the size and intelligent look of his eye ; nor does Bobby, indeed, really deserve second place, for he has given up all his tricks, and is therefore everything that can be desired. My after-rider's animals are also serviceable brutes, but I cannot help thinking that too much daylight is to be seen underneath the big one, or, in other words, that he is rather long on his legs. For a colonial horse he is certainly too big ; the novice, or intending visitor, will do well to remember this, and if he has occasion to mount himself, he will get more work out of a fifteen-hand animal, or even one an inch less, than out of those that exceed this height. Moreover, here you do not want a daisy clipper, much less a horse with a long stride, but a clever quick mover that keeps its legs well under it.



It is extraordinary the difference there is in the methods adopted by persons in handling horses. My servant is constantly getting kicked; yet when my beasts are picqueted or in the stable, I can handle them as I choose with the most perfect immunity.

I had commenced to feel in rather low spirits from the utter silence that surrounded me, for not a vestige of man's presence or animal life was in sight—if I except an obtrusive but very sober plumaged small bird of the lark species, which never appeared so happy as when rolling in the dust—when suddenly, at a turn of the road, I came upon a detachment of the Royal Artillery, just going to have breakfast. There was such a fascination in the scene, that I drew rein and halted, the better to admire it. The cooking-fires were arranged in regular order, while the men, in every garb of undress, hurried to and fro in pursuit of their different duties. Close by were picqueted their horses, the foreground being filled up with waggons drawn up *en échelon*, while in the distance beyond grazed upwards of a hundred bullocks.

On advancing I was met by the officer in command, who at once invited me to join them in their morning meal. Without much pressing I did so, and enjoyed it excessively. The principal dish was wild duck, shot the previous evening on the Mooi River; and they were cooked so admirably, and put on the board so hot, that it was apparent my friends had a capital chef. There are worse

cooks to be found in the world than are frequently discovered among the ranks and files of a British army. But then what shall we say for the sauce? No better in the world can be found; its name is appetite!

This detachment of reinforcements are also *en route* for Dundee. Lord Chelmsford is evidently determined to make it hot for Ketchewayo before long!

Having knee-haltered my horses, they had over an hour to graze; this they appeared to enjoy amazingly, for probably it was a luxury that had been denied them for many a day. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we remember that until they are three or four years old they wander about the country in a state of freedom; after which they pass into the breaker's hands, and are not unfrequently held in a state of bondage ever after.

Let me explain what knee-haltering means. It is a method of securing a horse peculiar to Australia and South Africa; its purpose is to prevent the animals straying, and is performed in the following manner. Raise one of the fore-legs of your nag, then draw his head with the halter-rope towards it, which having accomplished, you make two inverted half-hitches with it around the limb immediately beneath the knee. Thus the animal can feed and walk slowly about. Nevertheless I have seen old stagers—beasts accustomed to veldt life—trot along at such a pace when thus secured, that it was no easy matter to overtake them.

However agreeable the society of my new friends was, many miles lay between me and Escourt, where I hope to rest an hour or two; so when a certain old gentleman, who shall be nameless, drives, needs must.

Up and down, up and down, the same interminable grass hills succeed one another at regular intervals. Mile after mile is traversed without a prospect of change. At length Bushman's River comes in sight, here, a noisy babbling brook; and when it is reached—after making the descent of a precipitous and very stony hill—the road turns off sharp to the right through a kloof, the sides of which are clothed with a dense mass of sub-tropical vegetation. This must be a very trying place for oxen, as numerous skeletons and half-decayed carcasses of these unfortunate beasts lay strewn around in every direction.

Soon the road begins to ascend, and for at least a couple of miles this continues; the rocks frowning over you on one side, and a precipice, several hundred feet deep, yawning open at your feet on the other. The road is a masterpiece of human skill and labour, but much requires yet to be done to make it safe. Even in imagination to see a team of runaway horses risking these angles and curves makes me shudder—one false step, one foot too near the margin, and horses and conveyance would afterwards be unrecognizable.

Having attained the summit of the gradient, a

few yards again bring you to the brink, which overlooks the valley beneath; and what a charming panorama lays stretched at your feet! To the left, a scattered village of snow-white cottages embedded in trees, a rapid, clear river skirting its confines, a noble green valley margined by hills, and these again enclosed by lofty mountains. Such is Escourt, such is one of the most picturesque villages in the world.

However, several miles have to be travelled along the face of hills, down steep descents, round abrupt corners, before the flat beneath is reached; after passing over which you traverse a handsome bridge, and you are within the precincts of the village.

Riding up to the hotel, which is close at hand, I order dinner. The establishment looks clean and comfortable, the landlord is civil and obliging, and there are few or no idlers hanging about. As the proprietor cannot promise me my meal for forty minutes, I stroll to the stable; and if there is fair accommodation for the master, there is equally good for his beasts, so I leave them to enjoy their rest, and proceed on my explorations.

After the Insanwala disaster, so convinced were the inhabitants that they would be attacked by the Zulus that they built a most formidable kraal around the police barrack. It may only be intended as a temporary erection; but it is strong and durable, and, in my belief, if defended by a hundred or more determined men, would have

defied such an enemy to capture it. On every hand there is evidence that I am approaching the scene of warfare, for not only is there a substantial stone barricade thrown up beside the stable, but many of the sheds and outhouses are loop-holed.

Here I saw a number of the Natal Mounted Police corps. They are unquestionably a remarkably fine body of young men. I am informed that it is not unusual to find gentlemen by birth in its ranks. The pay of a trooper, I was told, is 5s. a day; but he has to provide his own horse and accoutrements. However, on his discharge he is refunded the amount they have cost him.

In former days several sharp engagements were fought here between the Boers and natives, so that in the records of the country it has quite a history.

There are numerous stores here, which all appear to do a brisk business; but I may overestimate this, as a reaction may have set in after the stagnation resulting from the panic, thus accounting for the number of persons I saw.

On my way out of Escourt I stopped at a house to inquire for an old acquaintance, Mr. Ross—a worthy Scotchman, who had shown Morris and myself much kindness on the occasion of my former visit. After knocking at the gate, and shouting for some time, an old young man made his appearance.

"Tell Mr. Ross, please, that a friend would like to speak to him."

“He’s na here now,” was the answer.

“Not here! What has become of him?”

“Ye see, mon, he jist made his pile and went hame.”

“But he will come back again?” I inquired.

“I’m thinking na; he’s na such a d——d fool as a’ that. Whare are ye fray, mon; you look like a stranger in they parts?”

“Scotland,” I answered; and continuing, “No, I don’t know much about Escourt.”

“Scotland, did you say? Jist get off your powney, mon, and come in and hae a glass of square-face!”

As the day was getting late, and I had a long distance still to go, I declined with thanks my countryman’s hospitable offer, and pushed onwards.

For a few miles the country is somewhat bleak and very uninteresting; but after the road crosses a small stream a visible improvement takes place. However, as night is falling fast, I have little time to note more than that timber has become more abundant, and that the neighbouring hills are covered in many places with brushwood.

The sun has gone down, and gloaming commenced; in fact, it almost verges upon darkness when I halt in front of the Blue Krantz tavern and store, both the property of a native of Paisley, in Renfrewshire. Scarcely had I got him to promise me the best room in his house, when up rushed a conveyance to the door. The

speed was so great that I wonder the driver did not come to grief, for it was now as dark as pitch. In a moment after a gentleman descended from the box-seat. It was Major Ferrers, of the Commissariat Department, in charge of the transport on this part of the road. His energy was wonderful; and without fear of turning out a false prophet, the grass will never grow under his horses' feet when employed upon the service of her Majesty.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WARRIORS.

UP at daybreak ; however, Major Ferrers had the start of me. Before he bid me good-bye he called me on one side, and warned me that he believed my servant unreliable and a drunkard. Truly a nice character to give a man that is to be your companion for possibly months, and in a ride extending over thousands of miles. But what can be done ? Return to Maritzburg to obtain another, I cannot ; and as to picking up one on the road, his faults might be quite as numerous. Better the devil I know, than the devil I don't know ! To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

However, it is not always possible to protect yourself. My after-rider carries my rifle and bandolier, and if he were wicked or cowardly enough to avail himself of the opportunities offered, he could have any number of chances of putting a bullet through my head or carcase. If he attempts this and misses his aim, God spare him, for I wont.

Leaving the Blue Krantz, a small extent of



woodland is traversed, then a brook is crossed, when the road leads up an ascent to a more elevated plateau than any we have hitherto met with.

Far in the distance frown the towering Drachenberg, the loftiest and grandest range of mountains in Southern Africa. Whenever I look at them Byron's sublime description of the thunderstorm in the Alps is recalled to my memory. It may be the result of my having witnessed many a storm among them; and what thunderstorms they were, far exceeding in severity and intensity any I have experienced in other parts of the earth! Here on such occasions the thunder rolls with scarcely a break in his deep-toned voice, and lightning flashes are almost as frequent as the heavy drops of rain that fall to the earth in a tropical shower.

About half-past nine o'clock a change comes o'er the scene, for the fatigue which the eye has suffered from the previous surroundings is dispelled as your sight rests upon another grand valley, through the middle of which sparkles the bright, clear waters of the Tugela; a stream so lately dyed, lower down upon its course, with the blood of hundreds of our countrymen. But why tax Africa with being the scene of such a disaster? for, gentle reader, if you cast your eye over the map of the world, there are few places you can select which have not witnessed the death throes of our soldiers, who have “been

wiped out" in defence, or to avenge the wrongs which their native land has suffered.

The road here turns off more to the eastward, and when it has descended to the level of the plain that margins the river, the town of Colenso lies in front of you. Since I was here before it has much increased in size, but in no way diminished in its attractive appearance. A broad street, numerous fruit and shade trees, and square white houses with wide verandahs, are its characteristic features. At an hotel on the right hand side of the road, distinguishable by its neatness and well-regulated surroundings, I dismount, and order breakfast. The host, lately an officer in the Bengal army, is civil and obliging, and not only promises to do the best he can for me, but accompanies me to the stables to see that my quadrupeds have every attention paid to their wants. While lounging on the verandah, waiting for the meal to be announced, the too-too-ing of a horn awakes the silent echoes, and soon after a post-cart dashes up, the horses reeking with foam, fairly telling that the pace they have travelled and the distance come has been fast and long. On it there are no less than four warriors, returning home, their corps, Colonial ones, having completed their term of service. The breakfast was in consequence delayed, and I had opportunities of entering into conversation with these knights of the spur and sabre.

Talk of the deeds of prowess that were done

in the days of the Crusaders, of the terrific slaughters inflicted by Saladin and Richard Cœur de Lion, they were nothing to be compared with the deeds of each of these heroes! The havoc that they had committed among the foe was not to be counted by twos or threes, but enumerated at least by two figures. One tall, awkward, and ungainly youth, deeply marked with small-pox, and possessed of an undeniable squint, asserted without a smile upon his countenance—in fact I am inclined to think that he believed he was speaking the truth—that he went into action with fifty cartridges in his bandolier, every one of which he fired away, and it was not his habit to miss more than one buck out of ten that he shot at. The narration of this incident was followed by the explanation, "By God, sir! it was the prettiest day's shooting I ever had in my life! and I would travel a hundred miles to repeat it."

When engaged in hostilities against an enemy, doubtless it is your duty to do as much injury to the foe as possible; and I may be a mawkish sentimentalist, but I should be sorry to think that I had been instrumental in taking forty human lives; nor can I admire the taste of a man who would go a hundred miles to repeat the carnage.

The performance of one of his companions, however, was more attractive. He was surrounded by a number of Zulus immediately after the action at Isanwala; no chance of escape re-

mained open to him but to charge through the enemy. Whilst performing this feat he emptied amongst them each chamber of his revolver, felled a brawny savage with the empty weapon, then drawing his sabre cut down three or four more of his antagonists, and got clear.

These narratives I relate as I heard them, perhaps my informants were drawing on their imagination for the delectation of a greenhorn ; in fact I rather think that was the case. One of the number, nevertheless, showed me an assegai wound through the shoulder, which must have been both deep and painful, and I surmise would have killed anything but a volunteer ; and as these weapons do not do much execution at a distance exceeding twenty yards, he, at least, must have been within sight of the enemy.

One thing is, however, evident, that brave and bloodthirsty as these warriors were, each was exceedingly delighted that his term of service had expired, and that he had a near prospect of exhibiting his uniform, spurs, and other accoutrements, to the belles and eligible young ladies of the respective villages and towns from which they had come in the old colony.

Fighting evidently makes men thirsty ; talking of it has a similar effect, for in the short space of ten minutes there was not one of these worthies that had not destroyed the existence of three well-deserving sodas and brandies. This was "rough" on the liquor, for I doubt much if it

likes to be jumbled up in such a promiscuous manner.

After our breakfast, which really was a very fair one, and tolerably served, *un petit verre de cognac* was required by each of them as a settler for the stomach, after which I assisted them to their several perches on the post-cart, and bid them good-bye, with a parting injunction not to forget to hold on by their eyelids—a piece of advice which, under the circumstances, I considered to be extremely necessary.

Having mounted, I directed my course towards the ford across the Tugela. The river was so low that the water scarcely reached to my horse's knees. Above the ford numerous artisans were at work completing the buttresses of what is destined to be a handsome bridge—a structure which is much required here, as for a great portion of the year the river is quite unfordable, and the traveller, whether by cart, horse, or waggon, has to be transported across in a punt—a slow, dangerous, and most inconvenient method.

As I ascended the hill on the other side, again I passed a large number of transport waggons, loaded with munitions of war and food for man and horse. Slowly they toiled along the heavy sandy road; and as I viewed them I could not help thinking that of all lives I wot of, none can be more monotonous than that of a transport rider.

At the crest of the first hill that I reached, I

came upon the camp of a large number of invalids and wounded returning from the front. I accosted a good-looking young private, who was attended by a handsome pointer, and asked him where the officer in command of the party was. From him I learned that he had remained behind to bring up stragglers. Bidding adieu to these victims of warfare, I sharpened my pace, and in a few miles met the gentleman in command. His clothes were sorely travel-stained, but a merry eye and laughing face told that he had not suffered much bodily.

After a few minutes' chat he handed me his flask, and each drank to a future happy meeting.

About noon I reached the "Rising Sun." The landlord was out, but his wife attended to business during his absence. From the volubility of this woman's tongue, I should imagine that the husband must be a meek man, and that in her case the mare was the better horse. Of one thing she gave me an indisputable proof—viz., that she knew how to charge. After I satisfied my hunger, she narrated to me a perfect volume of her early trials, not the least among which was a misfortune that had befallen her that morning—no less a disaster than that they had lost a pointer, and that her good man had gone to Ladysmith in search of it. Her description of the animal completely tallied with that of the one I had seen with the troops. This I informed her; upon which she called a stalwart Zulu, and ordered him

forthwith to proceed in pursuit of the dog. The native evidently did not like his task, and hesitated to obey; but the virago attacked him with tooth and nail, which had no other effect than to make the burly savage bellow. In spite of this punishment he still stood undecided, when the mistress rushed into the house, immediately returning with a jambok. Poor fellow! he was doubtless well aware of the pain this instrument of torture could produce; for no sooner did he see it than he shot off in the desired direction at a pace that defied pursuit. For ten minutes I stood watching him, and in less than that space he had covered more than a mile, and still he was going at the long springy trot peculiar to his race.

After the excitement, and, I hope, unusual exertion of the hostess, she thought proper to get into a state of hysterics, and bemoaned the hardness of a fate which had thrown her amongst such savages, terminating her lamentations with a long and severe tirade against husbands in general and her own in particular, who left her, a poor lone woman, to fight her way and keep in subjection a host of barbarians, little better, as she confidently assured me, than cannibals.

However, the lady in question was evidently possessed of strong recuperative powers; her natural physique, assisted by a good half-tumbler of brandy, soon brought her round, and she became as loquacious as ever. Would I like, she inquired, to see a couple of Zulu beauties?

“Certainly,” I replied. “Well, come along with me;” and she led me about a hundred yards from the house to the edge of a stream where two young women were bathing, to refresh themselves after the fatigues of spending a morning at the wash-tub. They were well-developed girls, with remarkably graceful figures, and, but for their features, which were rather flat to please a European eye, would have passed current for good-looking women. They were both unmarried, and either might have been purchased, I was told, for a few cows. Not dealing in that description of stock, however, I did not make a bid. We had not long returned to the house when the old lady again rushed forth with her jambok, and chevied an unfortunate native, and on her return gave me the explanation that a lazy, good-for-nothing Zulu from a neighbouring kraal kept, morning, noon, and night, hovering about his two countrywomen, and by his attentions and love-making prevented the indolent hussies from doing their work.

I could not help moralizing that there are more countries than Natal, in which the young men by their attentions prevent the girls from giving their undivided time to their allotted tasks.



## CHAPTER X.

### ZULUS.

OVER the door of the "Rising Sun" is a sign-board. After it was painted, I should imagine there must have been a dearth of brilliant-coloured pigments in the colony; and I doubt if the artist ever painted again, since I am convinced he must have exhausted all his skill in the production of this marvellous masterpiece. Three years ago I stood and gazed upon it with wonder and astonishment, and with undiminished awe I look upon it now. Since first I viewed it, that picture has haunted me in my dreams. The blazes of a certain unmentionable place, can scarcely surpass in intensity the vivid red and yellow of the rising luminary, and its surrounding clouds.

Crossing the drift, I pushed my way up the opposite slope, and, after ascending it, halted. How the scene brought back to my recollection my waggon and oxen. Here it was they stuck, for many a long hour, in spite of whip and imprecation. Oxen are indeed "kittle cattle," and sorely try the patience of their owner.



The Zulus Salute "M'Kose."

A couple of hundred yards further stands a solitary tree. The ways here divide, one portion going off to the north-east, and the other due north. The first leads to Ladysmith, and, consequently, Zululand; the latter goes to the Drachenberg, at Van Reenan's Pass, and thus is the high road to the Orange Free State and Western Transvaal.

It was not without a sigh and heavy heart that I took the last-mentioned, for every mile I traversed would separate me more and more from my countrymen in arms; for, though a soldier now no longer, yet often do I look back upon the days of my youth, when the tent was my home, and the bugle-call my *reveillé*.

Before leaving this interesting spot a number of Natal Zulus approached me—handsome fellows, with the grandest development of limbs, and on their good-tempered features a genial smile. In their hands each has a bundle of assegais, and when they are abreast of me they range themselves in line, raise their right hand over their head, and salute me with the sublime title of "M'Kose," or "Great Chief." Then one advances from the rank, and hands me a document. This is a pass to permit him through our lines. I read it, and give him information with reference to the direction he must take, when all, with a short guttural sound—meaning farewell—wave their hands, and proceed on their way.

Whatever I may have thought of my attendant

previously, I am now convinced that he is an arrant coward, for his complexion has changed to a sickly hue, his limbs are trembling, and continue to do so until my Zulu friends are far off to the rear.

It has always struck me as strange that so very formidable a body of natives should have been permitted to travel about the land in time of war; yet I never heard of any outrage committed by them, which, to my mind, is a considerable proof of the loyalty of the Natal Zulu.

My route is "Forward," and as time is an object, I pull my mount together, and hurry on at a more rapid pace.

The horse I ride, and his companion which I lead, have evidently formed a strong affection for each other, each moderating his pace to suit the other, thus keeping as regularly abreast as if harnessed to the same conveyance; my boy riding within thirty or forty yards in the rear.

The more I see of my horses, the more I like them; and I will acknowledge myself to be an indifferent judge of horseflesh, if they do not prove themselves dowered with more pluck and endurance than falls usually to the lot of members of the equine family.

Suddenly my servant calls me. I retrace my steps to where he stands, when he points out to me a green mamba, nine or ten feet long. As this is one of the most venomous of South African reptiles, I dismount, handing over the

bridles of my horses, and proceed to give the snake the *coup de grace* with my revolver.

This was no easy matter, for my antagonist was active, and evidently disposed to give me battle. At length an opportunity presents itself, and my ball cuts him in two. But with the report Master Tommy breaks loose, and starts over the veldt at full gallop. I order my after-rider to pursue and capture the truant; but, although he does not hesitate to ride hard and fast along the road, he has a strong objection to risking his neck over the sward, where mere-kat and râtel holes might possibly, covered as they are by thick vegetation, give him an unpleasant spill. Thus there was nothing for it but for me to spring upon the bare back of his led horse, and, with nothing but a half hitch of the halter around the lower jaw, I careered over the plain like a Commanche or Raphahoe Indian.

But the runaway refused to be caught, moderating his pace as nearly as possible to mine, and turning either to the right or left the moment I attempted to shoot alongside. These futile efforts must have lasted nearly an hour, taking an immense deal out of both horses, when, finally, Master Tommy began to feel he had enjoyed the game long enough, and surrendered himself, with an expression of innocence in his eyes that prevented me from being over wrath on account of his delinquency.

But I had not come off scatheless, for the horse

I had ridden in this hunt was exceedingly high in the withers, and, consequently, for several days, I felt uncommonly uncomfortable when in the saddle.

As the sun went down I arrived at the "Dew-drop" tavern, owned by Mr. Disney, whom to hear speak a few words was sufficient to convince you that he is a gentleman.

In spite of Zulu scares, here he resided alone, not even happy in the possession of a stable-boy. Personally he assisted me to put up my horses, then laid the cloth for supper, cooked and served the repast, and ultimately turned down my bed with skill that would have done credit to the most professional of English cooks or chambermaids.

Before retiring he took me into his *sanctum*, a neat little room, tastefully furnished, and decorated with many a photograph of absent relatives in his native country.

In such a position it was a pleasure to me to meet a gentleman, although I could not help feeling sad that Providence, in his inscrutable ways, should thus have compelled him to earn his living. May he soon make a fortune! But I fear time must elapse ere he succeeds in this, as he is many miles out of the course that our troops take on their way to Zululand, and therefore out of the route where money is most abundant.

The following morning, at sunrise, I was again in the saddle, and after three hours' climbing

reached the "Good Hope" tavern, kept by Mr. Pretorius. Here I breakfasted, my host beguiling the time by talking sedition against British rule, and grumbling at the want of protection afforded by the Imperial Government.

He was clamorous to know the last news from the front, predicted that the white man would be before long driven out of Africa, and did not hesitate to state his belief that dwellers like himself, in outlying districts, would inevitably be massacred before they could gain the haunts of their fellow-citizens.

When this lugubrious speech was finished, his wife, a very stout lady, and verging on her fiftieth birthday, fairly broke down and wept bitterly. Doubtless in imagination, she saw the assegais pointed at her matronly bosom, and conjured up hundreds of naked savages pillaging her homestead.

What could a gentleman do but attempt to console her, under these circumstances?

Alas! she, like Rachel, refused to be comforted, so I was obliged to give up my endeavours, for the more I tried to soothe, the more violent did her grief become.

Before reaching the "Good Hope," I omitted to state that an exceedingly pretty river is crossed, the banks of which are steep and precipitous. At one point there is what might be almost described as a peninsula jutting out into the stream.

Here stands the remains of what must have

been a large house; in places the walls have crumbled away, yet sufficient of the skeleton still exists by which an observer may gain a considerable idea of its original dimensions.

Around it is an extensive plantation of trees; and even now the eye can trace what was at one time a very handsome garden.

Here I halted to take a view of the surroundings, and while doing so was overtaken by a traveller. I asked him as to the early history of this deserted abode. "Yes," he answered, "I have heard my father say that the shattered dwelling which is before you was inhabited by a religious order of Jesuits; and here they lived for many years, till death took off the last of the devoted band. Then the place went to ruin, as I suppose there were none to replace them in so isolated a position."

At half-past two I left the "Good Hope," the traveller I mention accompanying me, as his destination was Harrysmith.

It is seldom that one picks up casually so agreeable an acquaintance.

Together we toiled over the Berg. Previously to this I had thought the scenery grand in the extreme, but now it appeared to excel the former estimate I had made of its beauty. It is a sea of mountains, extending so far that the eye can scarcely distinguish the outline of those more distant, which fade into haze on the horizon, whilst, between, hill after hill billows up upon the



landscape like waves upon the storm-tossed ocean.

I may mention, to give the reader an idea of the climate of this spot, that my companion, who upon a former journey had lost his watch, found it on this occasion, just as he had dropped it, all unstained by exposure to the atmosphere, although it had remained where it fell over two months before. One might imagine that life in such a place would go on for ever. The very idea of such a thing reminds me of a celebrated town in Iowa, of which, when marked off by the surveyor, a large portion was devoted for the purpose of a graveyard. As nobody died, it became a positive reproach to the inhabitants, for no grave was made within its limits for many a year; so they sent to a neighbouring State and borrowed a corpse, over the interment of which there were great rejoicings and much conviviality, and by this means removed the stain from their locality.

When our backs were turned upon Van Reenan's Pass, before the eye stretched one vast extent of veldt, here and there interrupted by several magnificent isolated hills. In no country of the world does nature appear to have indulged in such eccentric feats, so much so that I almost think that, if dropped here without a knowledge of my position, I should have no hesitation in deciding where I was.

As we approached the edge of Natal, for the Drachenberg Range is not its northern boundary,

on the left-hand side of the road may be seen a rude cross, and several mounds smothered in grass encircling its base.

My new friend perceiving that my eye rested inquiringly upon this memento of a past time, volunteered the information that there a fearful tragedy had been transacted some years ago.

"Ten or twelve Boers with their families were outspanned, on their course up to the interior of the Free State. A number of Basutos joined them, clamouring for food. This hospitality was liberally bestowed; but the cowardly villains were by no means satisfied, and turned upon their hosts, and slaughtered all excepting one, who was fortunate enough to escape to Harrysmith. He told his sad tale; still not a Boer could he obtain with pluck enough to return with him to bury his friends. However, there was an old Englishman, a carpenter by trade, residing there. Summoning his son to his assistance, they started for the scene of the massacre, and without further aid performed the last obsequies to the departed, and the cross you see was put up by his own hands to mark the resting-place of the unfortunate Boers, as well as a standing reproach to the Dutchmen of Harrysmith."

Long after night had fallen, we reached "Smith's Tavern," on the Vilder river. Report says the old gentleman is rich; whether this be the case or not, he is decidedly convivial, with a strong affection for England and its institutions.

At supper we were joined by two characters as unlike each other as can possibly be imagined. The first was a schoolmaster, a little dapper fellow, who took most kindly to his glass. On being asked by the host what he would have to drink: "Just gie us the square-face, and let me help mysel'. None o' yer drappies that ye can scarce drown a flea in, mon!" was his reply.

The other was the "predicant," or preacher. He was a smooth-faced and oily, but powerfully-built, man, who refused, with many protestations of grief, to accept *spirits*, at the same time stating that he had no objection to ginger cordial.

To this concoction it was evident he was much attached from the frequency with which he replenished his glass. At length, to look after his horse, as he said, he went out for a few minutes.

As soon as his back was turned my curiosity prompted me to taste the ginger-cordial, that was evidently at the same time so innocuous and satisfying. By the piper that played before Moses! the cordial turned out to be "Cape Smoke," and I vow that it was not one iota less than fifty above proof! This dignitary of the church slept in the next room to me; and never did I hear a man snore like him before, and trust I never shall again, for sleep was effectually banished from my eyelids, so that when I rose in the morning I was little or nothing refreshed by my "slumbers;" in fact I felt *limp*.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ROUGHS.

It cannot be under twenty miles from "Smith's Tavern" to the town of Harrysmith, its distance from Durban being about 220 miles.

No part of the road which I have travelled have I found so monotonous and wearying as this stage of my journey. How to account for the languor which seemed to overcome me I can scarcely explain, unless it be from continually casting my eye over those interminable plains, that never cease until the Vaal river, which divides the Orange Free State from the Transvaal, is crossed.

When half the distance had been accomplished, the post-cart passed us *en route* to Maritzburg. If ever four unbroken devils of horses were put into harness, they were the brutes attached to this conveyance. Of course when they were doing their best pace they had no time for roguery; but as the driver wished to pull up to learn from me the last news from the war, he very nearly became possessor of a kettle of fish,

which he had difficulty in handling. One of the leaders got over the traces, a wheeler stood fast and did nothing but lash, while a third walked on his hind legs as if he were one of the great untamed rocking-horses which Miss Ada Menkin, or some of the celebrities of Astley's, used to ride in that well-known spectacular piece "Mazeppa." The result being that each of the passengers had to leave the cart, and hang on to the heads of these fiery steeds.

I dismounted to give a helping hand, and being under the impression that I could handle any obstreperous beast that ever was foaled, possibly rather too carelessly approached the one who had got himself over the traces. Without warning—in fact the whole thing was done so rapidly that I was completely taken by surprise—he let fly at me, and just grazed my elbow with his heels. Talk about "funny" bones! I certainly did feel undoubtedly *funny* afterwards; yet I would not be denied, and in a moment had my assailant by the head. He then playfully took me by the shoulder, and made such severe indentations with his teeth that I became anxious to reach Harrysmith, where I expected to obtain some "emplastrum diacolon." The last I saw of that post-cart was its former occupants hanging on behind, struggling with each other to regain their seats in the vehicle, the driver having once more got into motion, and fearing that a halt would occasion a repetition of the late scene to be enacted.

An hour and a half after this little episode, I entered the confines of Harrysmith.

From the number of new buildings that were being erected, it appears to be a prosperous place; yet why it should be so I have as yet been unable to discover, for no navigable river passes near it, nor do I believe that there is any prospect, even in the most remote future, of its becoming the terminus of a railroad.

Directing my steps towards the hotel, I met the landlord, a person with whom I had formerly become acquainted in the Transvaal. My previous introduction to him was rather a peculiar one. He had heard that an English gentleman was in the neighbourhood, so paid me a visit in the hope that I could prescribe for him for erysipelas, a disease from which he much suffered. I was loath to turn Æsculapius, and would have declined to accede to his request; but as no medical man was to be obtained within the radius of many, many miles I allowed myself to be persuaded to take his case in hand, and so successful was I that he regarded me as one of the most talented medicos that he had ever met. Consequently before I had been an hour in Harrysmith I had several applicants for my services. It is no easy matter to make a person see who has been blind for years, or a man stand whose legs had been useless for the same period; so I declined to meddle in a matter so far beyond my powers—a course of conduct which evidently did not lead to any extension of my popularity.

I have had some acquaintance with ruffianism, rowdyism, and localism, in various parts of America and Australia, but never, in the whole course of my previous existence, have I seen a greater number of blackguards than were to be found assembled in Harrysmith.

After supper I went into the billiard-room to smoke a pipe. The visitors to this establishment were such a rough, swearing, blaspheming collection, that I considered it advisable to regain the hotel, in case any should wish to draw me into a quarrel; but, early as I had resolved on taking this step, it did not prevent one of the *habitués* endeavouring to force me to take a drink with him, whether I would or not. A discussion having ensued as to the fairness of a "cannon," my tormenter left me, to see, as he expressed it, "fair play take place," thus affording me an opportunity to escape from so dangerous a locality. I was afterwards informed that six-shooters were very much in demand here, and that they not unfrequently performed a prominent part in the settlement of differences of opinion. I regret to say that many of these "roughs" were deserters from the English service; and, as no extradition treaty existed between the Orange Free State and the colony, these blackguards were safe from arrest. Several murders had occurred within the last year in the vicinity of the town, yet the authorities seemed powerless to punish the perpetrators of these crimes, or indisposed to bring the assassins to justice.

As my horses indicated a requirement of rest, I resolved to remain here for another day. Never shall I forget my astonishment when my bill was handed to me, immediately before starting. Half-a-crown a bundle for forage was charged; and so small was its size, that no one with a knowledge of how much a horse requires, could for a moment have doubted that two bundles at least were needed to make a fair feed for each animal.

As I was about to mount, a gentleman addressing me said, "Take my advice, sir, and see that your revolver is handy; for I have reason to believe that some of the blackguards who at present infest this town intend stopping you, they being under the impression that you have on your person a large sum of Government money."

I thanked him for the warning, and immediately afterwards cantered out of town.

The road from here lies over a succession of flats, with an occasional deep ravine intersecting them. On either side of the way were strewn the bodies of countless bullocks, that had died from fatigue, red water, or lung sickness, while vultures in hundreds, gorged with their foetid diet, flapped their wings, vainly endeavouring to rise at my approach.

All this carnage is the result of war, the unfortunate oxen having succumbed to an inexorable fate while trekking down supplies destined for our soldiers at the front.

At 1 p.m. I reached Mr. Langridge's, the



proprietor of the ferry-boat that crosses Elands river.

While lunching, he informed me that several suspicious characters had been about his establishment since sunrise, and consequently counselled me to change my route, and added that he would himself conduct me ten miles on the road. Thus, instead of crossing at the ford we followed the course of the stream for some distance, then crossing at a shallow drift, struck across the veldt. In an hour and a half the old road was once more regained, when my kind friend bid me good-bye and God-speed.

At sunset I began to imagine that I must have missed my way. For miles and miles I could see in every direction; but not a house was in sight. At length darkness set in, and I came to the conclusion that the veldt must be my sleeping-place, when a stranger on horseback overtook me.

From him I learned that I was still five miles distant from where I hoped to sleep that evening. However, as he was going some distance further, he volunteered to escort me until his residence was reached. I would fain have persuaded him to have accompanied me to my destination; but as he had lately entered into the bonds of matrimony, and was anxious to get home to his new wife, my request was not complied with.

“You cannot miss the way,” he said. “Keep to the road, and in about half an hour you will see the lighted windows of the house you seek.”

I did keep on for half an hour, but not a vestige of human habitation could I discover! For an hour more I rode with no better success.

Unwilling as I was to believe it, there remained no doubt in my mind that I had left the road, and was consequently wandering.

At length I got into a "sloot," the bottom of which was so soft that my horses were bedded up to the girthing in its slime and water; but a sharp application of spur caused the animal I rode to plunge forward, and in a few seconds I was again on *terra firma*; but my attendant was not so successful. The Dromedary, which name I had given to the big horse he rode, having deviated a little to the left, got into a regular quagmire; and in his efforts to extricate himself threw the boy—rifle, bandolier and all—into the strong-smelling cesspool.

I heard a cry, followed by a most earnest entreaty to come to his assistance; and when the luckless wretch was dragged out, I have seldom seen a human being present so woebegone an appearance. From head to foot he was coated with mud, and the usual *bouquet de nègre* in which he rejoiced was completely obliterated by the, if possible, more unpleasent, and decidedly more powerful odour, of the filth from which he was just rescued.

The horse having thrown him, took advantage of the circumstance to extricate himself, and started across the veldt, giving me at least a

quarter of an hour's pursuit before I could overtake him. When I had secured the truant I tried to find my boy, which was no easy task.

At length, after shouting until I was black in the face, I came across that worthy, grieving over the misfortunes which had befallen him, and loudly cursing his fate that compelled him to take service under so inexorable a taskmaster as myself.

If I could have managed the four horses alone, I should undoubtedly have turned him adrift there and then; but as I was unable to do so, I was fain to put up with one of the most useless specimens of humanity it has ever been my lot to be brought into contact with.

Having got the horses, and my dependent again mounted, I struck out upon the prairie, directing my steps more to the eastward. Soon after I regained the road, and to my extreme gratification saw the twinkling of a light. Straight to it, you may be sure, I went! But I calculated without my host, for both the horse I rode and the one I led fell over a wire fence, and precipitated me head foremost into a mealie field.

There being no result to be obtained by the process of weeping over the proverbial "spilt milk," I pulled myself together as quickly as might be, and got hold of each horse by the head. Ten minutes later I traversed the enclosure, and there quite a quarter of an hour was lost in seeking a place of exit; but my perseverance realized

its reward, and I was presently in the porch of Mr. Spettigrew's house, and the owner himself was kindly offering me that entertainment and rest of which I stood so sorely in need.

## CHAPTER XII.

### BOERS.

As there was no stable at the house where I was now guest, my poor horses were turned into the kraal, and a few mealies were all the food I could obtain for them, so in the morning, what between exposure and short commons, my pets looked anything but well. One in particular, the smaller of my attendant's beasts, had such a woebegone, tucked-up appearance that I resolved to part with him at the first opportunity that presented itself. Better to leave him behind here than further up country, where probably I should be unable to find a purchaser or a substitute. It was certainly rather soon in my journey—considerably under 300 miles—to find my nags giving evidence of hard work; but to my grief it was only too apparent to me that such was the case.

After a good breakfast I renewed my journey. The greater part of my ride was through a valley watered by a considerable stream. The country had a wonderfully repellant appearance, as the grass, far as the eye could see, had lately been

burnt off. However, spring-buck and bless-buck were numerous, but very wild; so as I did not want meat, I refused to let my boy have a shot at the pretty creatures.

Presently a mad-looking individual, with long streaming hair and an enormous gun, galloped past me, intent on mischief to the antelopes; he was splendidly horsed, yet looked more like an escaped lunatic than a sportsman.

Fervently, *sotto voce*, I expressed a wish that he had not brought out "straight powder" with him that day.

My servant soon after called to me, "Baas, come here and look at this enormous crocodile." After some trouble I discovered he was alluding to an iguana—a species of lizard—about five feet long. Verily his optics had a happy knack of turning mole-hills into mountains.

Soon after, descending a steep incline, I dismounted at a water-hole, to give my horses a drink. When so engaged a couple of Boers approached for a similar purpose. I asked one of them if he could direct, and tell me the distance, to my next halting-place. His answer, which he addressed to his friend and not to me, was—"Here's another d——d Englander come to spy out the land. If they think that they can annex the Orange Free State as they have done the Transvaal, they are confoundedly mistaken."

"Look here, Mynheer," he added, turning to me, "you had just as well take your beasts out of

that, and let a respectable citizen's drink; time enough for yours after his have done."

I put my hand quietly into the right-hand pocket of my coat, just by way of assuring myself that my "Smith and Weston" revolver was ready for use; not that I intended to commence hostilities, but to resent an insult if one should be offered me.

The black son of ebony who called me "Baas," either knew what the movement meant, or guessed what the expression of my countenance denoted, for he quietly slipped off up the hill side, leaving me, if a row took place, to protect my horses and do all the fighting by myself.

My experience has made me firmly believe that out of ten Boers nine of them are cowards, and evidently this pair of worthies did not differ from the majority of their countrymen, so, instead of clearing out, to make room for them, I kept my place, giving my weary beasts an opportunity of quenching their thirst, of as long a period again as I should probably have allowed them; after which I laid down upon the grass close by, lit my pipe, and took stock of them.

These Boers are not unlike certain animals of prey that are to be met with further up country; they cannot bear that a steady eye should be fixed on them, and when they perceive that such is the case, feel inclined to "make tracks." This was the first specimen of incivility I had met with, but well I knew that it would not be the last before

my journey was finished. When my troublesome friends had disappeared over the hillside, I tightened my girths, and having mounted Tommy, I attempted to drive the other three horses before me.

My intention was, if I could succeed in this course, to dismiss my servant, with the hope that fortune might throw in my way a lad who could better be depended upon; but the most fatigued and worn out of my team wandered incessantly to left and right, off the road on to the veldt. My man, perceiving this, and no doubt feeling inclined to chuckle at my failure, came and joined me. He said little, but evidently thought much; for after a period of silence, he remarked, "That Boer man would as soon shoot a coloured boy as he would a 'bok.'"

I did not upbraid him, for there is little use in throwing away an excess of language, simply for the sake of talking.

After a ride of about an hour, from the description I had received, I knew I was opposite Mr. Singer's house. It was a one-storied gothic building, with a very wide verandah running along the entire length of its front. I rode up to the door. In a pretty and carefully tended flower-garden stood a young lady, with a baby in her arms. Having received an affirmative answer to my request to be accommodated, I off-saddled my horses, and sent them round to the stable. Here there was forage galore, and a nice warm building to shelter my steeds.



I could not help looking at my hostess; again and again I took a sly glance at her, and only desisted when I feared she had observed my earnest gaze.

At length I exclaimed, "You must pardon me if you think I am staring at you; but you so much remind me of a lady in the Transvaal, whose hospitality I enjoyed for a couple of weeks some years ago, that I almost doubt now if you are not she."

"I have a sister there," she said.

"Thirty odd miles from Pourchestroom?" I inquired.

"Exactly," was the reply.

"Then you are Captain Gillmore, I suppose," she went on, "of whom I have often heard my sister speak. If you can only remain here a few days you will see her, as she is going to call for me on her way to Maritzburg."

Although I should have much liked to have seen my old friend, it was impossible for me to delay so long. The day after the morrow I should ride, and only did I delay for that period in order that my four-footed servitors might be recruited.

The husband had imported a large bagatelle-table, and until a late hour we all enjoyed playing upon it. It was a glimpse of home life—of those long happy evenings one spends in the native land—surrounded by relatives or dear friends. The life of a solitary wanderer is hard indeed—in

my belief, a person has to be peculiarly fitted for it, for the monotony of such a country as this, and the depression that appears to hang over the land, would drive some people mad.

African veldt, in some respects, resembles American prairie; in both there are the same gigantic stretches of grass-land, but the latter is bright and cheering, the former dreary in the extreme.

While at Mr. Singer's I was much struck with the number of waggons that passed, heavily loaded with wool. This is the staple produce of the country, and is destined for shipment at Durban, in Natal. The quantity which is taken to that port annually must be very great indeed; yet it does not equal, by one fourth, what is transported to Port Elizabeth, on Algoa Bay. This industry is, comparatively speaking, in its infancy; and I do not doubt that those who live to see another quarter of a century will find that Southern Africa has become a formidable rival to Australia in this article of commerce.

The necessity of our troops upon the frontier of Zululand has brought immense quantities of money into this Diminutive Republic.

Horned cattle, by tens of thousands, have been bought, and horses in innumerable numbers; the demand for these animals having been so great, that an ox, which a few years ago could have been purchased for five pounds, is at the present date considered value for twelve;

and, in the same way, horses have doubled or trebled their price.

To give an idea of the rascality of some of the residents in the Free State, I would fain tell a story which came under my knowledge.

Government emissaries had been scouring the country right and left for weeks, and by untiring labour had collected several hundred horses, which were at night placed in a kraal for their better safety, until the time arrived for sending them to Natal. On the morrow this was to take place, but to the astonishment and disgust of those in whose charge the animals had been placed, the kraal wall was discovered thrown down and nearly all the horses lost. Frequently afterwards I saw Boers riding on animals branded on the hoof and rump, but much as I should like to have despoiled the enemy of property which did not belong to him, being single-handed, I came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour.

At length the morning for departure arrived. Before sunrise I went to the stable to look after the saddling of my quadrupeds, where to my extreme disgust, I found that the invalid was unable to proceed, so I "swopped" him away for a white Basuto pony, strong as a cart-horse and hardy as a mule. He was a perfect type of the class of beast wanted for travelling in this country, possessed every known and unknown pace under the sun, and could go at the