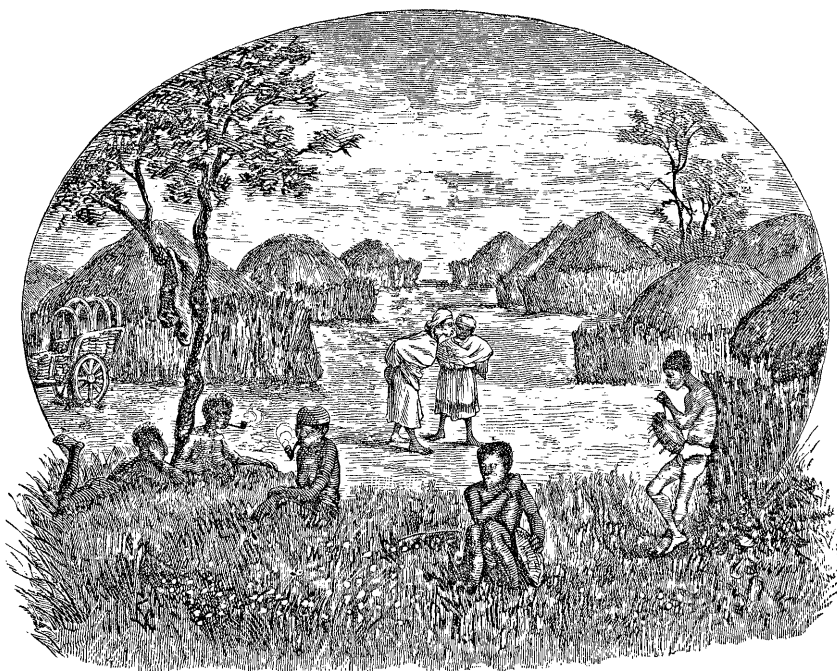


in the general laugh ; this had a wonderful effect in bringing the crowd into good humour ; I took the opportunity of telling the old barefooted overseer that I should have to water my cattle at his pools oftener than I expected ; however, I was quite willing, I said, to pay him properly, and he was soon in as amicable a mood as the rest, and recommended me to send for a certain man in the village of Marokana, who would be able to replace the damaged axle.

Within the last ten years, and especially since the introduction of spirituous liquors into the country, wherever the Hottentot element has mingled with the Bantu, or whenever the Batlapins, Barolongs, or other kindred tribes have not had capable and responsible men for their chiefs, they have been corrupted by the Korannas, Griquas, and others who have adopted all the vices, and none of the virtues of the white men. The consequence has been that drunkenness, idleness, robbery, and even murder, have become rife among them. It is sincerely to be hoped that the measures lately taken by the government in Griqualand West with regard to the Korannas will have beneficial results.

The arrangement that I made with the overseer was that our cattle should have as much water as they wanted at the rate of a shilling a day each ; he was even considerate enough to direct me to some clean pools that had never been used by the villagers. Before I set out again, I engaged the services of two native lads for eight shillings a week each. Pit's wages were ten shillings a week.

Musemanyana is the most northerly possession of the Koranna king of Mamusa; on the north and east it is bounded by plains abounding in game. To these plains I have given the name of "Quagga Flats;" they belong to Montsua, and are the common hunting-grounds of Batlapins, Barolongs,



MUSEMANYANA.

Korannas, and Dutch farmers, who come either from the Western Transvaal, or have been permitted by various chiefs to settle on their territory. On the west lies the small dominion of the Marokana chief who nominally owns allegiance to Montsua, the king of the Barolongs, but without any payment of tribute.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MUSEMANYANA TO MOSHANENG.

Departure from Musemanyana—The Quagga Flats—Hyæna-hunt by moonlight—Makalahari horsemanship—Konana—A lion on the Sitlagole—Animal life on the table-land—Gnu-hunt at night—A missing comrade—Piles of bones—Hunting a wild goose—South African spring-time—Molema's Town—Mr. Webb and the Mission-house—The chief Molema—Huss Hill—Neighbourhood of Moshaneng—Illustrious visitors.

No sooner was the axle mended than we left Musemanyana, travelling on till it was quite late at night. The wind was blowing almost a gale when we halted, and in lighting our fire we had some difficulty in preventing another steppe-burning; the next morning, however, the 21st, was warm and bright. Shortly after starting we came across some Makalahari and Barolong women collecting young locusts just emerged from their pupa state. It was not until we had gone on for three hours and a half that we arrived at a depression, and found some pools of clear water; from this point our road lay to the north-east, over wide plains with bushes few and far between. The dry grass had all the pleasant fragrance of hay, and

young blades were already sprouting amidst the withering stems. In all directions the ground was burrowed by jumping-hares, porcupines, and earth-pigs. Hyænas had taken possession of the holes that the earth-pigs had deserted, and occasionally we observed the lairs of jackals. In localities ex-



BAROLONG MAIDEN COLLECTING LOCUSTS.

clusively populated by natives, jackals, caama-foxes, and proteles are freely hunted for the sake of their skins, which are made into coats ; but in the parts where white men predominate, and game is abundant, hyænas are chiefly made the object of attack, being partially exterminated by strychnine.

Fourteen miles further on we came to another valley, broader than the last, and containing numerous pools; the grass here, although it had been burnt down in September, had already grown again a foot high. In the valley was the last of the outlying settlements belonging to Hendrick, the chief of Musemanyana, and we counted more than a hundred of his cattle. The plains extended right away to the horizon on every side.

We next entered upon the Quagga Flats, and found ourselves upon Montsua's territory. The weather continued genial, and the wind had dropped, but the marshy condition of the soil made our progress still difficult. Meeting some Barolong people on their way from Marokana to hunt, I tried to bargain with them for the exchange of some of my draught-oxen, but our negotiation fell through, as the Barolongs demanded 8*l.* a head on every bullock that should be bartered.

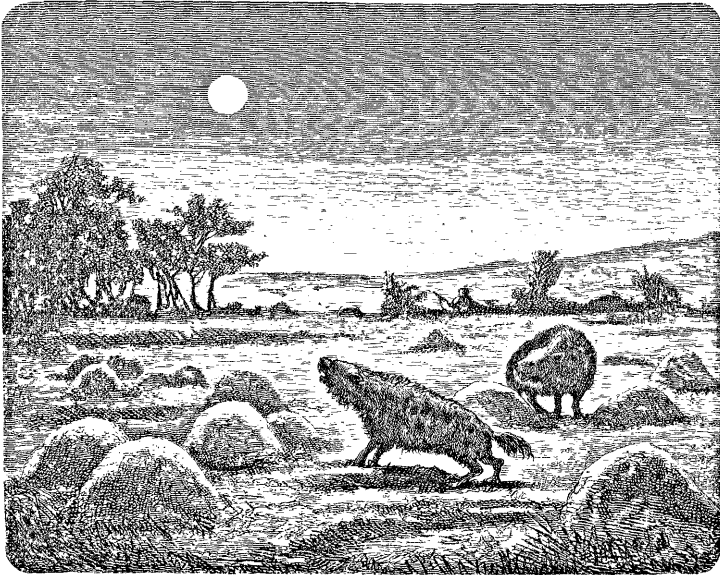
On the 23rd F. and I, accompanied by "Boy," one of our new black servants, left the waggon and went off on a little hunting-excursion. It was on this occasion that I first became aware of the fact that springbock gazelles leave their fawns all day, only returning to them in the evening to stay with them at night. Any one wandering about the plains where the grass is not many inches high may come within twenty yards of the pretty little creatures without perceiving them, and although they do not try to escape observation, like the orbeki gazelles, by lying flat upon the ground,

they are often very effectually concealed by the herbage.

In the course of the afternoon we turned into a road leading northwards that subsequently proved to be the direct route between Mamusa and Konana ; the track had probably not been open to vehicles until within the last three months, though apparently it had been previously used as a footpath by the natives. We were now on the edge of a plain that extended east and west as far as the eye could reach, but was bounded on the north by some hill-tops, and broken in the same direction by clumps of wood ; these, however, were some miles away. A lovely evening passed into just as lovely a night, and the full moon, encircled by the very slightest of halos, and stars twinkling with a subdued lustre, shed a kindly glimmer over the dark grey plain. In spite of fatigue, I lay awake long enjoying the beauty of the scene, my companions all sound asleep, and the dogs the sole sharers of my watch.

A sudden movement on the part of Niger disturbed me from my reverie ; followed by Onkel, another of our dogs, he sprang forward and began to growl. The long-drawn howl of a spotted hyæna had broken the stillness of the night, and though it was, as I supposed, at some distance, it quite accounted for the agitation of the dogs. I was so well accustomed to the sound that I did not pay much regard to it, and prepared to lay down my head to sleep ; but so obstreperous did the dogs

become, that I was soon convinced that the intruders could not be far away, and resolved to make a raid upon the disturbers of our rest. I crept up to Pit and Boy, and after shaking them till they were awake enough to understand me, I gave them orders to hold in the dogs. Going to F., I tried to arouse him, but did not wait to



A HYÆNA HUNT.

ascertain whether he took in what I said to him. Without losing more time than I could help, I procured some ammunition, and started off in the direction from which the howling seemed to come. The servant-boys had the greatest difficulty in preventing the dogs from following me; the whole canine race of Africa instinctively regards the

hyæna as an enemy that should be attacked whenever opportunity affords.

I advanced about a hundred yards, sometimes stooping, sometimes crawling on my hands and knees, but without seeing any signs of hyænas; all at once, however, a low growl reached my ear, and I placed myself behind an ant-hill ready to take advantage of the first chance of a shot. In vain I waited. I made the best scrutiny I could of the surroundings, but I could see nothing but ant-hills, and the growls were not repeated. I was beginning to suppose that my own movements had scared the beasts away; still I waited on till the ants began to make my position uncomfortable, not to say untenable. Just as I was thinking I must retire, I was startled by a hideous yell, scarcely a dozen yards away. I strained my eyes to peer everywhere around me, but the moonlight revealed nothing but ant-hills in every direction. Whilst I was still in suspense, I became aware of a savage growl close at my heels; turning myself round, I was about to fire, when Niger's well-known bark made me hold my hand. Frantic with excitement, the dog had been too much for Pit to hold, and Boy, fearful that the hyæna would be more than a match for him, had let Onkel, a far stronger animal, loose as well; and now the two dogs together were scouring the place, full of eagerness to scent out their enemy. They scampered backwards and forwards, far and near; but the hyænas had obviously adopted the prudent plan of timely retreat, and at last I was

compelled to abandon all further hope of success, and returned to the waggon to bear my disappointment as best I could.

Of all the South African beasts of prey, the spotted hyæna is the most enduring and the most tenacious of life, and I have known instances where they have withstood the effects of fearful wounds for double the time that I believe other mammalia could have held out. I shall have to refer to these animals more than once again.

Next morning we reached one of the patches of wood that we had seen towards the distant north; it contained some wretched huts, made of branches driven in the ground and covered with leaves, occupied by Yochoms, a branch of the Makalahari. These Yochoms were dependents of a Barolong, named Mokalana, who resided in another of these woods a few miles away; both settlements bore the names of their respective owners. The custom that the Bechuanas have of calling their towns and villages after their builders or owners, frequently causes a great deal of confusion, as in this way a place sometimes gets known by two or three names, those of past as well as present chiefs; and when a chief changes his place of residence, the new settlement will bear the same name as the old one, although it may be not more than a few miles distant.

The Yochoms had to look after a herd of cows and sheep for their liege lord, and it was also their business to hunt for him; for this purpose they

were supplied with horses, and seemed much more at home in the saddle than any other of the Bechuanas.

By a present of a pocket-knife, I induced one of the natives to ride off to the "Bas" and inquire whether he was disposed to let me have some young



A YOCHOM OF THE KALAHARI CHASING A BLESSBOCK.

oxen in exchange for my old ones, if I gave him proper compensation in money and ammunition.

While we were taking our mid-day meal, another Makalahari came back from hunting, mounted on a powerful brown mare. Quite imposing in his appearance was this swarthy son of the South African

table-land, as he rode along in his shining leather tunic, the shafts of his assegais supported in a leathern socket attached to the stirrup, and the carcass of a blesbock slung across the front of his primitive saddle.

All the horses are bred upon the plains, and so well accustomed are they to the clumps of grass and to the holes in the soil, that the riders give themselves no concern about their bridles, but chase the fugitive herds of antelopes at full gallop, and generally succeed in overtaking them (except the springbucks, which are too fleet to be caught in this way) in about half an hour; the assegai is then brought into requisition, and is aimed with such precision that it rarely fails to hit its mark. One head of game thus secured, the huntsman, as a rule, never attempts to get a second, but having despatched his booty with his other assegai, he forthwith turns his horse's head homewards. The fewer the wounds which the animal receives, the greater the value of its skin to the Bas.

As my messenger was long in returning, I began to prepare to start; but just as the bullocks were being harnessed the man was espied in the distance. The message he brought was to the effect that the Bas had only one team for his own use, and that he could not consent to part with it. At the same time, however, he sent word that he had a sheep which he would exchange for a mug (about 1 lb.) of gunpowder. Accepting his offer, I received a fine "fat-tail;" and, in addition to the gunpowder, I

gave several trifling articles, such as needles, tinder-boxes, and little chains, which the Makalahari reciprocated by presenting me with some proteles' skins, and a few blessbock and harteboest horns.

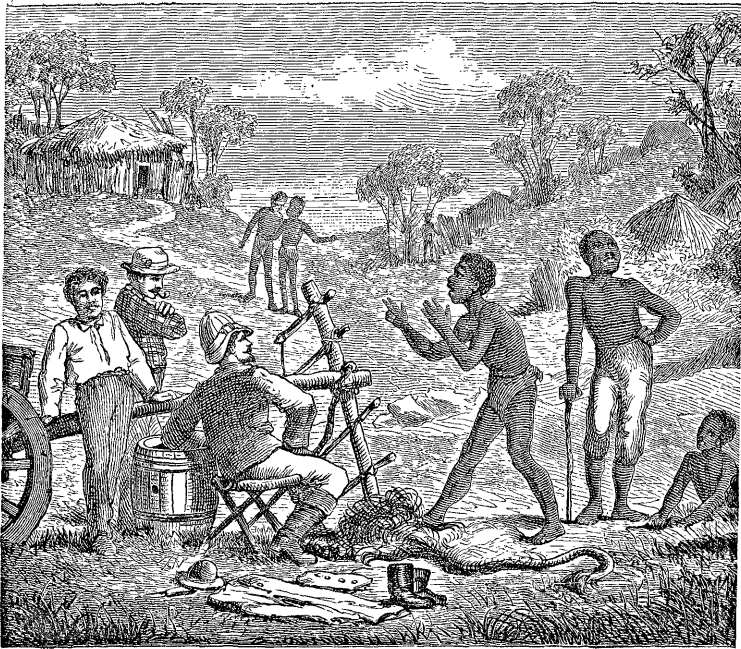
The unwelcome announcement was made to me the first thing next morning that one of my bullocks had died in the night, so that the burden of the waggon had to fall upon three pair instead of four.

Opening into the valley along which we were making our way were several side valleys, all containing cultivated fields. After a few miles we came upon one of these running north and south, which, we were informed by some passing Korannas, was that of the Konana River, that flows through highlands to the Maretsana. These highlands are occupied by Korannas and Barolongs and their vassals, and are under the protection of their chief, Shebor, who in his turn is subject to Montsua.

After rather a tedious drive, we came to Konana, which lay extended along the slope of a hill studded with trees, and contained 1000 inhabitants. I indulged a hope that I should be able here to procure some fresh bullocks; and in order to attract the attention of the people, I encamped on an open piece of sward just to the east of the town, on a declivity leading downwards to the river, and made a display in front of the waggon of various commodities that I had brought with me to enable me to make purchases for my scientific collection. It was not long before a crowd of visitors arrived, and with much curiosity inspected my stock, which con-

sisted of a velveteen suit, two bright woollen shirts, a hat, half a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, and half a roll of tobacco. But, although the chief came in person, I found no one disposed to negotiate with me for what I wanted.

Several of the residents, who entered into con-



A BAROLONG STORY-TELLER.

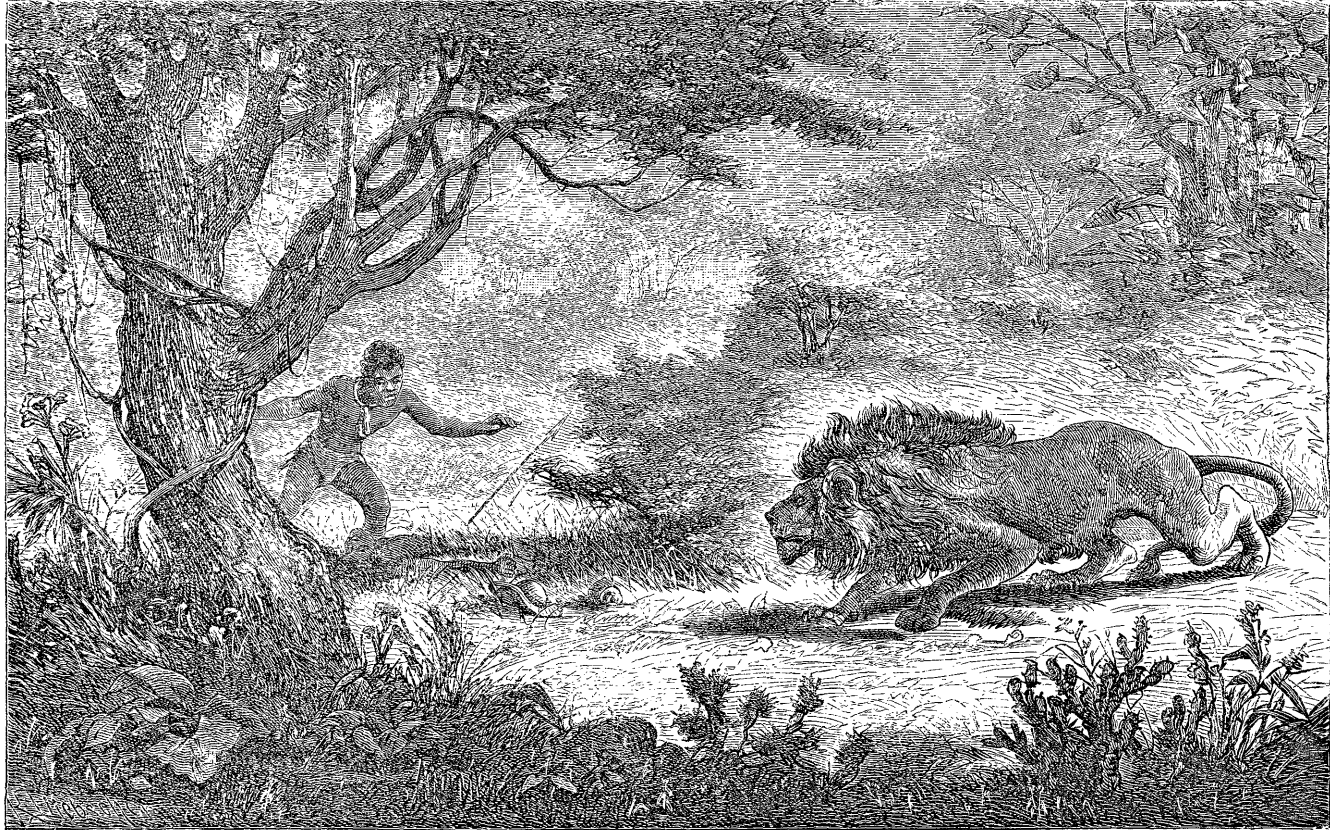
versation with us, informed us that the surrounding hills, as well as the heights along the Sitlagole and Maretsana Rivers, were infested with lions, which were so accustomed to the sight of men and to the sound of fire-arms that they were incredibly bold. Although the plains were abundantly supplied with

game, the monarchs of the forest exhibited a decided predilection for domestic animals; and the chief, Shebor, told us that he had to lament, not only the loss of many of his cattle, but of several of his people; and he advised us to keep a sharp look-out all along the opposite hills, which were amongst their favourite resorts.

He related a distressing incident that had occurred on one of the neighbouring rivers. A party of natives were on their way from Maraba, in the Makalaka country, to the diamond-fields, a distance of 800 miles. It was by no means unusual for such parties to quit their homes with simply a hide and an assegai, quite prepared, during their long and arduous journey, to live on nothing but roots, wild fruit, and occasionally a small head of game. The spectacle they would present to any traveller who might meet them was very piteous. Sometimes they would be almost destitute of food of any sort for days together, and be reduced well-nigh to skeletons. Their progress would become more and more painful; and they would endeavour to mitigate the pangs of hunger by drawing in the waist-bands which with a strip of hide formed clothing. The ordinary custom was for them to travel in single file, the strongest first, then the less robust, followed by the weakest; so that an invalid would often be quite by himself, a long way in the rear. In the party of which the chief was speaking there were two brothers, one of whom, on account of his feeble condition of health, had for more than a week been

obliged to take his place last in the procession. Arriving at the bank of the Sitlagole, the party halted to search for some roots, not unlike turnips, which were known to grow there, and which they hoped to cook and enjoy for supper. They found the roots in such abundance that it was resolved to spend the night on the spot, and they kindled a fire to prepare their meal. On closing in, it was soon ascertained that the sick comrade was missing. They looked at each other with much perplexity; but the brother of the absent man, without losing a moment, snatched up his own and his brother's share of the roots that had been gathered, fastened them to a strap upon his shoulder, seized his assegai, and started off. The rest drew closer in, enjoyed their supper, lighted up several additional fires as a protection from attack, and laid themselves down under the bushes to sleep.

The missing Bechuana was a Batloka, and the evidence went to show that the poor fellow had been compelled to rest so often and so long from his weakness, hunger, and sore feet, that he had fallen far into the rear, and, missing his way, had strayed into a rocky valley full of bushes that were notoriously the haunt of lions. Here no doubt he had been pounced upon and killed, for the brother had not gone far before he could trace the spot where the proper path had been left, and proceeding onwards he soon observed a lion's footprints in the sand. Instead of turning back, he had apparently caught sight of his brother's stick, straw hat, and



THE BECHUANA FINDS THE REMAINS OF HIS BROTHER.

gourd bottle, lying on the ground, and, trusting to his assegai, had resolved to venture on alone.

“But what was an assegai,” exclaimed Shebor, “in the face of a lion who had just tasted human blood?”

It was clear that before he reached his brother's corpse the lion had sprung from its concealment, and secured him as a second victim.

Finding next morning that both the men were absent the whole party was in consternation, too truly fearing the worst. They applied for help at a Barolong farm close at hand, and, following the tracks, were not long in discovering the two mangled bodies close to each other. The marks on the ground were quite distinct, and left no doubt that a lion had just quitted the spot. Probably it had only been scared away by their own approach, and they determined to continue their chase. After they had made their way for about 500 yards along the bank, they caught sight of a tawny object in a thicket just ahead. They hardly dared to hope that it was the creature of which they were in pursuit; but simultaneously a number of them fired, and great was their triumph when they discovered amongst the bushes the carcass of a huge lion pierced by six bullets.

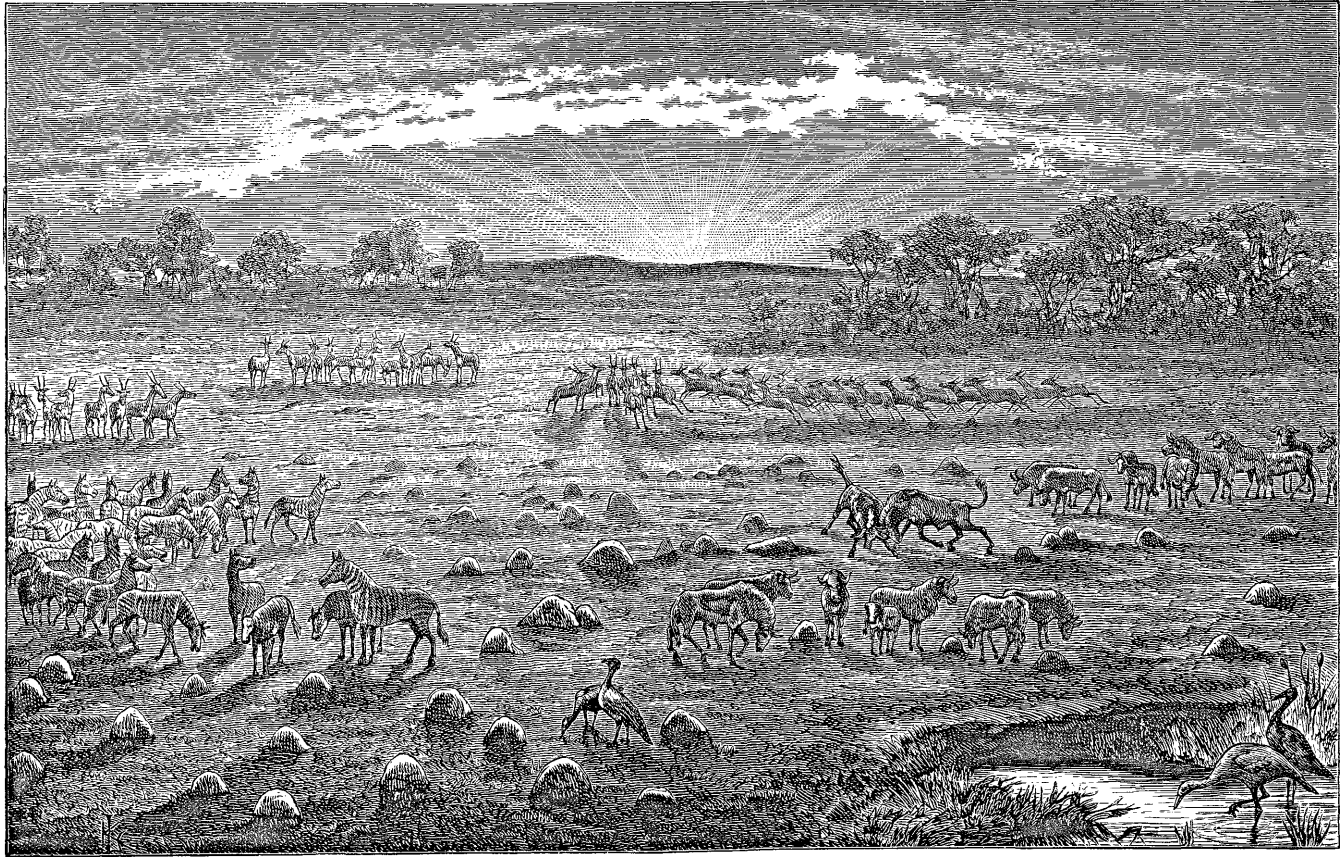
Such was the substance of Shebor's narrative, which he told with much energy and many gesticulations. It had its due effect in inducing us to take every precaution on our way to our next encampment on the slope, about three miles from Konana.

The next morning was again very fine and bright, and the golden sunbeams that penetrated the foliage above our heads awakened the feathered tribe betimes to commence their usual concert. Small song-birds were especially numerous, as well as various kinds of shrikes, and the *Tockus flavirostris*.

For two reasons our progress all day was very slow. Not only were our bullocks so weary that they required continual intervals of rest, but the bushwood was so dense that we felt the necessity of being very cautious. We did not, however, catch sight of a single lion; and, in due time, found ourselves once more upon comparatively open country.

It turned out a gorgeous day, and I am sure that none of us will forget the view upon which we gazed across the table-land. To a sportsman, and still more to a student of animal life, such days must ever remain engraven on the memory; they atone for the discomforts which have been endured in the past; they explain the longing which arises to revisit former haunts.

On reaching the top of the plateau, we looked across a vast plain, extending for at least twenty miles to the north and south, bounded on the east by mimosa groves. Except around the pools where the grass grew high, the plain was covered with a rich carpet of new green sward, thickly studded with brown ant-hills, and forming the habitat of numerous sorts of game. Dark-brown, light-brown, tawny, yellow, motley, and



WILD ANIMALS ON THE PLAINS.

black, were the robes in which a fanciful nature had bedecked her children. There were striped gnus and black gnus, blessbocks and hartebeests, springbocks and zebras; some were grazing, others gambolling, whilst here and there a herd would stalk solemnly along in single file, as though wrapped in meditation. Several herds of blessbocks stood in long rows cropping the pasturage, and quite near to us was a group of nearly 150 zebras, wending their way in a wide curve slowly to the south. In smaller bands were hartebeests innumerable; black gnus, in herds varying from ten head to eighty, had taken up their position near the bushes; and between them and the zebras were springbock gazelles, far too many to be counted. Nor were birds wanting to add to the animation of the scene. There were great bustards (*Eupodotis Kaffra* and *Kori*); there were two of the lesser bustards that I have already mentioned. There were chenalopex, ducks, plovers, ibises, cranes, and many others; their rich plumage and graceful forms as they rose in the air, or hovered just above the ground, contributing largely to the general charm.

I had seen much of the animal life of South Africa during my first journey, but I had never witnessed anything to compare with this; it exceeded all that imagination could depict, and appeared to me enough to transform the most indifferent into a keen lover of nature. For a full hour we feasted our eyes upon the prospect before us, quite forgetting the necessities of our weary cattle. So fascinated

were we with the scene that we resolved to make our encampment where we were for several days.

Connected with another, this plain extends to the upper Harts River on the east, to the Maritana on the north, and nearly as far as Mamusa on the south. It covers an enormous area, the greater part of it belonging to King Montsua. It has no perceptible slope, and it is only close to the riverbanks that the rain gets carried off at all; consequently, its surface holds numerous salt-pans varying in size, besides many shallow depressions, always full of water in the rainy season. The salt-pans, it would seem, have a great deal to do with the wonderful way in which the game thrives.

In one of these depressions we chose the site of our encampment, about three miles from the spot where we had stood gazing at the view. The zebras and the blessbocks were the first to take flight as our waggon proceeded, and some of the herds made their way through the thickets in the glades, and scampered off to the adjoining flat.

We could distinctly hear the lowing of the gnu-bulls as they led their herds to drink, and we determined that on the following evening we would take our stand and watch for them by one of the rain-pools. In the morning we made a preliminary attempt at a *battue* on the southern end of the plain, but without any success. Pit and F. took a wrong direction, and consequently left a gap between us of about 360 yards, through which the game made an escape.



BAROLONGS CHASING ZEBRAS.

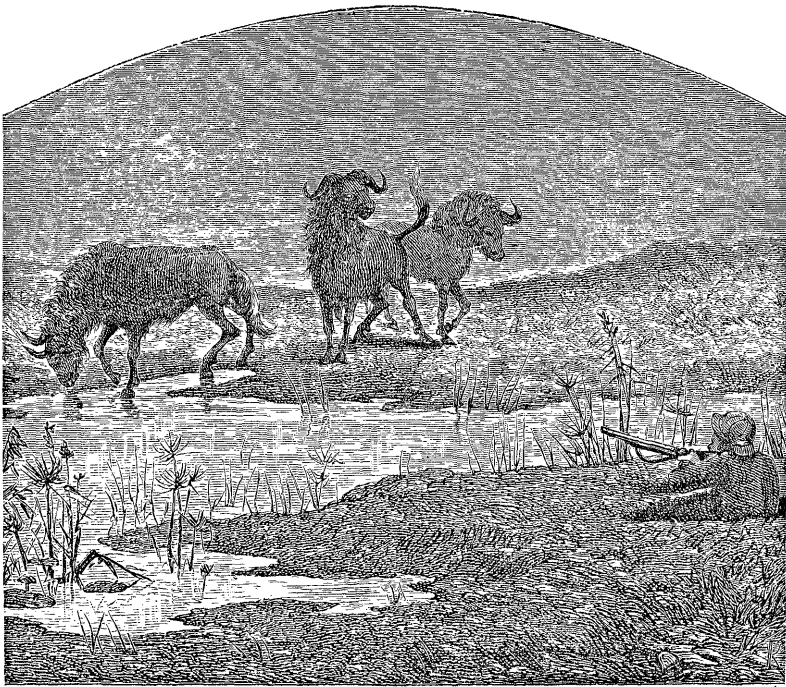
Returning to the waggon, we found some Barolongs, who had come from Konana, and were on their way to one of the mimosa groves, where some of their companions were already waiting for them, for a *battue* of their own. They offered us their assistance, but as it was my object to observe the different kinds of game, rather than to kill a number of them, I declined to avail myself of their help.

As night drew on Boly and I set out to the separate spots upon which we had previously fixed, intending to make ourselves during our observations as comfortable as we could in some small holes in the ground. I contrived to creep into my hiding-place without rousing any birds from the water, a circumstance that, however trifling it might seem to be, was really of great moment, as the clatter made by a number of birds startled suddenly, and rising on the wing, is quite enough to make the larger game aware of danger and avoid the spot.

The night was rather dark, but in the north a storm was travelling eastwards, and repeated flashes of lightning gleamed across the sky. Except for an occasional cackle or twitter from some birds on the water, the silence was almost unbroken; several times I thought I could hear the low growl of gnus, but probably it was the suggestion of my imagination; once too I felt sure that I caught a sound as of a dog lapping in the stream, but though I strained my eyes I could discern nothing,

and could only conjecture that a stray jackal might have approached the water to leeward of me.

Patiently I waited on, until at last there was no doubt that I could really distinguish the sound for which I had been listening. Raising my head and



GNU-HUNTING BY NIGHT.

laying my ear upon a bare place on the ground, I heard the heavy thud of a herd of gnus tramping along a game-track. Full of expectation I crouched down again. When next I looked up, I was aware of the lightning in the north being much more vivid than before. Soon I was able to hear the grunting

of the approaching herd, and had not long to wait before I made out one of the gnus on the opposite side of the pool; it came along the water's edge some way towards me, then turning round, it retreated a little distance, returning almost directly, accompanied by several others. They all stood for a considerable time without moving, but the leader, followed by another of the herd, at length began cautiously to descend to the sandy shore. As the creature stood directly in front of me, it was so foreshortened that I could see nothing of it but its head. As well as the darkness would permit I took my aim straight at the skull, and fired; the crack of the rifle was followed by a distinct crash of the bullet, and I was sure I had hit my mark; without paying any attention to the rest of the herd, I rushed out to secure my victim; but my search was all in vain; I groped about with my gun-barrel, but to no purpose; I was so certain that I had struck the creature that I was quite bewildered at its escape, and should have persevered long in looking for it if the increasing vividness of the lightning had not warned me of the impending storm, and induced me to return.

On arriving at the waggon, I was disconcerted at finding that Boly, who had set out with me, had not come back, and supposing that he had missed his way, I sent F. some distance up the slope with a lighted fire-brand, hoping that it might serve to guide him in the right direction; but although the beacon was brandished until the great rain-drops fell and

extinguished it, there was nothing to be ascertained about Boly. The wind had now risen to a hurricane, and brought upon us a most furious storm. Although our position in the hollow had the advantage of sheltering us in some degree from the violence of the tempest, it had the disadvantage of receiving all the torrents that rushed down from the flats above, and we were rendered wretchedly uncomfortable by the in-pouring flood. However, it was not so much the discomfort we endured as the anxiety about our missing companion that engrossed our minds; we felt so perplexed and baffled that we could talk and think of nothing else, and yet we were powerless to aid him. The storm was increasing, flash following on flash, and thunder-clap rolling after thunder-clap, and the rain beat so heavily upon the waggon-tilt that it was only by shouting at the top of our voices that we could make each other hear. The temperature, which all day had been very high, became suddenly checked, and a cold chill made us shiver again in our damp clothes.

The storm lasted for hours, and by the time that the wind abated, and the rain ceased, we were all very fatigued. It was indispensable that we should have a little repose, but we hardly allowed ourselves a couple of hours' rest before we were ready, by daybreak, to make what search we could for our missing friend. I sent one of the servants in the likeliest direction, and he had not gone many hundred yards, when he fell in with Boly making

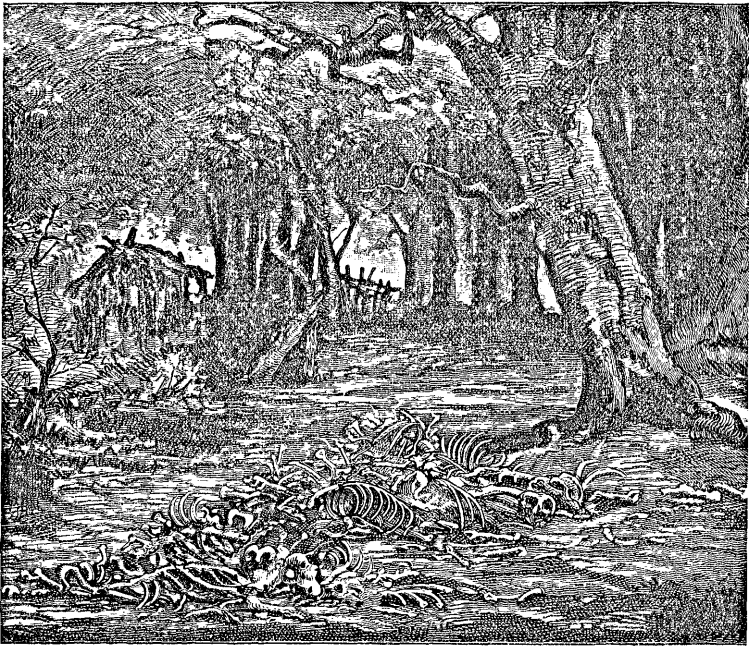
his way towards the waggon. He was covered with dirt from head to foot, and was as pitiable-looking an object as could be imagined; but although he was trembling with cold, and begrimed with mud, he was carrying a gun as bright as when he had started. He had not much to tell; in order to avoid the fury of the storm he had crept into a hole by the side of an ant-hill, where he had made the best of things all night through, but in order to keep his gun clean and ready for all emergencies, he had wrapped it in his jacket, which he had taken off for the purpose.

On the morning of the 29th I took a stroll, and brought back a hyæna-skull; this was placed along with some skulls of gnus, blessbocks, and springbocks that we had collected already since we had made our sojourn here.

At mid-day we started again, going to the eastward with the object of getting into the road leading from Taung to Molema's Town, whence I should proceed again to the north. After going about six miles we rested in a mimosa grove, where we fell in with some Barolongs. We passed a great number of deserted huts, round which the bones of animals were heaped in piles; to account for such an accumulation the slaughter must have been prodigious. Curious in the matter of pathological deformities, I turned the heaps over, but found the bones nearly all broken; the horns were perfect with the exception of two which had been pierced by bullets, the wounds having healed and a fresh horny substance

having formed in the apertures. I likewise found a pointed piece of horn, pierced with holes and attached to a thong, used by the natives for dressing leather.

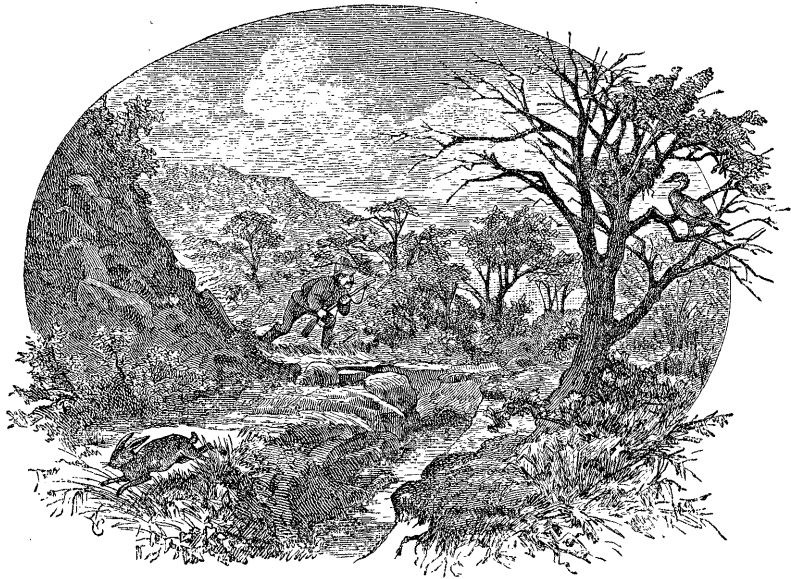
When it grew dark we pitched our camp under some acacias on a hill near a salt lake, which was



DESERTED HUNTING-PLACE OF THE BAROLONGS.

itself quite dry, but had some fresh water-springs on the bank supplying what we required for drinking. Wandering about, I found some more empty huts, and some more collections of bones. Observing that there were plenty of hares, guinea-fowl, partridges, and duykerbocks about, I made up my

mind to remain in the place for a whole day, and had every reason to be satisfied with my decision, for the weather was lovely, and the sport so successful that by the next evening my scientific collection was richer by a variety of bird-skins, snakes, insects, and crustaceans, as well as by a considerable



EGYPTIAN GOOSE ON MIMOSA-TREE.

number of plants. The rest of the party brought me back from their excursion some interesting birds, chiefly bee-eaters, black and small grey shrikes, and plovers.

The capture of a wild goose (*Chenalopea*), which I considered a great prize, gave me a good deal of trouble. The hill where we were stopping was at

the western corner of the salt-pan, the northern and southern banks of which were bounded by other hills of the same character; between us and the hill to the north was a valley by which the rain descends from the upper plains; but so partial had been the storm that had inundated us two days before, that here, at a distance of hardly a dozen miles, no sign of water was to be traced. Every now and then I heard the cackle which I recognized as that of the Egyptian goose; but, although I had the advantage of a high position, I could not succeed in getting sight of the bird at all. Persevering, however, for a long time, at length I espied it perched on a bough of a withered mimosa. My gun was loaded with only small shot, so that it was useless for me to fire unless I could get very much closer; this required no little caution, but by taking off my boots, and making my way barefoot over the stony water-course, I succeeded in placing myself in a good position behind some bushes. The goose continued sitting quite upright upon the same branch, which I afterwards found nearly overhung its nest at the bottom of the trunk. Finding myself within sixty yards, I took my aim, and the handsome skin of my victim was soon on its way to my rapidly-increasing collection.

To the saltpan I gave the name of "Chuai Jungmann," or Jungmann's salt lake; its geological formation is similar to the Vaalstone at Bloemhof, consisting of blocks of greenstone of about three cubic feet.

After sundown we proceeded a little on our way, and spent the night on an immense plain, which bore evident tokens of a long drought; the ground was cracked, the herbage crumbled at a touch, and the fleeting herds of springbocks raised great clouds of dust. The deficiency of water made us put our best foot forward, and during the next day we got over eighteen miles; there was no game to induce us to loiter on the way, and we were only too glad to find a hollow full of water, where we could halt for the night.

On the morning of the 1st of December we were surprised by a visit from a Boer, who had settled in the neighbourhood. From him we ascertained that we had now reached the western boundary of the Transvaal. He said that he was anxiously waiting the arrival of President Burgers, who he hoped would give him some relief from the annoyances to which he was perpetually exposed on the part of the Barolong.

Some of the white-thorned mimosas on the plain were in full bloom, and covered with hundreds of small globular blossoms of a bright yellow colour and pleasant fragrance. These shrubs sometimes grow eighteen feet high; their flowers are tender and sensitive, often containing many varieties of rose-beetles (*Cetoniidæ*), and some Longicorns marked with red bands. Amongst so many sorts of shrubs, I was surprised to find that there were only two that seemed to be much resorted to by insects; these had their branches often thickly coated with the

larvæ, more than an inch long; of the great cicada, of which the sonorous chirping could be heard on all sides. At our approach the insects would rise with a loud buzz, and settle again upon some adjacent mimosa with a shock that could be truly said to be audible. Brilliant leaf-beetles were also to be seen, and great steel-blue wasps were hovering round the bushes, catching flies; whilst numbers of humble-bees buzzed about in their busy fashion, collecting food for themselves and their broods, that were quartered in the forsaken ant-hills.

The South African spring-time had now settled with all its glory on these districts of the Upper Molapo, and all the inferior animals seemed roused to new life and vigour beneath its influence; to them its beneficent breath imparted fresh animation and enjoyment; to the unreasoning offspring of nature it seemed to be the herald of peace and pleasure; only amongst men, the lords of creation, did its return revive thoughts of discord, fire, and deeds of blood.

A short drive on the morning of the 2nd brought us to the village of the Makuba, on the southern or left shore of the Molapo,² belonging to Molema's Town. For the first fifteen miles of the river-course the valley is very narrow and enclosed by steep cliffs, but further on, where the plateau slopes to the west, it becomes much flatter. Here it was that we had to cross it, and we made our halt on the right-hand bank, near some wartebichi

² Molapo = river.

mimosas. Towards sunset we saw Molema's Town lying in front of us on a moderate slope, with woods in the background; on its eastern side the town is bounded by two interesting rocky heights, and between one of these and the stream stands the commodious Mission-house, built in the native style, belonging to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

The little river is not more than six or seven yards wide, but the rocks and the numerous acacias and willows that adorn the hillside in the spaces between the farms, combine to make the position of Molema's Town one of the most pleasing of all the native settlements of Central South Africa. The farmsteads are all detached, and all provided with enclosures, within which the pointed roofs, overgrown with calabash-gourds, are quite picturesque.

The many waggons about the place were the index of a thriving population, a circumstance to be attributed very much to the fact that King Montsua has prohibited the sale of brandy in the country, an order which Molema, the governor, or sub-chief of the town, has strenuously enforced. Another source of prosperity has been the introduction of European cereals by former missionaries.

Molema, it may be mentioned by the way, is a Christian and a preacher. It pleased me very much to find that he has forbidden the felling of any trees in the precincts of the town; and we had scarcely made our encampment when a native, as the representative of the police-court, came to apprise us of

the rule, at the same time offering to assign us adequate pasturage for our cattle.

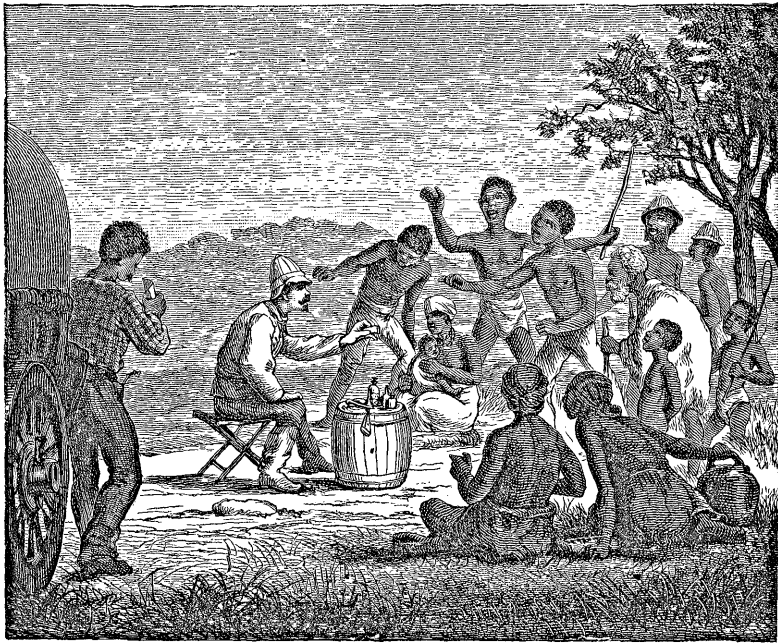
I was contemplating calling on Mr. Webb, the missionary; but before I had positively made up my mind, a fair stout man leading a little girl by the hand came out of the Mission-house towards me, and, as I anticipated, introduced himself to me. We engaged in a long conversation, and he gave me much information about the locality. He told me that Montsua was now residing at Moshaneng, a town in the province of his royal ally Khatsisive, the ruler of the Banquaketse. He was resolved, however, to settle in Poolfontein, where the Transvaal Government (probably for the purpose of forestalling the independent Barolong chiefs) had placed its Barolong subjects. This was a great annoyance to Montsua, and the real motive of his desire to leave Moshaneng, and to build himself a new residence elsewhere.⁸

The Mission-house was furnished with the barest necessities, as, in the extremely unsettled state of affairs, Mr. Webb considered his residence likely to be only temporary; moreover, Molema, being himself a preacher, was by no means well disposed to white missionaries at all. Both Mr. Webb and his wife, who appeared to be an energetic helper in his labours, advised me to make my way as quickly as possible to Moshaneng.

Mr. Webb now went to inform Molema of my

⁸ Montsua has subsequently done this, and has offered the English Government the jurisdiction of his territory.

arrival, and brought him back with him to the Mission-house. Molema was an old man, suffering from asthma. He expressed himself very delighted to see me, and said that he had not seen a Nyaka (doctor) since Nyaka Livingstone. He was very anxious that I should give him a molemo (a dose) that would



DISPENSING DRUGS IN THE OPEN.

relieve him of his troublesome cough, and enable him to breathe more freely ; inviting me to go and see him on the following morning, he promised that if I would stay for a few days he would make me a present of a fat sheep.

In an excursion that I made up the country, I

observed that wherever there was a stratum of mould, it never failed to be sown with kaffir corn. I noticed a good many specimens of tropical vegetation, the first I had seen since leaving Grahamstown; but, on the other hand, I saw a large number of plants distinctively belonging to the temperate zones, such as *Campanula*, *Saponaria*, *Veronica*, and some umbelliferous *Euphorbiaceæ*; out on the plains the grass stood four feet high. I shot a heron and several finches, including two fire-finches; also two spurred plovers, which probably I should not have noticed but for their peculiar cry of "tick-tick." The women who were working in the fields were much cleaner than the Batlapins; and after I left Molema's Town I was satisfied that these northern Barolongs, as they are called, are altogether of a higher grade not only than the Batlapins, but than the Mokalana, Marokana, or south-western Barolongs; in agriculture, however, and especially in cattle-breeding, they are far surpassed by the south-eastern Barolongs, who reside in and about Thaba Unshu, which contains over 10,000 inhabitants, the people living to a large extent upon their horse-breeding, which cannot be successfully carried on either in the Molapo district or in the Transvaal, on account of the horse-plague.

I did not omit next day to pay my visit to Molema. The chief received me in his little courtyard, and after introducing me to his wife and sons, whose apartments were close at hand, sent for some wooden stools for myself and Mr. Webb, who

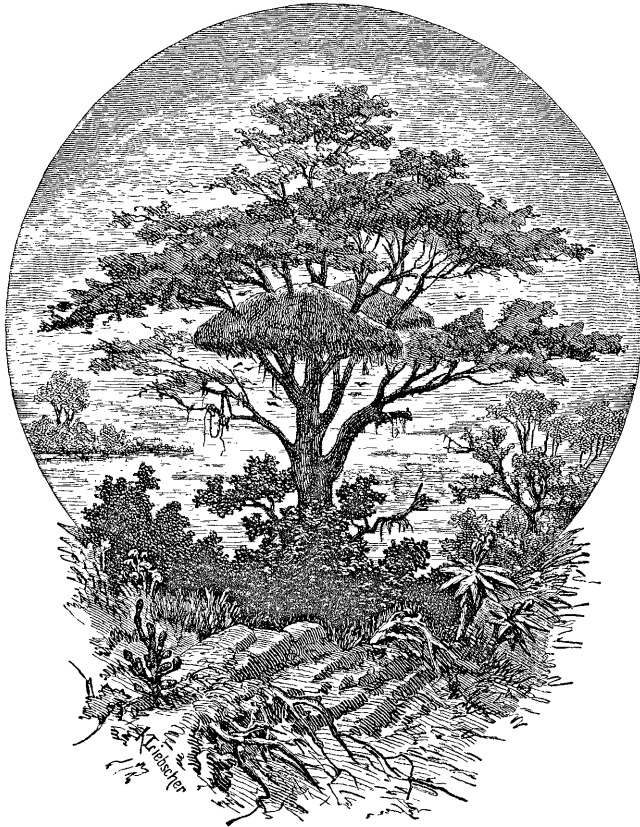
accompanied me. When we were seated, he begged me to give him the latest news from Cape Colony and the diamond-fields; he made inquiries about the proceedings of the English Government in the south, complained bitterly of the encroachments of the Boers in the east, and wound up by asking me whether I was an Englishman or a Boer. When Mr. Webb tried to explain to him that I was a Bohemian, he looked completely mystified; and having asked me my name, he made some old Barolongs who were sitting in the courtyard repeat both my name and my country over and over again, until the two words were sufficiently impressed upon his memory. Before I left I made him a promise that I would never return to his country without paying him a visit, and he assured me that I should always find a welcome.

Before I left Mr. Webb gave me two letters of introduction, one to Mr. Martin, a merchant residing in Moshaneng, the other to Montsua, which Mr. Martin would read and interpret to him.

On the 5th we started off northwards towards the foot of a wooded hill. Without deviating far from our proper route I had many opportunities of adding to my entomological collection; amongst other coleoptera I secured a large and handsome tortoise-beetle that I had never seen before, having its wing-sheaths dotted with greenish-gold and brown spots; its habitat apparently was on one of the commonest South African nightshades. The nest of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*) did

not fail also to attract my attention, abounding as they did in the camel-acacias along the way.

The day's march was brought to a close in a



NEST OF WEAVER-BIRDS.

depression near a brook flowing north-eastwards towards the Taung or Notuany River; and next morning, after making our way through a regular underwood of acacias, we came to a Makalahari

village, the population of which was composed almost exclusively of Montsua's shepherds and hunters. They gave us a most discouraging description of the road to Moshaneng, and declared it all but impossible for us to accomplish the journey to the royal residence with oxen so weak as ours. The road was indeed in a deplorable condition; the sand was very deep, and sorely tried the strength of our poor animals; the woods were full of holes a foot or more in depth, that had been rain-pools in the rainy season, and, besides this, the dust rose in clouds from the sand-drifts, parching our mouths and throats, and making our faces smart considerably.

In one of the smaller hollows now overgrown with grass, I found hundreds of a glistening blue *Litta*, marked with a rusty red spot, a species which I never met with but once again when I was on my subsequent journey in some woods not unlike these, about fifteen miles to the north of Shesheke. I also shot a buzzard of the kind known as the honey-buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) that was hovering over me.

The state of the road next day showed no improvement; and when we came to two salt-pans, nearly dry, where the sand was some fourteen inches deep, we almost despaired of getting across, but by the aid of various expedients, and by the exercise of much perseverance, we managed to reach the opposite side, where we halted to enjoy the rest that we felt both man and beast had so hardly earned. In the woods we found two kinds of

edible berries, one of which was the brownish-red fruit of the bluebush, used for shot, the other being a yellow berry something like our currant, called wild pomegranate by the Boers, and "geip" by the Korannas, by whom it is greatly relished.

On our way we saw in the distance a ridge of hills running transverse to our path, which some Barolongs that we met told us were Malau's heights; to the highest summit, which did not appear hitherto to have had any special distinction, I gave the name of Huss Hill. Reaching the saddle of the ridge we camped amongst some groups of shrubs overgrown with bryony, cucurbitæ, and other creepers. In some spreading acacias we observed shrikes, both long-tailed and black-and-white; large turtle-doves, too, seemed by no means rare, and for the first time I heard a note which I fancied must proceed from a *Psittacus*. Following the sound I was gratified by seeing a pair of the small grey parrots (*Psittacus Ruppelii*) with green breasts, and yellow spots on the head and wings. They are found beyond the Zambesi, and live in pairs in hollow trees.

As we went on we had alternately to descend steepish valleys, and to climb stony hills. Again we had to experience a lack of water; for ourselves, indeed, we were fortunate in being able to get some milk from a few Barolong people we chanced to see, but the deficiency was sadly felt by our poor panting bullocks.

Arriving at a wide valley running north by east,

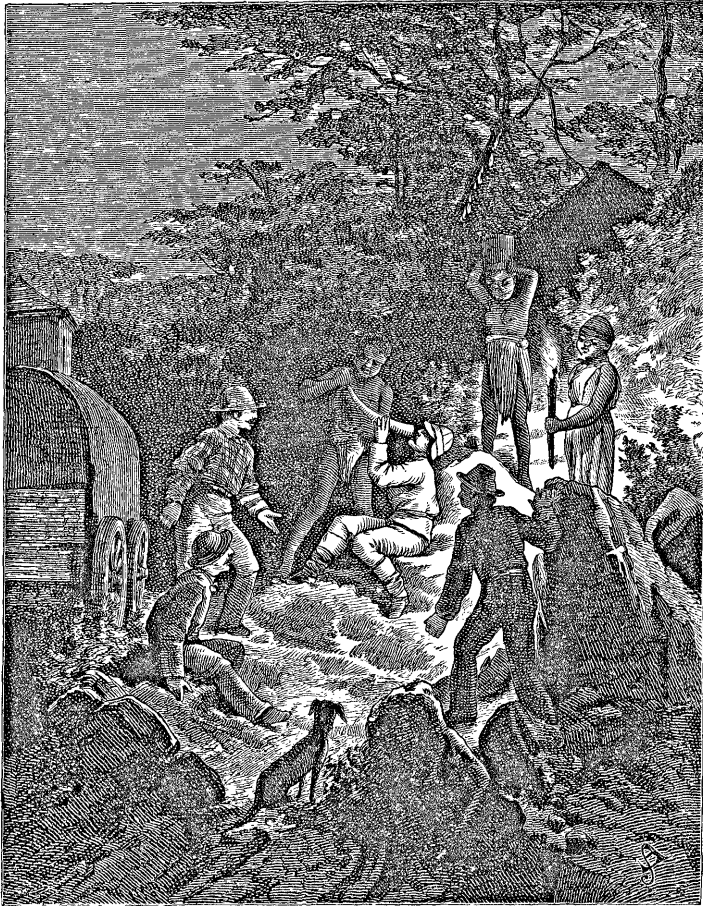
under the last spur of Malau's heights, we were relieved by the springing up of a cool breeze, which seemed to prognosticate rain. Our anticipations in this matter were not disappointed, and, before we had toiled on much farther, a refreshing shower came down, allowing us to fill all our vessels, and the bullocks to quench their thirst.



COLLECTING RAIN-WATER.

It had been my intention to push on so as to reach Moshaneng that day; but, coming to a valley where the pools were full of rainwater, and which looked very pleasantly sheltered, we were induced to stay there for the night, although it was about four miles short of the town.

In the woods were some fine trees, known amongst the Boers as beech, as well as a shrub erroneously called wild syringa. There were also wild olives



A REFRESHING DRAUGHT.

and karee trees, mohatla and marethwa bushes; some shrubs with winged seed-vessels, like the maple, several kinds of mimosas (*Acacia detinens*,

Acacia giraffa, *Acacia horrida*), and, on the hills, some aloes, that differed from those which I had seen further south. I shot a great grey lory, that from its cry is called the “go-away” by the English, whilst by the Boers it is known as the “grote



ROYAL VISITORS.

Mausevogel.” It builds right at the top of trees, whence it peers about at anything that excites its curiosity; whenever it utters its frightful cry its crest stands perfectly erect. I likewise brought down a brown fork-tailed kite, and two yellow-beaked hornbills. On the 11th I made some short, but not

unsuccessful, excursions, and secured, amongst other booty, some parrots, six lories, some widow-birds, hornbills, two sorts of cuckoos, a small red-and-green woodpecker with a red crest, and some shrikes.

We had now come about seventy miles from Molema's Town, having, about half way, entered upon the territory of the Banquaketse, in latitude $25^{\circ} 10'$ south. In the course of the afternoon we were honoured by a visit from some of the magnates from Moshaneng. A covered two-wheeled waggon, drawn by four horses, was seen skirting the wood, and making straight towards us. Our black man, Stephan, went to the horses' heads, whilst the occupants, four natives, alighted. The first to step out was a young man of about seven-and-twenty, who introduced himself as Mobili, the son of a Bechuana chief. He had known my friend F. in Kimberley, where his English education and knowledge of the language had for a time procured him an appointment as interpreter in the Courts of Justice. He was now, however, living as a South African gentleman, and was on a round of visits to several Bechuana chiefs. He had come from the king of the Bakuenas only a few days previously. Having shaken hands with F., he proceeded to introduce the three others. "These," he said, "are two of the most distinguished Bechuana kings. Montsua, king of the Barolongs, a wealthy and powerful tribe, and Khatsisive, king of the Banquaketse; and this," he added, pointing to the third, "is

Khatsisive's Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Banquaketse kingdom."

Montsua, a plump, jovial-looking man, of about fifty, inspired me with confidence immediately. Khatsisive, who was tall and scraggy, looked, as did also his Chancellor, as if he knew how to suit his furrowed countenance to circumstances. They were all in European costume, Khatsisive wearing a long overcoat and chimney-pot hat, while his Minister sported a "Menschikoff."

Mobili and Pit acted as interpreters, and during the conversation that ensued we were closely scrutinized by our visitors. Montsua assured me that I was very welcome to the neighbourhood of his residence at Moshaneng, explaining that he was not now living on his own territory, but on that of Khatsisive, his friend and ally, having quitted the Molapo some time since on account of the oppression of the Boers. He was so weary of the annoyances he suffered, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to leave Moshaneng, and to establish himself either at Poolfontein or on the Lothlakane, where he should be pleased if at any time I would pay him a visit.

I was very closely interrogated as to the object of my journey. In reply I exhibited some birdskins, which were regarded with some astonishment. Mobili interpreted my explanation of the process by which the skins were preserved; but the way in which the king kept shaking his head implied that it all surpassed his comprehension; and when

I advised him to be careful in handling them, as there was some poison used in preparing the plumage, he uttered a low cry of alarm, and instantly dropped the specimen he had in his hand. Mobili had translated my word "poison" by the words "molemo maschive" (i. e. bad medicine), which startled the king, as there is nothing of which the Bechuanas live in greater dread than subtle poison, even applying the name to medicines that fail to effect a remedy. Montsua and his companions were certainly a good deal disconcerted by my communication, for they turned up their coat-sleeves and began vigourously rubbing their fingers against the sand on the ground. They were very glad to avail themselves of the soap and water and towel, for which I immediately sent; but nothing seemed to make them quite comfortable, notwithstanding my assurance that the poison could have no injurious effect upon the human skin.

After shaking hands with us all round, and bestowing a friendly nod upon the servants, the two rulers over many hundreds of square miles remounted their waggon and prepared to start. Mobili had just taken the reins when King Montsua laid his left hand upon his shoulder, and with his right beckoned to me. As soon as I approached he made Mobili ask me what I had done with the "rumela," the letter of introduction that I had brought for him from Mr. Webb. I fetched the letter at once, as well as the other addressed to Mr.

Martin, which I asked might be delivered for me; at the same time I expressed my surprise that the existence of the letters should already be known at Moshaneng.

Montsua laughed, and said,—

“I knew all about the letters three days ago. While you were asleep two Barolongs came over from Molema’s Town; from them I heard of your arrival, and of the good effect your molemo had had upon Molema.”

On the afternoon of the 14th, I completed my journey to Moshaneng, the way lying through cultivated country, bounded on the east by an open plain, on the west by rocks, and on the south by wooded heights, which were the northern chain of Malau’s ridge, overlooking the town.

Malau’s ridge may be considered as the south-central portion of the Banquaketse heights, which are connected by the Lekhutsa and Makarupa hills with the western mountain groups in central South Africa.⁴

⁴ I consider that there are three distinct mountain-groups in Central South Africa; the Magaliesbergen in the east; the Marico heights in the west; and the hills in Matabele-land in the north.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM MOSHANENG TO MOLOPOLOLE.

King Montsua and Christianity—Royal gifts—The Banquaketse highlands—Signs of tropical vegetation—Hyæna-dogs—Ruins of Mosilili's Town—Rock-rabbits—A thari—Molopolole.

THE southern part of Moshaneng belonged to Molema and his Barolongs, and (excepting the ruined church and Mr. Martin's house) contained no buildings in the European style of architecture. The native huts were all of pure Bechuana construction, and owing to the limited space, were packed very closely together, although in the Baharutse quarter, separated by a valley and a stream, the farmsteads were much less crowded. I should estimate the population of the entire town to be about 7000; but out of this number nearly 1000 would be fluctuating, many of the inhabitants working occasionally for lengthened periods at the diamond-fields, or cultivating land at a distance.

The king's residence stood in the western part near the river-bank, and was surrounded by a courtyard containing two huts apiece for his five wives.

Here, as with not a few of the Bechuana tribes where Christian missionaries have begun to labour, a good proportion of the young people have professed to embrace the new doctrines, while the elders have clung to their heathen institutions. It soon became evident to Montsua that, although circumcision was not uniformly discarded, the young men and young women were reluctant to take part in the accustomed marriage orgies, and that many of the established festivities were very thinly attended. Amongst these ancient ceremonials was a dance known as the reed-dance, performed through the towns by a number of men in procession, blowing with such vehemence upon reed-pipes, that nearly always one or more of them would either drop down dead during the progress, or would subsequently die from the acute emphysema of the lungs brought on by the exertion. With reference to this time-honoured performance, Montsua gave notice that he should only undertake not to interfere with the "bathu ba lehuku,"¹ on condition that they all joined in it as heretofore. The dance was ordered by authority, but the converts, instigated by Molema, Montsua's own brother, refused to obey the king's injunction. Molema was himself urged on by Yan, the present black Barolong Christian preacher.

Baffled on this occasion, by the advice of his rain-doctor Montsua next required that the followers

¹ According to Mr. Mackenzie, the bathu ba lehuku are "the people of the word;" the people who receive God's word.

of the new faith should take parts in two ceremonies connected with rain-magic; first, in the letshulo-hunt appointed by the rain-doctors for the capture of certain wild animals, parts of which were employed in the incantations; and, secondly, in turning up a plot of ground for the service of the doctors, which was afterwards considered consecrated, and called "tsimo ea pulta," the garden of the rain. To both these demands the converts again resolutely refused to submit, giving the king to understand that while they were ready to submit to any other proof of their loyalty, since they had become "bathu ba lehuku" their consciences would not allow them to participate in the idolatrous usages of their forefathers.

Again thwarted, the king was driven to devise some other measures for bringing the recusants to obedience; the constitutional form of his government, and the large numbers of the adherents of the new creed both making it difficult to bring the offenders to justice. He soon tried another scheme. On the following Saturday, when both Molema and Yan had gone away into the country, he issued an order, and caused it to be circulated through the town, that no person would be allowed to attend the church on the next day. The women took up the matter; aware that Christianity raised them to an equality with their husbands, they came to the unanimous decision that no notice was to be taken of the king's order. Accordingly, Sunday came, and at the hour of service not a member of the congregation was absent from his usual place. The

king, perhaps, might have heard the singing from his own house; or perhaps there were plenty to inform him what was going on; at any rate, he got into a towering passion, and, seizing a long knife, rushed off to the church, which he entered just as one of the men, in Molema's absence, was delivering a



BAROLONG WOMEN AT MOSHANENG.

prayer of thanksgiving. His appearance naturally caused no little commotion amongst the worshippers, and in the midst of the excitement, he bellowed out a peremptory order that they should all disperse. One of the women calmly confronted him, and said that the "bathu ba lehuku" must finish their ser-

vice first. Enraged at the open defiance of his authority, and incensed by the temerity of the woman, he made such vehement and indiscriminate thrusts with his formidable weapon, that he quite succeeded in clearing the building.

Amongst the converts were one of his own daughters and her husband; at first he simply forbade her to leave her own house, but when he ascertained that she was visited there by one of the new community, who joined in hymns and prayers with her, he took her away from her husband, brought her back to his own residence, and obliged her to revert to the heathen custom of wearing nothing but a leather apron.

In course of time, however, as Montsua found that his opposition was of no avail, and discovered, moreover, that the converts not only remained just as faithful subjects as before, but were the most industrious and the most thriving of all his population, he grew weary of his persecution, and subsequently, when he and Molema separated, although he did not himself embrace the new faith, he so far favoured the cause of Christianity as to direct Yan, the Barolong, to continue preaching amongst the surrounding people, and to permit Molema to do the same in his town on the Molapo.³

³ It was by the Wesleyan Missionary Society that Christianity was introduced among the Barolongs. At the time of my visit, in 1873, Moshaneng was the most northerly station; but now that Montsua has settled in Lothlakane, there is no station further north than Molema's Town. Molema himself is still a

In acknowledgment of some trifling medical services that I had rendered to himself and his household, Montsua presented me with 1*l.*, and with some beautiful ostrich feathers, four black and four white, which he said were for my wife; he looked very incredulous when I told him that I did not possess a wife, and observed that I could keep the feathers until I had one. Besides this, his gratitude was so great that in return for my Snider-rifle he let me have five strong bullocks. By the assistance of Mr. Martin, and another resident merchant, I procured five more, so that with what I retained of my own, I had the satisfactory prospect of continuing my journey with a good team of fourteen.

My stay in Moshaneng was advantageous both to my ethnographical and entomological collections. I obtained a number of curiosities in the way of costumes, kiris, and other weapons, sticks branded with ornamental devices, water-vessels made from ostrich-eggs, wooden spoons and platters, and snuff-boxes made of gourd-shells or horn. One way or another, too, including duplicates, I collected as many as 350 insects, amongst which were a new cerambyx, another of the same family with black and yellow bands, and one copper-coloured and two

preacher. Mr. Webb has left. Mr. Harris is the present missionary in Lothlakane. The work of the Society has borne good fruit, inasmuch as it has refined many of the habits of the Barolongs, induced the rulers to adopt more considerate measures, and by the introduction of agriculture has done much to raise the social condition of the natives.