crowded into them, and things got worse instead of better the next day. For some reason, the coloured men who had been impressed by Government were not immediately paid off. They wanted to get away to their families, but they had to wait, and in the meantime, having nothing else to do, they drank. The streets were full of howling. reeling wretches. All order seemed gone. Horses were stolen in the most daring manner. If one, with a saddle and bridle, were left for a moment, whilst his owner turned his back, as likely as not he would be seized and carried off in broad daylight. Mr. Higgins, after getting back Wellington safe, nearly lost him thus; and would have lost him entirely, if, leaping on a horse without a saddle, that stood close by, he had not pursued and caught the robber. Others, less fortunate, lost their horses altogether. Numbers of families had to be sent to their desolated homes with government oxen-having lost all their own. Many would not go, knowing that, without oxen to plough their land, it was of no use going to their farms. Men met me who told me that they had seen whole teams or individuals of a team of their own oxen, marked with their brand, in Boer waggons, bringing produce to the market, but they could not claim them; one man even showed me the oxen he spoke of. I met men who seemed crushed by the disaster at every turn. Mr. N---, the trader I had met at Andreas Mayepee's, with his young Boer wife, almost wept as he said, "It has been cruel to us-cruel! If the country was to be given back after all the solemn oaths that it should for ever remain English, why go to war? Why force us who must live amongst the Boers to declare openly against them, or be It is not only that we are ruined, it is our disloyal?

domestic happiness that has been destroyed. I am but one amongst numbers who have thrown up the ties of relationship, of old friendship, only to be cast off like an Numbers like me have turned love into encumbrance. hatred, have closed doors upon themselves which were ever open to them before." And what he said is true. Heavily as the destruction entailed by the peace has fallen on us English in the Transvaal, the real sufferer is the loyal Africander, and the loyal Boer. Our policy has robbed them not only of their property, but of their home, of even their country; and they, unlike us English, cannot face the thought of leaving the land they have been bred in, to cross the sea and carve out a home for themselves elsewhere, but, if they mean to gain a livelihood for themselves and their children, must bend their necks to the taunts which will be lavished by the Boers on those, who, having fought for and been discarded by the English, are now dependent on them. But the one person I dreaded seeing in Pretoria was Mrs. Erasmus. She had been a fine-looking old lady before Deesy died. Now she was bent, shrivelled with grief. I often saw her, but it was ever the same sad wail that I heard, and what could I, or any one, say in answer to it? "Oh! if only he had died for any purpose! Oh! I clung to the thought that I had given him for his country's sake! But he was sacrificedmurdered! Why should they have sent my boy to be killed for nothing?" His father wandered about silent, the decrepitude of grief stealing over him visibly. once he spoke to me of his son's loss, when asking me to let my waggon and oxen take a simple tombstone to his grave.

"I could bear it," he said; "but his mother; oh! his mother!" and he turned away.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In this my concluding chapter I trust my readers will excuse me if I enter into some details as to the manner in which the war and its results affected me personally. The narrative will hardly be entertaining, but, as hundreds have been ruined in a very similar manner, it will afford an illustration of how the process has been carried out in the Transvaal generally.

Not long ago an officer who sat opposite to me at breakfast in an hotel, speaking of the ruin that had befallen numbers in that part of the world, asked me whether I had suffered severely, and on my reply in the affirmative, asked whether the Boers had looted largely? I told him that they had in some few cases, but that in my case, and in the case of the majority of the sufferers, ruin was not the result of being robbed; and he then stated that he could not conceive how this could be the case.

If any one who reads my story is of the same way of thinking, perhaps the end of it may throw a little light on the question.

The animals impressed by Government were all valued some time after they were impressed, and had been working hard, while their food was stinted; they had in

consequence become thin. Even in the state they were in, the valuation fell very much under the real value of the animals in a number of cases; for this reason, no allowance was made in favour of salted animals. I cannot blame the Government for this, for, as there is no absolutely distinctive mark left by lung-sickness, red water, or horse disease, to have attempted any such valuation would have been impossible. In the case of lung-sickness, it is true, the tail of inoculated animals is often distorted or lost: but then animals who have the disease naturally do not suffer in this way; and in the case of the other two diseases, although people who study such matters can make a pretty good guess from the general appearance of the animal whether it is salted or not, still it is but a guess at best. Yet the fact of an ox or horse being salted produces a very large effect on its price, and real value. My oxen were known salted oxen, but they were valued as unsalted, and they were but a few amongst a great number of others similarly valued. The consequence of this was that most people, including myself, refused the valuation. It is true that I should under no circumstances have sold my oxen to Government, for the government animals are very cruelly treated, and I am afraid there is no remedy in the matter; but in this I am an exception.

When the peace was declared, I, and others, applied to have our animals returned to us, and there was considerable delay in the matter of the oxen. We also applied for hire of them and the waggons. We were told that the Government did not intend to adhere to English law in the matter, but to Roman Dutch law—the old law of the Transvaal; and that the question whether by it

we were entitled to payment had been referred to the Attorney-General for his decision. That decision was not given for almost three weeks after the declaration of peace. In my case, and no doubt in others, this was productive of evil; for my already thin oxen had to be kept in Pretoria until, the decision being given, I could leave the village. I wanted to take loads to Natal, and the winter was coming on apace, while owing to there being hardly any grass to be had near Pretoria the poor beasts were getting thinner daily.

If the Government had given over the country to the Boers at once without reserve, the results of the peace would have fallen less heavily on us; but as it was, all of us knew that the Boers would never consent to any partition of the Transvaal. The Boers themselves said so openly. but, in the face of the terms of the Convention, every one believed that England meant to retain a portion of it, and this we all knew meant a renewal of war, and an alliance between the Free-State and the Transvaal. knowledge determined numbers, at great personal loss, to leave the Transvaal, if only for a time. My belief in this eventuality made me determine to risk taking my poor oxen to Natal with loads, rather than take them to Mr. Higgins's farm for the winter; my own farm would have been too cold for them in their impoverished state.

The belief that war was imminent was prevalent amongst the military as well as civilians, and was increased by its being known that the forts round Pretoria were being strengthened. The Boers, too, spoke of the great probability of war; and indeed what official intelligence we received breathed the same thought. All

work was at a standstill in Pretoria. All those who could were leaving the town. Owing to the uncertainty with regard to the settlement of the country all credit was at an end, and people were obliged to realize at a great loss in order to meet current expenses. Numbers of waggon-loads of goods had been stopped on the road. The loads that were coming up to me had been stopped and warehoused at Newcastle. I had to pay for their warehousing, and now they were coming up, at heavy rates, to be thrown on my hands, when there would be no market for them, and I should only have the choice of selling them for a quarter of their value, or warehousing The only things which were saleable in Pretoria. at a fair price, were horses and fat oxen, and of the latter the Boers brought in numbers: the value of everything else was wonderfully depreciated. The auctions were crowded with articles for sale, but there were no buyers, for there was no money. I saw a cart which would have been cheap at thirty-five pounds sold for five; a handsome silver-mounted biscuit-box (it was real silver) sold for less than ten shillings; a very nice house with a large wellstocked garden, put up without reserve, and not a single bid made for it. There was absolutely no money in Pre-The shops were offering goods for cost price, to get rid of them without loss, for loads which had been stopped on the road during the war were now coming up to them, and the market was diminishing daily. whole village was in a fearful state of demoralization, and it was hard to keep one's boys in hand at all. had to go personally to force a boy away from a canteen, and as a rule they were all either half or quite drunk. Thieving too was going on to a great extent in the village, for, once outside it, the thief could defy the law, so that the temptation to rob and bolt was very great.

The Felmans' house had been, I heard, broken into during the siege; I wanted Mrs. Felman to go there with me then, and see whether any of my things had been taken, but she always made some excuse, and refused to let me have the key of the house to look. I had told her husband that if I was not allowed to investigate the matter in my own interest then, so as to be able to make an affidavit as to my loss and ask for compensation, I should be obliged to hold him responsible. At the end of the siege it turned out that all my property was gone, but it was of no use holding him responsible, for he was bankrupt.

Mr. Higgins had gone to Surprise, to see how things were there. He brought me back word that all my lambs were gone—dead or stolen; that seventy of my sheep, including all my wethers and my best ewes, were stolen, some of them having been taken after peace was proclaimed, and that my ram was also gone,—poor Hans, too; and he said that the remaining ewes were in a pitiable condition from neglect. All his sheep were gone, so I asked him if he would care to buy mine cheap. He answered that he had no money. Mr. Sturton had lost his sheep, but he too had no money to buy any, and, indeed, was living in Pretoria in his waggon, unable to leave, for it would have been useless for him to go, without oxen, to his desolated farm.

It appeared that the Nell family had been rejoicing greatly over the discomfiture of the Higginses and had been purloining freely. So much for gratitude!

Added to this, a notice had been sent to Mr. Higgins

from the neighbouring Boers, telling him that all his standing crops, and indeed everything he had, was confiscated to the Boer Government, and that he was held responsible for nothing being wanting until the sittings of the Conference should come to an end, when he would be communicated with. I saw the letter stating this myself. Mr. Higgins returned to Pretoria, and reported the matter to the Administrator for the time, Colonel Bellairs. Hendrick Schumann heard of it, and declared, on the part of the Boer Government, that such a letter was utterly unauthorized; also that the seizure of my sheep was an act of violence not authorized by the Boer leaders; but in the meantime Mr. Higgins and I were the sufferers.

I sent a waggon to Jackallsfontein, to bring Jimmy up, and was delighted to find that he had been kindly treated, and that two oxen which I had left on the farm had been kept safe. Little Roughy, too, came up flourishing, but nothing remained of all the crops I had sown. Of course his host made a good penny out of his board, &c., but I was in no humour to haggle—only too glad to see him safe and sound.

Lo De Plessis came up to pay me a visit, and try to borrow some money, in which he failed; and the way he asked for different articles—sweets and snuff, &c.—to be bought as presents for him was very amusing. Jimmy and I gratified him in this. I knew of one case where a woman had been turned off her own farm by the Boers, under pain of being hung, and had had to walk forty miles into Pretoria, and I felt very grateful that Jimmy had been spared.

I was getting anxious about the answer from the

Attorney-General. It was very bad for the oxen to remain in Pretoria, the grass being all eaten off; and every day the boys were going from bad to worse; besides, there were no means of making any money, for all work was at Rumours of a fresh outbreak of war were a standstill. rife, and as the Boers all vowed that they would not yield up any of their country, while it was stated distinctly by Government that this was one of the conditions of peace, it seemed likely that the rumours were true. Every day also brought accounts of the dissatisfaction of the Kaffirs, and threats of a general rising against the Boers, if the Transvaal were given back to them. People did not know what to do, and numbers were leaving every day for Natal. I determined to do the same, and agreed to take loads down there. It was the only way of making money; but the danger was, that the oxen, already overworked, would not stand the journey in the winter. Every day now was of importance, so as to get over the Drachensberg before the great cold set in-and still the Attorney-General sent no answer.

My oxen were already drooping from bad feeding, and I even lost one of them, a favourite of mine; Hendrick, too, was taking to very bad courses, and I had more than once discovered him in theft, but I contented myself with speaking to him, for it was almost impossible to get drivers, and I did not want to lose him. One evening, after a very hard day's work, I felt ill; I had been on my feet, packing up, so as to be ready to start at a moment's notice, when the decision about the hire of the oxen should be given, and had been in the saddle, too, looking after the oxen that were feeding at some distance, and after the boys, who were all drunk except little

Hendrick. The next morning I had hardly got up when I was obliged to lie down again, and from that day I was unable to leave my bed for three weeks! The news of the decision came two days after. It was what I expected. No one was to receive a penny for the use of their oxen and waggons. The Government decided to act on the old Boer law, and by it no hire is allowed in time of war! I believe that it was in consideration of my having given up my oxen and waggons voluntarily, that I was allowed seventy-five pounds as compensation for deterioration in the value of the oxen and waggons. I was told by other sufferers that no such compensation was allowed to them. It was a terrible blow to those who had counted on being paid, and to me the delay in giving me the answer was fatal.

During my illness of course everything went to the bad, and at last I heard that Hendrick was stealing my oxen. I was getting better; had just been moved on to the sofa-chair, and was fortunately more capable of acting than I had been. I had him and the oxen caught, and so escaped this loss; but Hendrick bolted. Weak as I was, I saddled up, and pursued him as far as Derde-poort, taking my revolver with me, but he had the start of me on horseback, and I had to turn back. As it was, I was shaking in the saddle as I rode into the village. I managed after some delay to obtain two drivers ("Boy" and my other driver had left me to go home), neither of them good; and, although still ill, I started, taking Jimmy with me, and discharging Soldat and Clara. My goods had not yet arrived, but I could wait no longer, for the season was too far advanced as it was.

It was a terrible trek. I rode by the side of the oxen

myself to see that they were tenderly treated, and not over-driven. I saw them blanketed every night before lying down, and often I have got up of a cold night from where I slept close to them, to see that they were covered. I watched them as if they were children rather than oxen, but all was vain, one by one they drooped, and lay down and died. The weather was very cold. Some I left behind in charge of farmers, but I knew they were doomed. They came to know me so well that I could not only work with them myself, but they would come up to me as I sat by the camp-fire, would rub their noses on my shoulder, or take mealeas out of my hand, and it was real grief to me to see them wasting away. If it had not been for this, I should often have enjoyed the picture round the camp-fire of a moonlight night before they were tied up, for the horses too would come and stand with their noses close to my shoulder, and often would try to take a piece of bread out of my hand as I was eating.

It was an unlucky trek throughout. Poor little Roughy was bitten by a snake, and handsome Prince shot through the heart by a Boer. At last my spans were so decimated, that at Harrismith they fairly gave in. I had to arrange for the loads to be brought on for me, and at first determined to try to take the oxen loose over the Drachensberg and try to get them on to a warm farm, while I, for a time, once more tried my fortune as a governess, in, if possible, the employment of the owner of the farm, so as to be able to watch over them; but the one day that I had to remain at Harrismith before starting with them showed me my error. It would have been cruelty to have exposed them to the long, toilsome ascent of the Berg,

where numbers of them would have lain down in the cold never to rise again, whilst I had an offer of selling them to a man who had sheds to shelter them in, and plenty of good forage to give them. So I sold all but two of them at a third of what I paid for them, and left all of them together with a gentleman who buys half-dying oxen as a speculation, having the means of caring for them, and having a fancy for looking after them. The last thing I saw of them was comforting to a certain extent. They were all busy eating loose forage which was thrown to them with a lavish hand, and seemed to be enjoying themselves, although one of them (one of the two I left as boarders) left his forage to come over to me when he caught sight of me, and put his great wet nose against me in sign of friendship.

The depression of trade in the Transvaal was making itself felt even at Natal. Firms there were offering goods as cheap as you could buy them in some cases in England, and this applies to Harrismith as well. stocks of articles had been sent over to firms for transmission to the Transvaal, and were now left on their hands. Crowds of emigrants were coming down from the Transvaal, and the market was overstocked with people wanting employment. There were no good prices being offered for anything except fat oxen, and garden or dairy produce, which latter, strange to say, always commands a high price in South Africa; and instead of being able to sell my waggons well, as I had hoped, I could get no more than about half value for them. The depression was so great that the auctioneers often refused to sell rather than let articles go so much below their real value, as they would have done by accepting the highest bid.

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I think what I have told will show those who read it, how ruin has come to numbers owing to the war and the subsequent Convention, without being due to any looting on the part of the Boers. The compensation offered by the Government, even if it be paid, which is doubtful, will come tardily, and only direct losses are to be admitted. As a fact, most of the people who have been ruined, have been ruined by indirect losses, and this without counting the loss entailed by the depreciation in value of landed property, which is such that properties which would have fetched a high price before the war are now unsaleable. It would be impossible so far as I see, for any government to contemplate compensation for indirect losses, but it is hard that a government can sign away that which numbers have toiled hard to earn: and vet this is what has been done in the matter of the Transvaal. All that I have to add is, that I took Jimmy with me to Natal, where he got a fairly good situation; and that Eclipse and Dandy, and little Moustache, are well, and still belong to me. Herewith I make my bow, and end my story.

THE END.

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