

met, close to it a dam, the reddish water of which supplied the indwellers and animals alike. I was often obliged to halt at these houses for rest and food, and always found the people hospitable, and exceedingly tiresome.

On entering, the first word would be "*Affsaal?*" Then the fat *vrau* would step forward, holding out her big soft hand, the entire family, and anyone else who might be there, following suit. There is an odd lack of heartiness about a Boer's hand-shake; it is just a limp touch, very unlike an honest English grip. Weak coffee would then be handed round; this, by the way, they drink all day. This proceeding was always followed by an exchange of tobacco pouches and the never-varying questions as to where I was bound, from whence I had come; the weather is hot, cold, or dry, as the case may be. The ground once broken, they would entertain me with not a few lies as to the extent of their

stock, or boasts of their shooting. At eight o'clock prayers and psalms for an hour, and then to bed. The latter is generally a home-made affair of wooden framework, called a "kartel." Strips of raw hide are stripped across for the support of an enormous feather-bed; it is not at all uncommon for the whole household, regardless of age, sex, and relationship, to share the bed in common. The floors of the rooms are generally plastered with cow-dung; this one does get used to, as it is not objectionable when dry. The best room is often smeared with coats of bullock's blood, until it looks and shines like ebony.

At the time at which I write, the country was suffering from a severe drought. The house at which I was staying was situated on a flat, monotonous, red plain. The dry, hard, brackish earth was covered with short, leafless Karroo bushes, small *kopjes* of red brown iron-stone dotting it here and there.

The leaves of the prickly pear had turned from a brilliant green to a sickly blue, and almost all the dams had dried into dirty red-brown pools. The sheep staggered about, fainting from weakness and starvation, unable when down to rise to their feet again, cattle wandered about unsteadily, moaning for want of food, whilst the pitiless sun poured down its scorching rays from a glaring white sky. The only green things visible were the milk bushes—an *euphorbia* of a poisonous nature—that grew like long thin fingers pointing to the cloudless sky. The scene made an indelible impression upon me. I seemed to have arrived at “the land of desolation,” and I made up my mind to push on northwards. However, my new friend advised me to go south, and try my luck in British Kaffraria. I was obliged to wait a week longer, as my horse had become miserably thin; the poor fellow would come and almost beg for food. I was obliged to feed him as best I could on

scraps of bread, a handful of mealies, or a few green weeds out of the scanty garden that was kept going from a well. There were plenty of springbok about, but too thin to be worth shooting.

At last I started on my way back from this land of drought. Avoiding the inns to save expense, I camped out at night under a bush, and hobbled my horse, giving him a bundle of forage, obtained at an inn sometime during the day. A horse's usual feed at the Cape consists of a sheaf of oats, cut into three-inch pieces by fixing a reaping-hook in a hole in the manger. My own lunch was a piece of bread and *biltong* (dried beef or venison).

It was refreshing on reaching Cradock to see the green trees and the mountains once more. I called on Mabel, and told her of my altered plans, and heard that a friend of mine had obtained my last post at Mr Barker's. Leaving the next day, I rode

sixty miles, passed through the pretty little town of Bedford, on the Kagha River, and reached Adelaide on the Koonap, where I stayed a week with some relations who owned a small farm.

There was no game to hunt here, so I amused myself walking down the river, shooting *logavaans* with a small rifle. They are useless, except for the sake of a lump of fat which is found inside them, and which makes the best oil in the world for cleaning firearms.

Whilst here, the startling news came of the breaking out of the Zulu War, and filled me with the idea of offering myself as a volunteer. The next day on my journey I resolved to sell my horse at East London, go up to Natal by a coasting steamer, and join the forces. What did it matter what I undertook? I was young and strong, with five pounds in my pocket, besides having a horse and rifle. I felt as

lighthearted as any adventurer of olden tale, and, no doubt, had a devil-may-care way of taking the vicissitudes of life.

Sleeping at Alice that night, I arrived at King William's Town the next day, and put up at a hotel. Seeing a poster with a notice of a sale of horses to be held the following day, I rode up with mine, and requested the auctioneer to sell it with saddle and bridle just as it stood. It was knocked down for £20 to a Major H——, who put to me some questions concerning it. Having informed him of the horse's good qualities, and the distance I had ridden him, we got into conversation. He had only arrived a few days before from Natal for the purpose of buying horses for the remounts ; he required a hundred and twenty to take to Natal overland.

Here was my chance. He was an Englishman, only stationed a year in Natal, not used to Cape travelling, and unable to speak any of the native languages.

We had arranged to meet again the next day, so I determined to offer him my assistance, did so, and it was accepted willingly. He took me to the Government Compounds, where I saw some fifty horses he had bought, he had certainly given good prices for them, and declared that bargaining through an interpreter was not satisfactory.

He had put advertisements in the local papers, notifying he was open to buy mounts, and dealers and farmers were bringing in horses every day. Remaining at the Compound all day, we examined a good many and bought a few. When he found that a horse was suitable, he left it for me to buy, which I did to his satisfaction. He asked me to dine with him that night, and after dinner I mentioned my desire to go to the front. He promised to aid me with all his power, and telegraphed the next morning for permission to employ me to assist him on the journey with the horses. The request was

granted in a few days' time in a despatch that also fixed my salary at 16s. 6d. a day. He congratulated me heartily, and I thanked him in like terms. My satisfaction at earning money for the first time in my life was great. I was soon rigged out in a plain undress uniform, and the days passed pleasantly until we had made up the full complement of horses. This done, we started on our long journey. Our route lay through Komgha, the Transkei, Tembuland and Pondoland, a distance of about 450 miles.

The journey was rather uneventful. The country through which we passed was most beautiful. Sometimes we rode through a perfect forest of tambookie grass, that waved in places above the horses' heads, or threaded our way through deep gorges, swam rivers, and climbed mountains.

We had sixteen bastard Hottentot drivers, besides two who acted as servants and

led the pack - horses These fellows make capital grooms, but are unmitigated scoundrels otherwise. At this time a good many of them were used as jockeys, and rode some of the best horses, the only trouble they gave was the occasional need of a good thrashing

The finest country we passed through was, I think, Pondoland Never have I seen a land with such prospects in a general way— deep rich soil and splendid pastures, fairly well timbered with hard woods, intersected by picturesque valleys and numerous streams, its hills, reputed to hold great wealth in minerals, covered with waving grass

Game is now scarce, but sport can be had with partridges and *pauw* (wild turkey), while the angler might find use for his rod in the many rivers that flow through the beautiful valleys The valuable sea-cow (*du-gong*) is found in numbers in the Unzimkulu River, near the mouth of which there are



A PONDO.

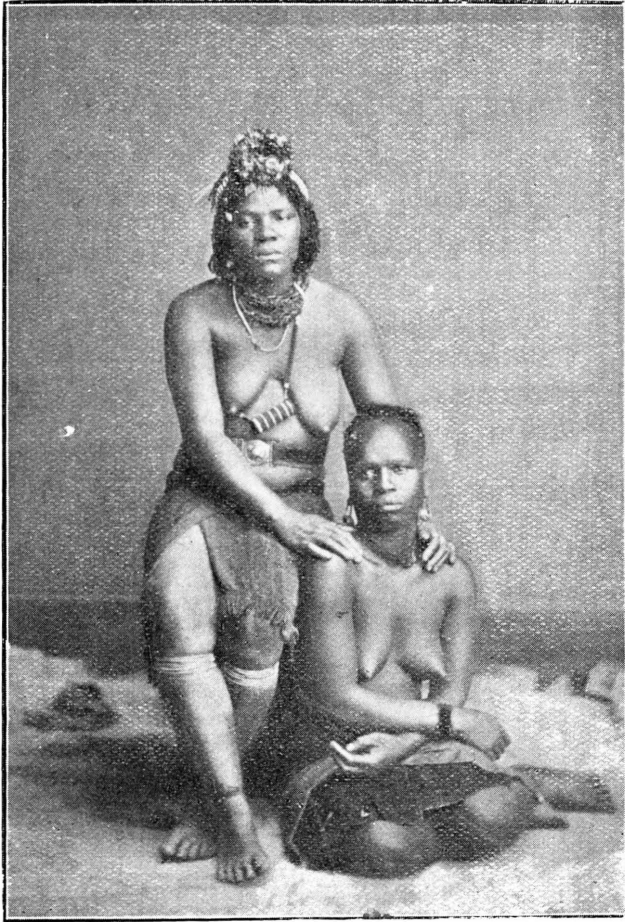
facilities for making a good port. There seems no doubt that the best parts of South Africa are occupied by natives. Consider the vast Karroo in the Eastern Province, the Western Province, the Transvaal, and Orange Free State, and you will find none of them compare favourably with Pondoland, Zululand, or Zwaziland. The latter countries are not afflicted by the droughts, as are the former; indeed, if they were, the natives could not live as they do.

Their mode of cultivation is exceedingly primitive. The men do no work. They lie in a blanket in the sunshine, smoking, taking snuff, and drinking *tjwala* (Kaffir beer); they get up now and then for a feed of mealies and Kaffir-corn cakes. The women take hoes, stand in a line, and cross-hoe the fields, whilst other women follow and sow. That is the only cultivation the land gets, yet the crops are splendid. They grow mealies, Kaffir corn, and tobacco. The sur-

plus mealies are sold, and the money spent in blankets, which are their only need—happy people!

The village consists of twenty to fifty huts, with three-feet high entrances. In the centre is the kraal into which the cattle belonging to the various families are driven in the evening. This done, the men slouch lazily in, and sit in the kraal to watch their *incomos* (cows), and talk; indeed, cattle is their favourite topic of conversation; the epic of the cow might be gleaned from their unwearying narratives. They do not care for cattle or sheep; a cow is their chief pride. With them they buy their wives and sell their daughters; they half live upon the milk, and the bull calves are killed and eaten. They have so little else in common with the world that it is small wonder they worship the cow.

When the winter is just over, and the long grass is dry, the men go out with old muzzle-loading guns, assagais, and *knobkerries*,



PONDO WOMEN.

and surround a few acres of ground, having set fire to the windward side of it. They rarely return without half a dozen buck and some birds. The latter are thrown on to the fire just as they are, until burnt pretty black, and then everything is eaten except the bill and legs. They are very expert in knocking over partridges and other birds by throwing sticks at them ; indeed, even a rabbit or hare has but little chance of escaping their unerring aim. I often thought I would like to see some of them shy at an Aunt Sally at an English fair ; the proprietor's stock of coconuts would rapidly diminish.

One day, after a ride of twenty miles, we arrived at the bank of a river—the Umlaas, I think—which was in flood, and we thought it wiser policy to stay the night there rather than risk a crossing. We had during our journey crossed several rivers in flood, and experienced some difficulty in landing the horses on the opposite bank, some being

washed down half a mile. After we had seen the camp formed, the guards turned out with the horses, and the picketing ropes got ready, H—— and I took towels and strolled to the river to find a quiet place to bathe. It was running very swiftly ; the water was yellowish in colour. We did not mind the colour, but the speed of the water amongst the huge boulders made bathing uncomfortable, so we wandered further down and found a quiet spot where the river had made inroads amongst some trees. Here the flood had made no perceptible difference. The water was still, the place looked dark and shut out from the sun. I did not like the look of it for some reason, and shuddered to think of plunging into the cold depths. One hears at times of people diving into these African rivers and never rising to the surface again. They probably get caught in fallen branches, or stuck in mud or quicksands.

However, we said nothing to each other of

our feelings on the matter, and commenced to undress quietly—I do not think I ever took off my clothes so slowly in all my life—and when I had divested myself of my last garment, I found that H—— had finished at exactly the same moment. I sat still as a mouse, gazing at the gloomy water, hoping that he would go in first ; but he was equally bent on waiting for me. I then asked him why he did not go in ; he suggested that I should have first go ; this I, emphatically declined. We finally decided to toss who should take the dreaded plunge. We did so, and I lost. H—— laughed loudly, and I remember his laugh struck me as uncanny in that weird place. I felt much inclined to propose looking for a fresh place, but did not like to appear afraid. I would ten times sooner have chanced a dive in the yellow water amidst the boulders. However, I went to the edge of the bank, poised for a dive, and had already let myself go when I saw a

snake, about six feet in length, swimming along the surface of the water. There was no way of saving myself, and with a sort of involuntary yell I fell plump on to it, and felt it slither round my body. The water was icy cold and my feelings indescribable. I have no doubt the snake was quite as frightened as I was. I did not sink very deep, and scrambled out as quickly as possible. H—— had seen all, and when I climbed up the bank he was busy putting on his clothes, and there was an end to our bathing experiment.

CHAPTER V.

ON the sixteenth day we arrived at Pietermaritzburg, delivered the horses at the stables, and reported ourselves at headquarters in Longmarket Street.

Pietermaritzburg is named after Pieter Maritz, a powerful Boer, who *trekked* north and founded the colony. It is the capital of Natal, and one of the prettiest towns in South Africa. Its streets are wide, and its bungalow-like houses nestle amongst every variety of tree. It has a population of about 18,000. The market square, which is the business centre of the town, is always alive with vehicles of every description, from the brick wagon, with its long team of oxen,

to the Cape cart and American "spider," which is so much used throughout South Africa.

Coolies are very numerous in Natal. The majority of them are, perhaps, to be found in Durban, but here I saw numbers of them, in their cool white clothes and turbans, carrying baskets of fruit suspended from the ends of a bamboo over their shoulders. In the worst part of the town, many of them had shops, in which they sold goods imported from India adapted to their own needs.

The natives are made up of Bacas, Tongas, and Natal Zulus, who are not the pure breed. The police are natives, armed with a *knobkerrie*, and dressed in white.

The military element was very strong in the town at that date, and met one at every turn. English red-coats, cavalry, the picturesque uniform of the Natal Mounted Police and Border Rangers, rumbling gun-



ZULU POLICEMEN.

the officer in charge when I called to hear my fate, but he was very cordial, mentioning that he had received excellent accounts of me, but had no idea I was so young. I was obliged to admit that I was barely seventeen. Anyhow he promised to mention me in some despatches he was forwarding to General Strickland, and told me to call again in a week's time

This was in February, and the troops had passed into Zululand some six weeks before. A brief summary of the troops may be of interest to younger readers.

They consisted of four columns.

Col. Pearson, situated at Ekowe, had eight companies of the Buffs under Col. Parnell, six companies of the 99th under Col. Welman; one company of Royal Engineers, with two 7-pounder guns, under Lieut. Lloyd; 200 blue jackets and marines under Captain Campbell, from H.M.S. *Active* and *Tenedos*, with three Gatling guns, 200 of Captain

Barrow's Mounted Infantry; 200 of the Durban Mounted Rifles, Captain Shepstone; Alexandra Mounted Rifles, Captain Arbuthnot; Victoria Mounted Rifles, Captain Sauer; Stanger Mounted Rifles, Captain Addison; Natal Hussars, Captain Norton. A Native Contingent of 2000 under Major Graves.

Two Companies of the 99th posted at Stanger and Durban. This was the Coast Column. Another column was stationed in a strong position, called Krantz Kop, which was almost unassailable. It consisted of a native contingent of 3300, commanded by 200 English officers, with two rocket tribes, under Lieutenant Russell, R.N., and 200 mounted natives.

General Lord Chelmsford's column, stationed at Helpmakaar, was the strongest. It consisted of seven companies: 1-24th, and eight of the 2-24th; six 7-pounder guns; a squadron of mounted infantry under Captain

Browne ; 150 of the Natal Mounted Police ; the Natal Mounted Carbineers under Captain Shepstone ; the Buffalo Border Guard, Captain Robson ; the Newcastle Mounted Rifles, Captain Bradstreet ; 2000 Native Contingent, Commandant Lonsdale ; and 2000 natives under Col. Glyn.

The fourth column, under the command of Col. Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., consisted of the 13th and 90th regiments ; Weatherley's Light Horse ; Baker's Horse ; Buller's Horse ; Raafs' Corps ; Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles ; some artillery, and a number of natives , in all, about 2500.

Up to the present there had been occasional severe fighting, especially with Chelmsford's column. After crossing the Tugela River, he fought an *impi*, defeated them, and captured some 500 head of cattle. This was on the 12th of January at Sarayo's Kraal. On or about the 20th, they were encamped at Isandula. The next morning

Commandant Lonsdale and Major Dartnell were ordered to reconnoitre with a force of volunteers, Police and Native Contingent. The day following they sent in word that the enemy was near in great force.

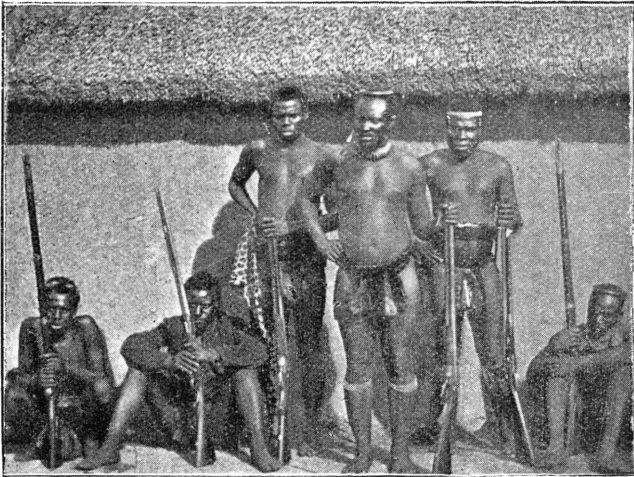
Hearing this, General Chelmsford left early the next morning with the 2nd battalion, 24th regiment, the Mounted Infantry, and four guns, sending an order to Lieut.-Col. Durnford, commanding No. 2 Column, to move on to Isandhlwana camp with all mounted men and a rocket battery, to take over command, as he was leaving with Col. Glyn to attack the Zulu force, reported to be some fourteen miles off. Col. Pulliene was to be in command until the arrival of Lieut.-Col. Durnford.

Durnford received the order too late, and was obliged to fall back, and sent praying for reinforcements, as the enemy had surrounded him in large numbers. However, he managed to get to Col. Pulliene with

the news that an enormous force of Zulus was advancing on to their small body.

Indeed, it was but too true. They were the flower of Cetewayo's army, and numbered about 20,000, they surrounded the British camp, and advanced in silence until quite close to it. Then they came on with a rush, yelling their terrible war-cry. There was no resisting them. The mighty, surging mass of naked demons hurled themselves with terrific impetus into the camp, and falling on the soldiers with their stabbing assagais, drove them hither and thither like sheep, stabbing and spearing all before them. Very few escaped from this awful slaughter, the result of a terrible blunder of General Chelmsford's in the first place, and of the officers left in command in the second.

The encampment was on the bare ground, without the slightest attempt at a defence in case of attack. If a *laager*, as at Kambula, had been made, they would certainly have



ZULUS.

kept the enemy at bay until the General came to their assistance, but, instead of that, the force was scattered.

One company of the unfortunate 24th was sent out to meet the Zulus, I suppose for the purpose of trying to check them, and not one returned. The infantry had no chance of escape ; they were simply wiped out. Some of the mounted men escaped across the river ; others were cut off and shot. Col. Durnford and Col. Pullienc were both killed. In all, there were about 800 white men and 200 of the Native Contingent slaughtered ; there were no wounded, as it is the custom of the Zulus to kill their own wounded as well as their enemies.

A part of the victorious enemy rushed on to Rorke's Drift to seize the booty there, and their intention was that the whole army should advance into the Colony of Natal and lay it waste.

In the meantime, whilst this awful defeat

was taking place, General Chelmsford and Col. Glyn were engaged fighting a paltry force of 500 Zulus, of whom thirty were killed. Then the dreadful news reached them that the Zulus were in possession of Isandhlwana, busy sacking the camp.

When the General received these disastrous tidings, he sent Col. Glyn forward with most of the troops to retake the camp, but they received no opposition, and when night came on the weary and dispirited troops lay down to rest amongst the dead bodies of their friends and comrades in the *debris* of the camp.

The next morning General Chelmsford hurried on with his small force to Rorke's Drift. This place was in charge of Lieut. Chard, R.E. In the afternoon two men rode furiously up, and gave the appalling news of the full extent of the Isandhlwana disaster, and stated that the Zulu army was advancing to take the Colony, and that Rorke's Drift must be held at all cost.

Rorke's Drift is on the Tugela River, just below the junction of the Blood River, and is wide and deep ; the troops crossed by the aid of large ponts.

Lieut. Bromhead was in command of a company of the 24th there.

Everything now was made ready for the attack. The *laager* was formed of bags of mealies and biscuit-boxes and a couple of wagons. The force, numbering 104, were determined to succeed or die.

About 4.30 P.M. the Zulus were seen advancing, and a withering fire was poured into them ; but, elated as they were from their recent victory, they charged undauntedly on up to the very barriers, and wrestled with the bayonets. It was a desperate struggle, but they were beaten off only to charge and re-charge, sometimes almost succeeding in taking the little camp. The fighting continued until 4 o'clock the next morning, then the Zulus, numbering 3000, disappeared over the

hills, and the Colony was saved—thanks to the brave defence and pluck of this little company in face of overwhelming odds

Soon after Lord Chelmsford arrived at Rorke's Drift, and congratulated the gallant defenders warmly

On the same day that Isandhlwana was fought, Col Pearson's column marching to Ekowe was attacked at Inyezani along the entire right flank and in front. One hundred and thirty wagons, with a long train of oxen attached, makes necessarily a long column, all the more difficult to defend. However, the Naval Brigade and the Buffs poured out a steady fire and held the position, while the rear wagons closed in. The main body of the Zulus was located in the bush, which was immediately shelled; this drove the enemy into the open plain, where they were effectually routed, and forced to fly to some heights, these were in turn stormed, and a complete victory gained. The British loss was twelve



ZULU WOMEN.

killed and sixteen wounded, while 300 Zulus were slain.

After this nothing of importance occurred until March.

I must now return to the story of my own career. I spent the intervening week in watching the fortifications of the town being made, or rambling through the military Compounds. I often met Major H——, with whom I sometimes messed, and he informed me that we would in all likelihood be sent to the Cape Colony for more horses. I told him that sooner than do that I would join some volunteer corp, which was certainly against my inclination, for I wanted to go to the front and see active service. At last the day arrived. I called at the War Office, where I was informed that I was appointed to take charge of a convoy of wagons on their way to Kambula, and that other duties would be assigned to me on my arrival there. My salary was to remain at 16s. 6d. a day, and

I was to start at once. Hurrying to my hotel, I strapped some things in a valise, and hastened to the Remount Stables to procure a horse. I knew the officer in charge, and he informed me he had not one fit to give me, there being only six in the stables, all on the sick list. I told him I must have one, as I had to catch up a convoy before it reached the Zululand border, so we went to the stables and inspected them. They were indeed a sorry-looking lot, but I chose, as I thought, the best, strapped my valise on a saddle, and started on my long ride.

I was forced to walk my horse most of the way, and until I reached Colenso on the Tugela River, my journey was most uneventful. This place is about 80 miles from Pietermaritzburg, and it took me three days to reach it. Here I learnt a lesson which I have not yet forgotten, but before relating it I must make a few remarks as to what led to it.

During the Zulu Campaign the Commissariat Department was worked in a very different way to what it is now. It is now included in what is called the Army Service Corp ; but at that time officers belonging to different regiments managed the Department under Commissary-General Strickland. Amongst the duties of these officers was the purchase of cattle for meat and transport wagon work, as well as large quantities of grain. I heard at different times from reliable resources that the British Government was swindled over and over again by the vendors of cattle and grain, who were mostly Colonial adventurers ; the officers buying miserable beasts at large prices, likewise paying exorbitantly for the grain.

After the war I was told by several men, who considered it in the light of a good joke, that a man would take, say, fifty head of *trek* oxen, sell them at £15 apiece,

and get his cheque. These cattle would be driven into the yard or kraal, stolen by the vendor in the night, and driven to some quiet out-of-the-way place. Giving them there a rest of a few weeks' time, he would return and re-sell them sometimes to the same officer. A Colonial or a native would easily recognise any cattle again; but one could hardly expect an officer in the British army, unused to dealing with live stock, to do so. I heard of many other swindles in the same line.

I was very young, and felt enthusiastic about the war, and everything touching it roused my keenest interest.

Arriving at Colenso, leading my jaded horse, which was completely done up; chafed at the delay and tired from the continued walking, I was not in a very cheerful state of mind. Putting my horse in the stable of the little inn, I sat down for a smoke on the *stoep*. Soon after two officers in un-

dress uniform rode up from the direction of Zululand. The younger man led the two horses round to the stables, whilst the elder eyed me from head to foot, answering a careless nod from me. Presently he came out, sat down near me, and we entered into conversation. He told me that he had come from the front, that everything was quiet there, but the war would probably be a lengthened and expensive one. I, with the cock-sureness of youth, launched into my views of the management of the Commissariat. It was a most unfortunate and ludicrous conversation for me, as I had no idea I was talking to my own General, and the Chief of the Department in question ! He listened for a while until I had nearly finished, but at last, when he could stand it no longer, he jumped up and asked : "And who the devil are you?" Much surprised, I told him my name and rank, and asked to whom I had the pleasure of speaking. He

answered that I had better be careful in the future to find that out beforehand, and re-entered the inn

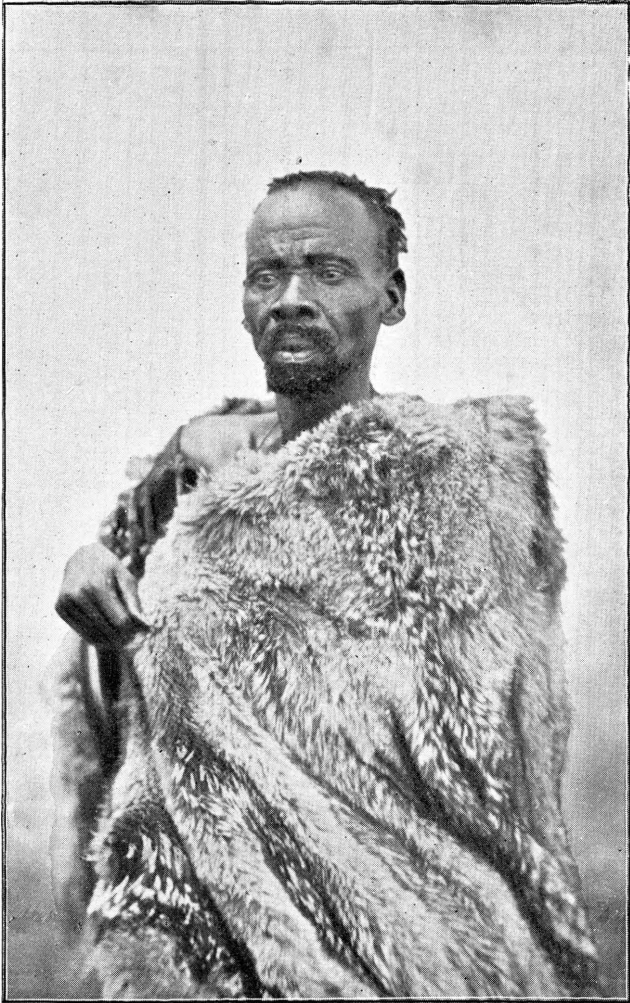
I sat and wondered for a while who the man could be, and then went to the stable to see how my horse was getting on. There I met his companion rider, and asked him who the "old buffer" inside was. He answered it was General Strickland! I felt somewhat alarmed, and related the conversation we had, and what I was, at which he laughed heartily, and advised me to get out of the way as quickly as possible. I took the hint, and saddling my horse pushed on again

Never in my life had I seen such a night. It was pitch dark, and I had to lead the horse and strike matches every now and then to find the road to the river. When I got there another difficulty arose; the pont was on the other side, and I had to shout repeatedly to rouse the ferryman. At last he

came out of his cottage and said it was too dark and too late to ferry me over. I shouted out that I *must* cross, and at once, and, as he still argued, I told him I was despatch-riding to the front, and, taking out my revolver, fired off a shot. This and the falsehood had the desired effect ; it bluffed him completely, and he ferried me over. I put on a good deal of "side," and abused him soundly for detaining me with important despatches, forgetting all the while the appearance of the animal I was leading. He remarked ironically that it would be a considerable time before the despatches reached their destination if I rode that animal, which made me feel rather foolish.

I mounted and rode on, and could only just get a glimpse of the wide white road. The air was hot and heavily charged with electricity ; there was not a breath of wind, and I expected a thunderstorm. The next stopping - place was Ladysmith, where I expected to catch up the convoy, and my sole

regret was that I had not a good horse to push on more quickly. Presently there was a flash of lightning quite close to me, and before the roll of the thunder had passed away repeated flashes were darting about me. Ten minutes later I was in the thick of a good old Cape thunderstorm; flash followed flash in quick succession; the glare of the forked lightning illuminated the night, striking the trees and earth in every direction. My horse, knocked up as he already was, was shivering from fright, and I could hardly persuade him to advance a pace. Near the road I noticed a hut, with a bush-kraal full of sheep. I rode up, dismounted, and asked permission to stay there until the storm had abated. It was a small hut, with seven Natal Zulus squatting round the embers of a fire on the floor. They refused point blank, observing that there was a house belonging to a white man a little further on. I told them they were *Amakafula* (Kaffirs), a term of



A KAFFIR CHIEF.

insult to a Zulu, and rode on. I had no difficulty in finding the house a mile ahead. Meanwhile the rain had come down in torrents, and I was wet through in a very short time. In answer to my loud knock the door was opened by an Englishman, who did not, however, seem inclined to let me in, only that the storm was too bad to turn away a dog. I was surprised at this reception in such a hospitable country, but he apologised for it later on, explaining that he was besieged both day and night by camp-followers and others on their way to and from the front. He had no stable, so the unfortunate horse was tethered to a post outside. We sat up talking late into the night, and it turned out that he had a brother in the old Colony who was a great friend of mine. Upon hearing this he made me very comfortable.

The next morning I was up at daylight, only to find that my horse had taken fright during the night and broken away. It was a very

lovely morning, and, as the ground was wet, the *spoor* was easily traced. I tracked him for two miles, and found him amongst some low hills where the grazing was good. On my return my host exclaimed . “ It was very lucky for you that you did not sleep in that hut last night, for it was struck by lightning and every man killed.” It certainly was a narrow escape, and haunted me for days. I had never in my life experienced danger before, and it had not occurred to me that I was running a chance of being shot or assagaied by the Zulus. The idea would keep coming back, till at length I asked myself seriously if it proceeded from cowardice. I was loath to believe this, and finally reasoned myself into the conclusion that it merely arose from inexperience, and that most other fellows had probably felt it.

After an early breakfast I proceeded on my way, and arrived at Ladysmith in an hour’s time, where I saw the convoy camped outside the town.

On reporting myself to the officer in command he handed the convoy into my charge.

I found they had suffered not a little through the storm, having camped on low ground and literally slept in water. Four oxen had been killed by lightning, and they had taken no measures to replace them. Borrowing a horse, I rode round the outlying farms and bought four others, giving the vendors orders to draw the money on the Department. It took me the whole day to purchase and drive the oxen to the camp.

Upon arriving there the officer in command of the troops was angry, and told me I ought to have gone on without them. This was absurd, and so I told him, and gave him to understand that he had nothing whatever to do with the wagons and oxen, they were in my charge, and his duty was merely to escort them.

From Ladysmith we travelled in a north-easterly direction to Dundee; it being my intention to take the new road from there