

This is about the only time in her life that she gets enough meat to eat! After the marriage every ox the bride and bridegroom kill for their wedding feast belongs partly to the father of the bride, and is sent to him. The head and about 40 lbs. of the flesh is his property entirely, and so strict is the custom, that if this rule is neglected, the marriage is annulled—the offence being considered so great that it can only be pardoned and wiped off by a present of fifteen or twenty head of cattle, and a dispute on such a matter has often given rise to a tribal war. Some of the cattle paid by the bridegroom to her father for his wife, are killed for the wedding-feast and a portion given to all the servants and retainers about the kraal, and the father sends the rest of the marriage cattle to be herded with his own. This custom never alters among the Basuto tribes—even when baptised and received into the Church, or converted by the French Missionaries, the Basutos are still compelled by their chiefs to pay cattle for their wives. A

Basuto mother says : 'It is the very least a man can do, to recompense me a little, for all the troubles, fatigue, and anxiety, which I have gone through, in bringing up his wife for him! It makes no difference in that respect to what religion she belongs, the trouble is the same.' There is joy in the kraal when a child is born, especially if it be a girl, a Basuto woman is wretched if she has no children, as she is intensely despised by everyone, if she has not had, at least, two. There is generally one who is the 'chief wife,' as the Basutos have several, and the others are inferior to her. At the birth of a girl, the family are delighted, the grandmother takes it up and exhibits it, gives it a slap, and then kisses it, saying, 'Luck! From this child come many herds of cattle.' To the father and mother, she says, 'You have no trouble until you have a boy child, as he will be a source of drain on your income and decrease your wealth.'

The father and mother have a curious way of addressing each other, for instance,

supposing that they have a boy named 'John,' the father would be called 'Ra-John,' 'Father of John,' and the mother, 'Ma-John,' or 'Mother of John'—the son also would address his father and mother as 'Ra-John' and 'Ma-John,' or 'Father and mother of myself.' This custom is especially mentioned by Moffat in his works. If a child dies, the next child is always called, very poetically, 'The Child of Consolation,' and the father and mother are addressed as 'The father (or mother) of the child of consolation'—in Sesuto, 'Ramothisidh.' The Basuto women are, as a rule, very faithful to their husbands, but a divorce is easily to be obtained. The greatest injury which a woman can do to her husband, among the Basutos, is to be unfaithful to her marriage vows, when he has gone to battle, or on a hunting expedition, for the strongest superstition prevails that in such a case he is sure to be wounded by his enemies, if engaged in war, or to miss his game, if out hunting. To obtain a divorce, the interested parties have first to go through a process called 'Ryosane,'

which consists of consulting the elder members of the kraal, who assemble a 'pitso,' or great meeting, to discuss the subject, which they do at great length. When they have decided to grant a divorce, the woman is ordered to return all the presents given to her by her husband; bracelets, earrings, bangles for the hands and feet, worn just above the ankle, made of brass, and milk-bags, to contain their favourite food of thick milk. These milk-bags are made of strong skins, brazed, dried, cleaned and prepared. Karosses, blankets, beads, rugs, and all the surviving cattle, have to be restored to her husband to constitute a divorce.

A widow may not re-marry until twelve moons have passed by, after that she is at liberty to do so, when the same ceremonies are gone through as before. If possible she marries her deceased husband's brother, and so carries on the name. Men also, always endeavour to marry their deceased wife's sister, as they say, 'Who else would take so much interest in, and be

good to, my children, as my late wife's sister?' They send any distance to secure them, and even take them away from their first husbands, if they can, when lawfully married.

The Basutos have a deep respect and affection for their mothers, their greatest oath is to swear by their mothers, and they consider it most sacred. They have a proverb, 'Tegôrno è Nano Tegudie,' a mother is like the cow which sustains the family in time of drought.

Referring to the scriptural story of Solomon's judgment of the two women and the baby, the Basutos say, 'See those two women standing before the king to be judged, one snatches the knife or assegai, with her bare hand, and allows herself to be cut, to save her child, *she* is the mother of the child, the other woman does not do so, but thinks only of herself.'

The men always have to pay their future father-in-law for their wives, the first payment is called 'Bojadi' so many heads of cattle, are given and accepted, according to

the supposed value of the bride-elect, her position in Basuto society, personal appearance, height, size, amount of beauty, etc. If she is fat, she is much more admired, and so is of course a more valuable possession. The son-in-law takes a very subservient position with regard to his father-in-law, and is always liable to be sent for, or called upon by the father of the bride, to do all kinds of menial work for him, he has to prepare skins, bray, dry, and clean them for him, even plough the fields and sow seeds for his father-in-law, and is virtually his servant. For the first year, the marriage is not considered completed, and the bride has to live with her husband in a kraal or hut, close to her father's home, until the birth of her first child, when her husband has to take a certain number of cattle, and present them to his mother-in-law. This ceremony is called 'Mokadee.' He is not allowed to speak to his mother-in-law, or even *look* at her, for the first year, (this is a custom that many people would like to see introduced in England). This is called

‘Anissibana.’ If the bridegroom happens to meet his mother-in-law anywhere, he hides his head and does not look at her, (like the ostrich).

Before engaging in war, the Basutos have to undergo a regular course of preparation on Thaba Bosigo. There lives the paramount chief, and this is his great stronghold. All the Basuto ‘disloyal’ armies repair to this mountain for three or four days to be thoroughly washed and ‘charmed’ as a safeguard against their enemies. The old women take a great part in this process, and they brew mystic concoctions, composed of herbs, something after the manner of the ancient Greeks before a battle. The old men and women have to wash these heroes before daylight with ‘witchcraft’ medicine, and then bathe them in the river. After this they are supposed to be purified; and on their return from the war they have to go through the same process again before they are allowed to enter the presence of a chief, or to return to their own homes. If they neglect this ceremony it is a great

offence, and may lead to their being punished by banishment from the country.

While on Thaba Bosigo, the natives also dance wild war-dances by the light of the moon. Like their neighbours the Zulus, when preparing for war, the Basutos take two bulls, one white and one black one, then they cut the skins of the poor beasts, so that they hang down from their backs on both sides, and leave them to go about like this until they die. If the white bull dies first, they consider it a bad omen, and that they themselves will lose the battle; if the black bull is the first to succumb, they look upon it as a sign that they will win the day and their enemies be vanquished.

These are of course entirely savage customs, and never practised save by the unconverted Kaffirs.

If the courage and strength of a given number of young men is doubted, they are tested by being confronted with a savage bull, and they have to show how quick and plucky they can be by the manner in which they despatch him. Nothing but little short



spears are given to them, and if they kill him off quickly they are considered fit to belong to a regiment, but if they are long about it and show a lack of smartness, it goes much against their record.

## CHAPTER V

### MOHALE'S HOEK

THESE were as yet peaceful times, and we all rejoiced very much when the Cape Government offered my husband the appointment of resident magistrate of Mohale's Hoek, after we had been for about six months at Advance Post. Little did we think of all that lay before us, when we joyfully packed up everything and started off, having sent on our furniture and luggage in two waggons, and we ourselves travelling in the light cape-cart, for Maseru—*en route* for our new station.

Our journey was pleasantly broken at two of the French Mission stations where we met with every sort of kindness and hospi-

tality, and were greatly interested in observing the results of the admirable course of training furnished to the Basutos, both men and women. The French Missionaries manage to get an immense amount of influence over the natives, and teach them many useful avocations. The stations were kept exquisitely clean and neat, and the inhabitants all looked very happy, bright and intelligent. We were shown all the arrangements of the missions, and were especially struck with the schools which presented a model of good management. Here the girls are taught to preserve fruit with great skill, and to do all kinds of work. Sacks upon sacks of peaches and apricots, dried in the blazing sun of the Basuto summer, were filled with fruit and put away for use in the winter. The girls also made a sort of maccaroni and vermicelli, and were taught to wash, iron, and mangle clothes. Mangling is done in a peculiar fashion throughout Basutoland, and also in the Orange Free State. The clothes are first sprinkled with water, folded and packed in a compact, flat, square

mass, a sheet is pinned together with the clothes in the middle and a blanket is fastened round the whole, and then the Basuto men and girls dance on these great bundles, a regular Kaffir dance, singing all the time a Sesuto song or hymn, clapping their hands and dancing wildly on the family washing. Strange as it may sound to English ears, this operation has the desired effect, and the clothes come out mangled to a turn.

The Basutos have many curious and original ideas and ways, which may be interesting to my readers to hear of, so I mention a few more of them. For instance, if a native comes to visit a friend from a long distance or a neighbouring country, and inquires after his health and well-being, whether the country is quiet, etc. If the prospects are peaceful, the host replies, 'We are sitting down, building houses,' meaning that all is quiet in the land, as otherwise they would not be so peacefully occupied as to be building houses, but on the contrary, would be sharpening their assegais, filling powder-horns, cleaning their guns and battle-axes,

storing grain in their mountain fastnesses, and otherwise employed in preparing for war.

The Basutos are well acquainted with our fables, which the missionaries have introduced and translated into Sesuto ; they have no books or letters of their own. They know the fable of the hare and the tortoise, but they say, ' Yes ; but a sitting hen never gets fat, she remains always thin and suffers hunger, for she rarely gets off the nest to seek for food.'

To our proverb ' One good turn deserves another,' they have an equivalent ; they say, ' One hand washes another !'

One of their peculiarities is that a Basuto cannot make a straight road, no matter how open is the country ; no one, however vast is his experience of natives, has ever seen anything but a crooked road made by a native of Basutoland. They cannot walk straight either, from the constant habit of carrying a gun, stick, or knobkerry, or something in the right hand, they always walk crookedly. They prefer a round-about road

as being safer, and consider short cuts dangerous, and say 'they cause a man to sleep in the veldt.' They quote as follows :

' A road is a road tho' worn to ruts,  
Let him who goes keep straight therein.  
But he who lacks and takes short cuts  
Gets but fools' praise and broken shin.'

The two things which most surprised the Basutos in the advent of the white man, were the horse and the saw.

The real history of the celebrated Basuto pony is this :

In 1840, a butcher in Grahams-Town named Canood imported from Scotland a number of Shetland ponies. These were lost about that time, and found their way into Basutoland, from whence comes the short, stout Basuto cob, which is so well-known for its endurance and wonderful sure-footedness.

Basuto ponies hardly ever fall, and when riding across country they carry one safely over rocks and great stones, up the steep mountain sides which they climb, and down the sharpest incline, perhaps nothing but a narrow sheep-walk at the edge of a deep

precipice, at the bottom of which you can just see the blue waters of a river foaming and rushing down to the sea. These ponies always keep close to the edge going up or down a ravine, and at first I did not like it, but soon became accustomed and never once had a fall. You can get a good pony there for £10 or £15, so plentiful are they, and everybody rides in Basutoland. I was very fond of my particular pony 'King.' He carried me well, and in him, as in others, you could see the trace of the Shetland ancestor, and compare with the original stock. The same little button-feet, long mane and tail remain to this day.

There are no canteens, inns, or hotels in Basutoland, and the laws are very strict, prohibiting the sale of all intoxicating drinks. Everyone has to get a permit from a magistrate before he can bring in any spirits. Of course, however, this law is constantly broken, and the inhabitants do very often manage to smuggle in what they want from the Orange Free State. The Basutos make two kinds of beer of their own. One is made of Kaffir

corn. The first process is this : the corn is carefully sorted and washed, then it is put into large stone pots, and hermetically sealed, and left for a time until the corn begins to sprout. It is allowed to do so, and is then taken out and dried in the sun, and ground into flour, a certain amount of which is set apart, and when it becomes sour they make a leaven from it, which is boiled with the flour, and allowed to ferment, drain, and left to stand. This Kaffir beer can be made so strong that a quart of it may cause a man to be intoxicated, but is generally made so weak that a man can drink a gallon without feeling the effect. They drink their beer out of the large native red clay pots.

The Basutos are very fond of honey-beer, which is made from the honey of the young bee. They put in a little bag of powdered herbs (which last for ever), to give it a flavour ; this is called in Sesuto 'drutsè.' This honey-beer can be made very strong, and is most sustaining. They can support life on very little. When a man is travelling



he carries his own commissariat for any distance on his back. He takes a quart of maize, or Indian corn, burns it, and then grinds it very fine. A tablespoonful of this in a pint of water serves him for a meal, three times a day. It tastes rather like toast and water. This is enough to sustain a Basuto for a long time. But if they capture any cattle in time of war, they are then allowed to eat as much as they like, and a Basuto can easily put away ten pounds of meat in a day.

We drove to Maseru, and after staying for a day and night with Mr and Mrs Rolland, went on to Mohale's Hoek, leaving all our worldly goods to follow in the waggons. My brother Alfred had left us some time before, and gone to Leribe as clerk to Major Bell.

We were delighted with the beauty of our new station nestling among the mountains, and within sight and sound of many waterfalls. The Residence was a comfortable red brick house, with a court-yard, and capital out-buildings, besides a large and beautifully

planted garden and orchard, full of peach, plum, and apricot trees.

To the children it seemed a paradise of delight, with its lovely flowers, and endless number of fruit trees. So prolific were the gardens and orchards, indeed, that we were able to supply the neighbourhood with fruit and vegetables. In fact this last move of ours seemed quite like a return to civilisation, inasmuch as not only were there two or three stores all doing a fairly brisk trade, but we found moreover, a pretty little church under the Bloemfontein Mission, where regular services were held by the Priest, the Rev. W. W. Stenson, who with his family lived close to us.

To these kind people we were indebted for several days' hospitality, our waggons not having arrived, and our house being as yet quite empty. However, it was not long before we quite settled down, and made ourselves comfortable enough. After a while we established a regular little farm at Mohale's Hoek, exchanged peaches for fowls, made our own butter, and cured and dried

our own hams and bacon. We also tried brewing at home, but the success of this experiment was something more than doubtful, the beer showing a tendency to disagree somewhat with such unwary travellers as allowed themselves to be captivated by its harmless appearance. An old Basuto woman also helped me to make vinegar from the plant, and it was under her able tuition that I learnt to dry grapes and make raisins. Another failure to which I must confess was my first attempt at jam-making, and as to this, a libellous story was in circulation. It was said that several pots of preserve which I made and sent as a slight offering of affection to my brother Alfred, went through some mysterious process of fermentation *en route*, and the first of these, when placed on the breakfast table, blew up to the ceiling, and descended in a sticky shower upon his head, and upon a new suit of clothes which he had just imported from England!

We all used to work very hard when the fruit was ripe, drying peaches and apricots. Every day two hundred or three

hundred native women came to the Residency, each with a fowl, or fresh eggs, or pumpkins, to exchange for a large basket of fruit; and they looked very picturesque as they went away in a long procession, dressed in their embroidered skins, bearing each a basket of peaches on her head, and generally a baby. These they carried slung on behind, or sitting astride on their hips. The babies, as a rule, wore no clothes at all, only earrings, and a string of beads. They were often very pretty, with large brown eyes like velvet. A hundred or two of men and women always remained all day, and cut up peaches and apricots for drying, eating as many as they liked. All they wanted as payment for their day's work was a large basket of peaches. The fruit was cut up in quarters, the core cut out and put on pieces of corrugated iron and placed in the sun, brought in at night or during rain, and the peaches were turned over every day. Some were dried only, but others were sprinkled all over with sugar, and when dry were very good to eat without being cooked. I used to exchange bags

of these peaches and apricots with the traders, who gladly gave me groceries to the value of a shilling per pound, as they were so useful in winter when no fruit was to be had in those parts. Sometimes, but not often, an enterprising Dutch boer and his 'vrouw,' would bring a waggon into the station loaded with all sorts of good things; cheeses, bread, vegetables, and delicious fresh butter, which they sold in large milk-tins, the best butter that I ever tasted.

The waggon always went back empty, as everybody rushed to get the good things, and the worthy Dutch 'vrouw' was graciously pleased with the appreciation shown for these luxuries from the Free State, and promised to repeat the visit very soon. She was delighted with some fruit, for our orchards at Mohale's Hoek were famous all over the country. How the good soul's eyes glistened with delight when I begged her to take back as much fruit as she liked to carry in her empty waggon. Baskets and basketsful of peaches and apricots were quickly filled by herself and 'the boss' (her husband),

and when they got home the 'vrouw' made a quantity of jam for the winter with some of the fruit, and dried the rest and put it in large sacks. Fruit was so plentiful on this station that we fed our pigs chiefly upon peaches, and they got very fat on them.

We were sitting in the great court-yard under the trees one day, watching the Basuto women taking the dried fruit into the store-room from out the blazing sun, when Harry and Nancy suddenly appeared before us, each with a horrible mouth-instrument which the natives called 'fou-fou,' this they proceeded to play upon. Nancy danced in the most absurd manner, puffing out her cheeks, like a cherub on a tombstone, and doing all sorts of Basuto steps with the gravity and earnestness which characterised all her proceedings. Harry joined her in this charming duet. They then talked Sesuto, a little Fingo, Kitchen-Dutch, and a few words of French. But finding the sun very hot, they retired after a time, stewed, but rejoicing. They were very amusing sometimes. Harry imitated both Arthur and

me exactly, and gave Arthur long lectures in his own voice and style, 'Now Pappa, why *are* you so naughty, you'll never be a big man, you know, if you are such a baby,' and so on; and we had the satisfaction of knowing that all our exhortations were treasured up with a view of reproducing them afterwards in burlesque. Of course we stopped and severely reprov'd the young monkey, if we heard him.

Extract of a letter from my husband to his father.

'MOHALE'S HOEK,  
' 9th January, 1879.

'MY DEAR FATHER,—We are all in a state of "stata quoa" as a man wrote the other day! We are all well. Fanny was to have taken the children and started for Rouxville yesterday to see a doctor, but heavy rains have come on, and the Cornet Spruit, a pass on the river which divides us from the Orange Free State, is impassable; in such cases we are regularly imprisoned here, for the river almost surrounds us, and stops

both the roads to the Orange Free State and also to Mafeteng. I hope it will go down in a few days, but the rain is still falling. We heard by last post that war had been declared with Cetewayo, and are very anxious in consequence. Though I sincerely hope that the next news will be that of a victory, so complete as to scare the malcontent party here from all idea of mischief. There is uneasiness about, and the traders and others have begun to feel it. As is usual in such cases, all here depends on what happens in Zululand, we are so near it, and messengers are known to have been sent thence, threatening the Basutos with vengeance, if they don't assist the Zulus.

'Doda, the Basuto chief, has been liberated from the jail at Quithing, by a friend who wrenched the padlock off the door in the night, from outside, and let out all the prisoners. There was no police sentry put on at night, but Austin (the magistrate of Quithing) was daily expecting the consent of the governor's agent, to Doda's removal to the Colony, which had actually been given,



but by some mistake the letter miscarried and did not arrive until two days after Doda's escape. He has not since been heard of. If disturbances do occur here, no doubt he and Moirosi will be again put forward as tools to commence them, and to be supported or disowned as may be convenient to the greater chiefs, when they see how things eventuate. That this was the case in the former "Moirosi affair," I have no doubt, whatever.'

Extract of a letter from my husband to his father :

'MOHALE'S HOEK, 12th March, 1879.

'MY DEAR FATHER,—We are again without English letters, but the telegram informs us that the news of the disaster at Isandhlana had been received, and that reinforcements are on their way. They will have an easy task enough, I fancy, for the Zulus are more than half beaten already, as far as one can judge from the news from Natal. Cetewayo seems to be amusing himself by putting his Indunas, victorious or otherwise, to

death promiscuously, and must be a pleasant sort of person to serve. He is described as being terribly shocked at the appearance of his favourite Inlwana regiment when he saw it after Isandhlana, and could not believe that what he saw was but the remains of it; in fact, as with Moshesh at Thaba Bosigo, they seem really more frightened at their victory than they would have been at a defeat. "They fell together in one place," the Zulus said of the gallant Twenty-fourth, whose bravery seems to have made a great impression on them.

'Littleton writes me (the Hon. W. Littleton, private secretary to Sir Bartle Frere) an account of the deaths of Coghill and Melvill, the former of whom sacrificed himself to save the latter, who was wounded and struggling in the river, his horse having been shot. Coghill's horse was also shot whilst he was helping Melvill, and as he was then lame—the reason of his being in camp, for he was properly Glyn's galloper (Colonel Glyn commanded the 24th Regiment)—he could not save himself on foot, nor could

Melville, who was wounded, so they sat down revolver in hand to meet their fate, and were found by an N. N. C. officer, who had escaped and who led a party to the spot, dead, with several Zulu corpses round them. Coghill was clear of the river, and could easily have escaped had he not turned back to the rescue of Melville and the N. N. C. man, whose horse had kicked him off into the river, and who was the only one of them who succeeded in escaping. The Zulus won't attack Ekowe, which is too strongly intrenched, I think, to please them. Walker is there (now Major - General Forestier Walker of the Scots Guards), and they are, I fear, on short rations and very crowded. The Zulus are all in strong force in the neighbourhood, and it is thought impracticable to relieve the place until reinforcements arrive.

'For Basutoland news, Griffith (Colonel Griffith, the Governor's agent and chief magistrate of Basutoland) remains at Phatlallu waiting for a couple of guns which are to come up. Ayliff (Minister for

Foreign Affairs at the Cape) is also coming up, I believe. Moirosi is on his mountain, and his people are, many of them, pretending that they never had anything to do with him. I am told that two of Moirosi's headmen came over in quite an innocent manner to Griffith to ask if their cattle, which had been sent over to this side for safety, and collared by Lerothodi on their arrival, might be restored to them. As both gentlemen had undoubtedly been in rebellion, Griffith took them prisoners and sent them to Palmietfontein.'

At this time we had very great difficulty in getting any servants at all. I had to work very hard myself, and do all sorts of things, and became greatly knocked up, as I had to look after my little children, besides constantly having to cook and do much of the housework, see after the cows and horses, superintend the bread-making, curing hams and bacon, making fresh butter, drying the sheepskins and preparing them, all the fruit-drying, besides looking after the garden,

wheat-fields, etc. etc., and seeing that the fruit trees were properly irrigated by water laid on from the large pond. Besides all this, there was the washing to be done, and I had to help with the mangling, and often do the ironing myself! My husband was occupied the whole day in court, or riding long distances to settle various disputed points.

At last we made up our minds to get a cook over from Bloemfontein. Accordingly I wrote to one of the clergymen's wives there, and asked her to recommend me a respectable person, and agreed to give good wages, etc.

After much delay, we were informed that a 'treasure' had been found for us, and was willing to come to the Hoek—a widow and an Englishwoman of great respectability, etc. I waited with intense anxiety and impatience to see the waggon which contained my new cook, and flattered myself that at last peace and rest lay before me! When lo! a terrible female presented herself, with her son and heir *also*, a big boy of twelve years old or so. She immediately began to complain,

and abused me, declaring that she 'had been deceived' in very gruff and somewhat incoherent tones. 'I was told as this were a large town, and I wouldn't stay 'ere, no, not if you was to pay me ever so. *I am a lady, and haccustomed to heverythink *anonymus*.*' What she meant by this I never could discover, but suppose it was intended to crush me at once! 'This 'ere place would *never* suit *me*, m'am. I am a lady as 'as a very delicate constitooshun, and suffers much from consumption, 'eart complain, besides haricot veins (varicose veins) and browntitus (bronchitis), so you'll 'ave to send me back again at once; but I don't mind staying a day or two just to oblige you, and to take a rest.' I soon discovered that the 'treasure' was by no means an acquisition (nor a teetotaller). As she remarked herself, 'I feel quite an "anteloper" in such a savage place' (meaning interloper), 'and I do assure you, mum, that among all these blacks, I am nothing but a syphon' (cipher). It was very amusing to hear her talk, she used so many long words that she

couldn't understand; but she was no good as a servant, and I was thankful to see her depart with her little boy. She refused to let him work or do anything, however light; as she said, 'Is poor dear papa was a *gentleman*, and would *never* 'ave let him come to such a savage place.' She could not make out why *we* were living in such a place as the Hoek, and was much alarmed (as she had only lived in Bloemfontein herself, and never been into the country), to see us amusing ourselves by throwing assegais for practice. The natives, in their turn, were highly amused at her appearance and fine airs, and especially one day, when she asked leave to take a short ride, and went out with her hair streaming down, and a large shawl tied round her instead of a skirt, while a very long blue gauze veil floated from her hat. The Basutos were much delighted at this costume. They are great mimics, and can take off the white people to perfection.

I have overheard the Basuto servants amusing themselves by talking exactly like myself! One, especially, more clever than

the others, gave a performance, showing how I walked, entered a room, bowed to a friend, got up and sat down, etc. Having borrowed one of my hats and gowns, she sailed about, with a large parasol, much to the delight of her audience.

We had on the whole, many sources of content at Mohale's Hoek. Among these were the long drives into the Orange Free State, and cross-country rides, on our Basuto ponies, which are very sure-footed little animals, accustomed to scramble up and down the most breakneck looking places, while the beautiful climate and fresh mountain air made the mere fact of living a delight. Occasionally Mr Bowker would ride over from the Orange Free State, and spend a day and night at the Residence, or our two Scotch friends, Mr Donald Fraser and his brother Douglas, would come and cheer us up with the latest news, so breaking the pleasant monotony of our existence.

But this peaceful time was destined to be all too short, for the air now began to be filled 'with wars and rumours of wars.'



At Mohale's Hoek we were only a few days' journey by short cuts through the mountains from Zululand, and it was in the last days of January, 1879, that there came to us through the native runners the appalling news of the disaster at Isandhlana, and of the death of so many of our old acquaintances and friends of the Twenty-fourth. We had known most of the officers of the regiment well when they were stationed at Cape Town, especially poor Captain Degacher and Lieutenants Coghill, Hodson, Daly, and Porteous, all of whom were among the killed. Not only had we to grieve for the personal loss of so many brave men, but this catastrophe was indeed the beginning of all our troubles, as Cetewayo kept perpetually sending messages into our country, with the object of stirring up the Basutos to join him in Zululand against the English Government. Zulu refugees kept constantly coming into Basutoland at this time, bringing, of course, the most contradictory accounts of the progress of the war.

The news of the massacre at Isandhlana

created the utmost excitement and consternation amongst the Basutos, and had of course the worst possible effect on the natives generally throughout South Africa. Our people became more and more sullen every day, and we felt that there were indeed 'parlous times' before us, no one knowing what a day might bring forth.

Just at this time a baby boy was born to us. Harry and Nancy were much pleased with their little brother Hugh, and the Basutos always made a great pet of him. He was the first white baby who had been born at the Hoek; and was always called 'Doda' by them, after the rebel chief who escaped from prison. Within a few days of the event, my husband received orders from Colonel Griffith, the governor's agent, to join him at the camp, Patlahlas Drift, with as many men as he could collect, Colonel Griffith having already moved to the camp with 1200 loyal Basutos, and 400 colonial troops. My husband started immediately, leaving us all and the Residency in charge of his clerk, Mr Carlisle. Then followed a

terrible time of anxiety and trouble in the Hoek, as Arthur could not be spared to return to the magistracy, but remained with Colonel Griffith, to whom he acted as *aide-de-camp* at the siege of Moirosi's Mountain.

Having formerly served as an officer in the Sixth Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), my husband's knowledge and experience proved invaluable all through the rebellion of Moirosi and the subsequent revolt of almost the entire Basuto nation.

Colonel Griffith afterwards wrote to him as follows :

'I have submitted your name as my staff officer, and have taken the opportunity of again alluding to your coolness and bearing under fire, when carrying messages for me on the 8th April (attack on Moirosi's Mountain).'

I may just add that my husband's bravery and courage were greatly admired by the Basutos themselves, who gave him the name of 'The Lion.'

## CHAPTER VI

### MOIROSI'S MOUNTAIN

BEFORE going any further in this slight sketch of the siege of Moirosi's Mountain, it may be as well to state briefly that Moirosi was in reality a Baphuti (not a Basuto), chief of a tribe living in the Quithing district at a south-east corner of Basutoland, who had been conquered about fifty years before by Moshesh, then the paramount chief of Basutoland, and had consequently become with his followers the subjects of the 'Chief of the Mountain.'

Moirosi, being old and feeble, was almost entirely under the influence of his son Doda, a very troublesome and mischievous man, who, after repeated insults to his magistrate,

was, together with some of his followers and hangers-on, imprisoned and heavily fined. But the prison in which he was confined, being a mere shell, and the inmates very insufficiently watched, he one day contrived to escape, and with the rest of the tribe, now declared war against the English Government, and fled to the famous Moirosi's Mountain, an almost impregnable natural fortress in the Quithing territory.

The colonial government thereupon called upon the Basutos through the governor's agent, Colonel Griffith, to punish these rebels and force them to submit. The then loyal Basuto chiefs promptly obeyed the call, and in April, 1879, the first storming of Moirosi's Mountain took place with a combined force of colonial troops from the colony and Basuto levies.

Extract of a letter from my husband to his father, Sir Henry Barkly, April 9th, 1879.

'CAMP, MOIROSI'S MOUNTAIN.

'MY DEAR FATHER,—I have no writing-paper left, and scribble a line on the back of

a telegram, just to say that, as you will probably learn from the papers, we made an unsuccessful attempt to storm Moirosi's Mountain yesterday. The place is far worse than we thought, and one can't really realise its strength unless actually on the mountain.

'The stone walls or schantses are built marvellously high and solid, and command the whole face of the mountain. The ascent is far more difficult than one would think from looking through even good glasses from the bottom of the hill.

'We shelled for about an hour and a half and then tried to get up in vain; had about thirty killed and wounded, and eventually had to get under the lowest schantse, which we couldn't get up, and under the ledge below it.

'As it grew dark, by keeping up a tremendous fire on all the loopholes of the schantses, and the field guns (cannon) playing on them over our heads, we were enabled to get down the wounded and retire. The fire was something awful, and the stones came rattling

down upon us by thousands from all the schantzes thrown by the rebels.

'We were from 5.30 A.M. to 8 P.M. o'clock on the mountain, without food of any sort. Poor Surmon of the police is shot through the lungs, and not expected to live. Grant led the storming party very gallantly, and the Cape Mounted Rifles behaved very well. I was carrying orders backwards and forwards all day, and was fortunately not hit, though of course much fired at.

'This morning I assisted at three amputations. One poor fellow died ; I was holding his pulse.'

Extract from my husband's letter to myself :

*'CAMP, Saturday, April 12th.*

'The postboy has been waiting all this time at the standing camp for our letters, which we sent by the other bank of the river. I am now sending a man to tell him to go on, and he will take this. We are all well here. Colonel Brabant arrived yesterday with about a hundred and fifty men.

A new place has been found for the guns, which commands the mountain top completely, and we hope that by shelling from there we can soon make the place too hot for the enemy, who can be plainly seen, and even recognised from this point. To-day Griffith is going to have notice given by shouting to the enemy to send down their women and children (of whom they have a number on the mountain), and if they won't, they must take the consequences.

'I had a good day's fishing yesterday in the Orange River, and a splendid swim. The nights are very cold now, and the patrol tents we have not over watertight when it rains; still we are comfortable enough, and the life is healthy.

'I go to have a chat with the wounded men nearly every day. It is not very pleasant work, but they like it, poor fellows, and I have just got a message from one—the Sergeant Scott whose hand was blown off—asking me to come and see him. One of his bandages slipped off last night, and he has lost a great deal of blood, and is very



weak. He is a gentleman, and one of the finest young fellows, physically and morally, I ever saw. I am very sorry for him.

‘Little Daumas, the son of the French missionary, is a splendid fellow, as gentle as a woman and as brave as a lion. When others were running to get out of fire, he walked along as unconcerned and smiling as usual.

‘Please send me an air cushion and a little currant jelly, and a few odds and ends for the wounded. I gave them the biscuits you sent, and they made short work of them.’

The following account, extracted from the *Colonies and India*, June 28th, 1879, gives a good general *resumé* of both affairs :

‘Being by this time convinced of the impossibility of carrying the place by assault, Colonel Griffith ordered the men to be withdrawn, to save any further sacrifice of life. Then began the hazardous task of removing the killed and wounded from under fire, which was effected without a casualty, plenty of

volunteers coming forward for the work from the Cape Mounted Rifles. One body, however, that of Private Braine, C.M.R., killed early in the attack, could not be brought away. Captain Surmon, badly wounded (since dead), was found by the guidance of a native servant who had remained by his master all day. Several other acts of personal bravery are testified to, such as that of Sergeant Scott, coolly exposing himself, but carefully considering the safety of his comrades, whilst he threw the shells into the enemy's schantzes, and that of Private Peter Brown, C.M.R., who, to relieve the agony of his wounded comrades, went twice through a shower of bullets carrying water to them; whilst thus engaged, Brown received a severe wound in the leg, and immediately his right arm was broken by a bullet, and so he fell beside the men to whose assistance he had gone so bravely. The conduct of civil surgeons Kannemeyer and Daumas, in looking after the wounded under fire, has also received special notice.

‘Mr Arthur C. S. Barkly (son of Sir Henry Barkly, G.C.M.G.), the magistrate of Cornet Spruit district (afterwards commandant and staff officer to Brigadier-General S. Clarke), who arrived in camp the previous day, and volunteered his services (as an old Carabineer officer) to Colonel Griffith, is particularly mentioned as having rendered valuable assistance in conveying orders to the other officers, in doing which he was exposed to the direct fire of the enemy’s sharp-shooters.

‘After the failure of the attempt to storm the enemy’s position, and awaiting the arrival of heavier cannon, the investment of the mountain was continued, pickets being posted day and night around three sides of it, the fourth being a perpendicular krantz of many feet in height.

‘Notwithstanding all the vigilance and precautions taken, one of the pickets, consisting of a troop of the 3rd Yeomanry, were surprised on the night of the 29th inst. About two hundred of the enemy rushed into their camp, overpowering the

sentries, and assegaing some of the men in their tents. The yeomanry, after six hours' fighting, often hand to hand, beat them off, but not without sustaining a loss of six colonists killed and fifteen wounded.'

Extract from *Colonies and India*, June 28th, 1879 :

'At this time the Imperial troops, under Lord Chelmsford, were endeavouring with the utmost exertions to reach Ulundi, the Aldershot of Zululand, under great disadvantages of every kind, Cetewayo doing his utmost with thousands of his Zulu warriors to try and intercept and fall upon our troops on their way to Ulundi. Nearer home, within the Cape dependency, only a short distance from Zululand, in Basutoland, our colonial forces are still engaged with the rebel chief Moirosi. The mountain stronghold where the chief and his followers have taken their position, has proved to be a most difficult place to attack. There is but one path leading to the summit

which is fortified by strongly-built stone walls, arranged with great skill, so that the lower ones are commanded, and can be enfiladed by those above them. They are pierced with double rows of loop-holes, and in most cases are situated on the verge of steep rocks, which render them almost inaccessible from below. The mountain was crowded with every kind of stock, and defended by several hundred Baphuti rebels, under Moirosi.

‘When Colonel Griffith first invested it, two seven-pound field guns were placed in position to fire upon the fortifications and shell the defenders. The guns did very little damage to the walls, but the enemy appeared to be driven from behind them, as many were seen to fly.’

My husband was in constant communication, both by telegraph and post, all through the Basuto campaign with Sir Bartle Frere, Mr Littleton, and Mr (now Sir Gordon) Sprigg. Sir Bartle Frere constantly asked his opinion on the subject of the disarmament question, etc., and

Arthur always replied to the same effect, 'that some fighting there must now be, and that the stronger we are seen to be, the less fighting we shall have to do.'

Extract of a letter from Arthur to myself:

'CAMP, MOIROSÍ'S MOUNTAIN,  
'April 23rd, 1879.

'We have still no ammunition and are at a standstill, excepting that strong patrols have been sent out after some thieves who have been stealing horses, etc., at about thirty miles from this. Davies (commandant) is there with some natives, and a troop of yeomanry have gone too, but no doubt the natives will bolt to the mountains as soon as they come near them. I must stop and see the end of this affair. This place cannot be stormed unless all the schantses are fairly breached, for they are inaccessible without ladders, and breaching would be a difficult job, the mountain is such an extraordinary natural fortress, and almost im-

pregnable, very hard to take even if we had lots of guns and unlimited ammunition; but I believe that if they can get four guns, or even three, into position on the heights around, which all command the mountain, the fire will become too hot for anyone to live up there. It is marvellous how the cattle on the mountain manage to hold out; a good many are dead, but some seem healthy enough still. We are quite close to it here and have a fine view of everything, and are only waiting for the guns to come up to attack the mountain. They were ordered up at once by Sprigg on receipt of Griffith's telegram. We are very short of shot for the two guns we have, but have got the mountain now commanded from two sides, and will make the rebels' lives a burden to them. When we get a couple more guns and complete the circle of fire nothing can live on the mountain, I feel certain.

*'April 27th.*—They are getting short of water now on the mountain, and the cattle, poor things, are dying fast. We command

the only spring they can get to, and have shot several men going to it and they are now afraid to go there. Before Griffith got the second gun up into the new position, he sent a messenger to call to Moirosi to send down his women and children, but the old savage refused. The reason being, I suspect, that he has two of Letsie's on his mountain married to one of his sons, and thinks he will punish the paramount chief, who is angry with him, by keeping them there.'



## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE IN CAMP

I WILL not attempt to give anything like a detailed account of the Basuto campaigns, which has already been most ably done by others better fitted for the task ; but I think that a few short extracts from my husband's letters written at this time may prove interesting, and therefore subjoin the following:

'CAMP, MOIROSI, *2nd May*, 1879.

'I came down here yesterday with Griffith, and shall be back at Moirosi's Mountain tomorrow. This camp is better pitched, quieter, and more conveniently situated than that on the mountain. The hospital is here and three or four troops of yeomanry.

' One is out of hearing of the perpetual "pop-pop" of the pickets, which is a blessing, It will be "bang-bang" now, however, for the shells are up at last, and I hope will soon rout out Moirosi.

' Thanks for the loaf; there being no bread in camp, it was very welcome. The dried fruit I will take back to my mountain fastness to-morrow.

' *5th, Camp, Moirosi's Mountain.*—Came back here yesterday just in time for a little excitement, for last night the enemy tried to cut off the picket on the saddle rock, just beyond our camp, and very nearly succeeded. At about eleven o'clock just as we were going to sleep, a sharp fire from the pickets roused us, and a moment after it we heard bullets whistling through our camp. There was a tremendous scuffle for coats, revolvers, etc., and we all tumbled (literally, some of us) out of the tent; the police turned out smartly, and off we went, up the rocks to the "saddle." The gun at the point above us was now firing over our heads. Just at the "saddle" foot we came upon a wounded