

home with us. Our knives were both blunted, and his skin was extra tough, so it was over an hour before we had a haunch and the liver tied up in the skin, and safe on the back of my horse, and the head and horns in front of the saddle.

As we were riding quietly home, some way ahead we saw five objects which looked so like ant-heaps, that it was not until they began to move off that both together we cried out "Pig!" As it was too late then for any chance with the rifles, we set off and tried to race them down. I soon found that the dead weight of the bôk was telling on my horse, so I cut it off with my knife as I galloped on, and before we had gone a hundred yards I saw a vulture swoop down on it. Nearer and nearer we came to the pigs, and were able to hear their grunting; when, as if by magic, they disappeared from our view just in front of us, and in another instant we were very nearly going down after them into a regular net-work of bear-holes which the crafty pigs had been making for the whole time. The sun was now getting low, and we had a long ride before us; so anathematizing the pigs in the hole, for which we had lost the bird we had in our bag, or rather the haunch of fat bôk we had on the saddle, we made our way to the waggons. On our road my friend to all appearances shot a spring-bôk, but when we rode up it sprung on its feet again and made off, as if it had never been hurt; our horses were far too beaten to run it down, so we left it to the vultures. Francis had roasted in the pot a haunch of larded bôk sent us from the farm, and to us it tasted better than any

venison ; but perhaps the situation gave it additional flavour, and all the world over hunger is the most piquant sauce. I am sure that no epicure or gourmet however enthusiastic, ever had the same pleasure in the choicest dishes and wines, with every appurtenance of the table, as we had in our tough steaks fried in water when we had no fat, washed down with coffee and preserved milk.

Next morning before breakfast A. killed a klip-springer—a pretty little bôk, with a body no bigger than a very large hare's, but legs a foot and a half long. My friend of the 13th and I then set off for Middelburg. Before we had gone 100 yards I had rather a nasty fall, which taught me never again to trust to one of the boys to saddle my horse for me. I was riding one horse and leading another with a few necessaries in saddle-bags strapped on to it. The led horse took a sudden fright and bolted off, kicking furiously. In trying to hold it back, the weight proved too much for my girths, not half tightly strapped up, and the saddle suddenly turned top underneath and I with it ; but in falling the reins slipped up my arm, and I was dragged some way along the ground, and put my little finger out of joint before I could get loose. The horse, once free, twisted and kicked to such advantage, that he got rid of all his packages and quietly bolted back to the waggons, rather pleased with his performance, and it was nearly an hour before we again were on our road. The horses of South Africa have an unenviable reputation for buck-jumping, but I think by degrees the vice is being eradicated, and I never saw a horse

there which could for an instant compare with the buck-jumpers of the Australian colonies, where I myself once saw a horse, on leaving his stable, perform an almost incredible acrobatic feat. He first put his head between his fore legs and his tail between his hind ; then, arching his back almost to a semicircle, he began the most violent jerky springs straight up in the air, and then a side one as variety. First he broke the crupper ; the saddle at once canted forward, but his rider remained on until the saddle gradually was worked almost to a horizontal position on the vicious beast's neck, when, having no hold, an extra jerk sent him over sideways. In a few more bucks the saddle was right off and lying on the ground, uninjured, with the exception of the broken crupper.

On our way in we stopped some minutes to watch a kite chasing a mere-cat, which had incautiously wandered some distance from its hole. At each downward dart of the kite, the mere-cat would make a backward spring, and, before the kite was ready for another swoop, would have gained several yards nearer home ; and then the same process would be repeated ; but the kite was never crafty enough to alter his tactics, and after a dozen hair-breadth escapes we felt quite glad to see the pretty little beast, after such a gallant display of endurance and pluck, escape its pursuer and vanish into its subterranean hiding-place.

I had lunch at the camp, and left one of the horses there before riding up to the Mission Station, which I reached at five o'clock, and was met, at the door of his

house by Herr Marensky in person, who, after I had seen my horse stabled, took me into his little study to get a cigar and cup of coffee before accompanying me in a stroll round the workshops, which would be closed on Sunday. We first visited the blacksmiths, where probably the best work in the Transvaal is turned out. There is only one European, a German, in the shop as master and overseer, and the same applies to the waggon-making, and general carpenters' shop. All the work is performed by the Kaffirs themselves, many of whom are thoroughly efficient smiths and carpenters. About twenty boys are constantly employed in the shops, and when there is a press of work there are twice that number, who are competent to do the rougher kinds of work. The master smith and master wheelwright have each of them substantial well-built dwelling-houses close to their work, and I expressed my surprise to Herr Marensky at their having had the means at hand to build such excellent houses, for they far surpass the best houses in Middleburg; but he answered me with an English proverb which well expresses the spirit which pervades his whole policy and management: "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well."

We returned to the house to get ready for tea. I was shown to my bedroom, opening out of the little courtyard attached to the back of the house. A snow-white little bed, a carpet of spring-bôk skins sewn together, a ewer and water-jug, were the sole furniture, and on the wall hung a roughly-painted sacred picture. At tea I was introduced to Herr

Marensky's wife and family; and a very kindly welcome they gave me, and took every opportunity of showing me any little attention, besides taking the most lively interest in our plans, which I discussed at tea with the Herr Pastor, as there is no man in the Transvaal who knows better the temper and probable movements of the Kaffirs. I was also anxious, if possible, to obtain a boy from him as a guide, who was acquainted with the district and other tribes we might meet. On learning my wish Herr Marensky at once sent down into the village below for a man who he thought would suit me, and who had very lately returned from the very district we intended making our head-quarters. After tea the pastor took me back again to his sanctum, and after presenting me with another excellent cigar—one of a box lately presented to him by a gentleman he had nursed gratuitously through a long fever—he proceeded to give me some account of the station from its beginning, and which made a great impression upon me at the time, as much from the clear, straightforward matter-of-fact manner, which left not a shadow of a suspicion as to the minute veracity of every word he uttered, as from the indomitable pluck and perseverance that had been characteristic throughout of the missionary and his little band.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Herr Marensky's early Troubles—The Settlement—Population—System of Conversion—Government—Sunday Attack—Polygamy—Stores—Personal Property.

TWENTY years ago the pastor, first with only one companion, settled down in the territory, and close to the head krall of Secocoeni, and for some months he was in great favour with that chief, until the numbers of those who flocked to him—more, as he is the first to own, to obtain protection and means of making a quiet livelihood, than with any thought or care of becoming Christians—made Secocoeni jealous of the new power. For a couple of years he was exposed to nothing worse than petty annoyances; but at last Secocoeni, growing alarmed at the steady increase of the little colony, ordered him to quit his territory. Herr Marensky, however, managed to conciliate him, and obtained his permission to stay on, the chief perhaps being more influenced by the wishes of many of his principal head men (Indunas), who had received benefits from the medical skill and remedies of the missionary, and whom they regarded as a great medicine-man, than from any goodwill towards the pastor himself. The third year passed peacefully away, and Herr Marensky had now been joined by his wife; but there arose many slight squabbles,

until at last came a climax, in the demand for a fugitive, whom the missionary refused to give up to the messengers from the chief. Next day a large party, led by two Indunas personally unfriendly to Herr Marensky, surrounded the house, and in the most threatening manner demanded not only the fugitive, but also that the missionary should accompany them to the krall. On his refusal they forcibly searched the house and neighbouring kralls for the man, killing many of the harmless inhabitants, but failed to find him they sought, for he was hidden under the bed on which Frau Marensky, in a very delicate state, was lying. As Herr Marensky had gathered from their behaviour that they were not now authorized to kill him, he assumed, a still bolder demeanour, and after soundly rating them for their cruel behaviour, sent a message by them to their chief that he could not leave his wife to visit him. The party then returned to the chief's krall; but just before night the pastor received a message from an Induna whose life he had saved, and whose integrity he could rely on, that his house was to be surrounded, and himself and family slain before morning. Luckily he had a couple of horses at hand, left by a German farmer who was himself only some twenty miles away, across the stream; so after calling together all the natives, he told them to join him as best they could, beyond the river; and putting Mrs. Marensky on one horse and mounting the other himself, he set out for the ford. Before they had gone many miles the flames announced that the Kaffirs were at their deadly work,

and more than half the inoffensive station boys were butchered before they had time to make good their escape. The horrors of that night are still too vividly before his mind for the pastor to speak lightly of them: his wife in a fainting condition, and unable to sit her horse without support, and the yells of the pursuing demons ringing in his ears, before at last the river was reached, and only just in time, for a heavy flood was coming down and the channel was already swollen and dangerous. Some of his own boys were there before him, and with their assistance his wife was brought over in safety; and that very night, as the stars were giving way to the morning, his eldest child was born; and before his pursuers reached the stream it was a huge cataract, with masses of turbid water bearing down rocks and trees in their furious course, and utterly impassable by man or beast.

For many weeks he and his wife were protected and cared for by his compatriot. Everything had been left behind in his flight, and they were homeless and penniless, but anything but hopeless or repining, and he soon fixed upon the spot where the station now rests for another attempt, and had soon gathered the remnants of his little flock around him at the new home, where they were speedily joined by other fugitives from the surrounding chiefs. Thirteen years ago there was nothing but a barren waste; now he has a fine church—certainly the finest in the Transvaal—600 acres under cultivation, stores, dwelling-houses, workshops, and a huge native village, all built by himself and the Kaffirs. The Society

owns in all 39,000 acres of land. 30,000 acres cost them 500*l.*, and the 6000, of which the station and most of the cultivated land form a part, cost only 758*l.*; there are besides 3000 acres which have been bought, but not yet paid for, by the natives themselves.

The total population of the station is about 1600, of whom 1029 are baptized, 168 are under instruction, and 359 are children at school. .

Herr Marensky could, if he chose, baptize every man, woman, or child in his village; but he makes baptism the reward of a good and virtuous life, and not easy to be obtained. Children of Christian parents are naturally baptized as soon after their birth as convenient. The work of conversion is carried on almost entirely by the old converts; but, the pastor observed, "More is done by example than by anything else." When a stranger comes and announces his wish to join the community, he is at once given a piece of land, and is assisted to build his krall, and is given land to till, and seed to sow in it. But he is made to clearly understand the laws of the community: that idleness will not be allowed, and will be visited by expulsion; that theft will be punished by lashes and expulsion too; drunkenness, the first offence a flogging, and the next a still more severe flogging, and expulsion into the bargain; smoking daka is also visited with heavy penalties. After a time the new comer will naturally have his curiosity aroused by the, to him, mysteries of the Church, and the altered subjects of conversation amongst the baptized; and, little by little, will him-

self wish to learn something of the knowledge which he sees makes the others enjoy life in a way that is utterly strange and new to him. He will also wish to be able to understand the curious signs he sees the others reading, and to share in the ideas which enable his associates to bear their troubles more easily, and which makes their domestic relations so infinitely more happy : the wife and children obedient, cleanly, and industrious, and the husband thoughtful and tolerant. Then the new comer will apply to some of the native teachers, who will instruct him as far as they are capable ; and, at last, if he behaves well, he is admitted to one of the classes taught and looked after by either Herr Marensky or his assistant, Mr. Watson. If, at the end of five years, the man or woman, as the case may be, appears to thoroughly understand the ceremony, and be fit to benefit by it, he is at last baptized. If not, he enters into the body of catechumens, who are allowed to be present in the church during the first part of the service, while the communion-table is hid from their gaze by curtains, but are sent out before the curtains are drawn aside for the commandments to be read from the table. He remains a catechumen until such a time as Herr Marensky is convinced that he is worthy of baptism—sometimes as long a time as fifteen years ; and any misdeed during this time puts it off indefinitely.

The above are, as nearly as possible, the identical words of Herr Marensky in answer to my questions as to the means of conversion used. No man is ever under any circumstances solicited to embrace

Christianity, and if he conforms to the laws of the society he might live and die in whatever belief he may happen to hold. Herr Marensky has nothing at all to do directly with the interior economy of the settlement, which is left entirely to the management of four chiefs, one of whom is a cousin of Secocoeni, and takes precedence of the other three. These chiefs apportion to each man as much, or as little, land as he can till to advantage, and settle what rent he shall pay for it ; they settle all their disputes, and investigate any cases of crime or drunkenness that may occur. If any unusual difficulty arise, they at once refer it to Herr Marensky ; and also render him an account, at stated intervals, of their proceedings. His consent has to be given before any man can either be flogged or expelled. He is always ready to see and advise any of his people in any of their difficulties, and is always on the spot to give them consolation in any misfortunes that may come upon them.

It must not be supposed that it was all fair sailing for the little settlement, when they had once taken up their quarters at Potsabelo. From the very first they met with a most bitter opposition from the Boers, and were also liable to frequent raids upon them by native tribes. Their very first task was to build a laager, or fort, large enough to hold the entire population and their stock ; and on several occasions they defended it against large odds, under Herr Marensky.

The fort is situated upon the summit of a high knoll, and with steep ascent to it on all sides. Walls,

fifteen feet high and two feet thick, pierced with loop-holes, and built of ironstone, enclose a space of seventy yards square ; there are flank defences, and a turret over the entrance, which gives a clear look-out over to the surrounding country. Their first collision with the Boers was caused by almost the same incident which drove them from the territory of Secocoeni. A Kaffir who had been desperately ill-treated by his Boer master, escaped, and fled for protection to Herr Marensky. On careful inquiry it turned out that there was absolutely no agreement of any description between the boy and his master, and that he had only been kept by force for many months past. Herr Marensky refused to acknowledge any such legal slavery, as giving up the boy would imply, and told the Boers who came to demand his extradition, that they would have to take him by force if they took him at all. The Boers retired to talk it over, and presently returned in still larger numbers, bent on mischief ; but the missionary had meanwhile called out all his forces, and showed such a strong front, that the Dutchmen very soon gave it up as a bad job, and retreated, vowing vengeance. However, as they respected his strength and evident determination of holding his own, they never more openly molested him.

Only four years ago, while in the middle of the Sunday morning service, the men in charge of the flocks burst in with the intelligence that a large impiy (army) had suddenly come upon them, and driven away the whole herds. The pastor, after one very short prayer (“ *Nach einem sehr Kurzen Gebet* ”)

for success, dismissed his congregation, with orders to instantly fetch their arms; and in a very few minutes, himself at their head, they were on the trail of their flocks. Just before dusk they came up with the enemy, who had been impeded by having to drive the stock, and were completely successful in the engagement which ensued, inflicting heavy loss on the invaders, and rescuing all but a few of the oxen which had lagged behind and had been assagaied out of the wanton love of slaughter which characterizes a Kaffir when on the war-path.

Not long after this, one of the head men, coming up in the evening to consult with his pastor on some domestic difficulty, detected a strange Kaffir with a gun in his hands creeping in the shadow of the trees, towards the open window at which Herr Marensky sat writing. Stealthily crawling along behind him, he was just in time to knock the gun out of his hands, as the murderous wretch pulled the trigger, and the charge lodged harmless in the window-sill. The would-be assassin, greased all over, and slippery as an eel, wriggled himself free from his captor, who was at the time weak and ill, and made good his escape before Herr Marensky could render any assistance in detaining him; and, assisted by the darkness, managed to get clear away from the enraged natives, who were after him instantly to avenge the murderous attack on their pastor.

Throughout South Africa there are fifty-six missionaries and thirty-four stations belonging to the Berlin Society; and although it may be a doubtful point whether the work carried on by missionaries

in the aggregate is beneficial or the reverse to the interests of the country and the morals of the natives as a whole, yet there cannot be two opinions about the improvement in the condition both mentally and physically of those who are under the care of this particular society, which again almost entirely owes its success to the common sense and practical principles which Herr Marensky himself carries out and lays down for the guidance of the other missionaries of the Society. The pay of these men, who carry their lives in their hands from day to day, amidst hardships, ill-treatment, suspicion, and disappointments almost incredible, is miserably inadequate, not only to their wants, but to their absolute necessities. An unmarried man receives 80*l.* per annum, and a married 100*l.*, and also draws 3*l.* per annum for each child under three years old, 6*l.* for one over, and 12*l.* a child when education becomes necessary. It is almost imperative, however, for a missionary to be married, or otherwise he is completely looked down upon by all Kaffirs who have wives, and who do not consider a man of any importance unless married, and in fact have no hesitation in calling them "worthless boys." When Captain Clarke, as her Majesty's Commissioner, first sent to Secocoeni, that mighty chief replied "that Captain Clarke was only an unmarried boy, and what could such a worthless fellow have to do with him." Herr Marensky was himself unmarried for three years, and only obtained a degree of respect by the intimation that he was just on the point of being married, and would soon bring his wife to show them that he was.

The most difficult question a mission has to

deal with is the treatment of Kaffirs who wish to be baptized, but have more than one wife. Personally Herr Marensky would not make it a *sine quâ non* that the man should put away all over the number of one, but the Kaffirs themselves insisted on it, because they could not understand anything but one fixed hard and fast line, and could see no reason at all why, if a man was baptized who had several wives, a baptized man should not marry several. This feeling on their part induced Herr Marensky to decree that when a man with several wives wished to be baptized he should choose the wife he was most loth to part with, irrespective of whether she was his first married or last married, and keep her as his only one. It is not such a hard case for the discarded widows as it at first sight appears to one who is ignorant of the Kaffir marriage customs. The husband regards his wife in an utterly different capacity to that which a wife is supposed to fill among the whites. With the Kaffir she is merely a servant who will work for and support him, and whom he can do as he likes with, not running any risk of her either leaving him or making reprisals for harsh treatment. The women being looked upon in this light, become of marketable value to their parents ; and when a man wishes to marry one, there is no pretence of love-making, etc., but he goes straight to the father, having first obtained his chief's leave to marry, and asks him how many oxen he will take for his daughter. After some haggling a price is fixed upon, and the husband drives up the cattle, and after various ceremonies and much feasting, takes away his wife. He then gives her a krall and a certain portion of land, which

it is her business to till, and from it to supply provisions for her lord and master. The husband has his separate krall, and each wife in turn has to bring him his day's food to the place where he sleeps. This is roughly the state of affairs, and it follows that the deserted wives return at once to their people, who are only too glad to have them, as the oxen once paid are not redemanded, and the parents are able to sell the women again, occasionally at an enhanced price if the wife has proved herself a good workwoman and has made her former lord comfortable.

As the husband who wishes to be baptized has naturally not countenanced the visits and machinations of the witch-doctor, or allowed his wives to participate in the various dancing and devilry ceremonies which the missionaries forbid, and which have special attraction for the women, he is voted a stupid, slow fellow, and the wives themselves are delighted to leave him and have the chance of again being married to another man who will not put himself in opposition to their amusement.

Missionaries in general, are more opposed on account of the stores, they often have attached to their station, than on any other ground; and, in fact, nearly all the objections to their operations may be traced to this source. I was anxious to hear what Herr Marensky had to say in favour of the practice, which it was evident he approved of by the large store at his own station.

"Can you tell me any reason why a mission station should not have a store?" said he.

I could only give the usual well-worn arguments.

although I did not myself see much point in them, that the callings of a missionary and a store-keeper were too utterly distinct to ever be blended together without the duties of the missionary being neglected ; that it put great temptations in the missionary's way ; and that the permission was more often abused than benefited by.

Herr Marensky asked me if I had ever heard any one missionary, either of his own or any other Society, particularized, as abusing his privilege, or using it for his advantage instead of the natives', and I was obliged to own that I had not.

He proceeded. "You and all others who have travelled, even through the more civilized parts of the country, must be aware that it is absolutely necessary for a traveller or hunter to trade to obtain any of their ordinary produce from either Dutch or Kaffir, and that money will not buy what a tenth part of its value in merchandise will easily bring in. Why, then, should the missionary be the only one who may not avail himself and his people of this convenience? Again, if the natives of the station have no store of their own to deal with, they will go to the nearest and there run into debt, which ought at all times to be prevented ; they will also be in the way of obtaining spirits, which they can never do at the mission store. There are only two stores in all kept by the Berlin Society, and all the profits, if there be any, are employed exclusively in building new mills or workshops. The very houses the missionaries build for themselves are not their own property, but the Society's, and belong of

right to the next man who is appointed to the station.

Herr Pastor Marensky himself appears to be about forty-five years of age, of a medium height, but powerfully built. He wears a beard, which, with his hair, is iron grey in colour. His most striking feature is a fine broad forehead, and very quick bright eyes give him a peculiarly vivacious, humorous expression, and it needs but one glance to read the energy and determination in his character, which have carried him through a life of such varied dangers and difficulties. He is one of the most pleasant and amusing companions I have ever come across.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Kaffir Service—The Native Kralls—A Funeral—Extracting a Tooth—Making Beltong—The Foreloupers desert—Bôk-hunting—Bronsick Salt—A Farewell Supper—Parting Presents—A Breakdown.

DURING the evening the boy whom Herr Marensky had sent for made his appearance, but he could not be induced to accompany us when he heard our destination, as he feared that the hostile natives would make a raid down there as soon as they heard that a party of hunters, who would be sure to have arms and ammunition, of which they were much in need, had arrived on the spot.

On Sunday morning we had breakfast at half-past seven, and then the bell began to toll for the native service. The church is within a few paces of the pastor's dwelling-house. The foundation-work is white stone and the walls of red brick, and it has a thatched roof. It has a pretty little steeple of galvanized iron, which in the sunlight shines like burnished silver. The building is in the form of a cross, and capable of holding 1000 people.

The service commenced at nine o'clock, and by that time some 800 were collected in the church; the men on one side and the women on the other: the catechumens seated nearest to the door. There are no seats, except two pews for visitors and the

Europeans of the station ; so nearly all the Kaffirs bring their stools with them, but some prefer squatting on the ground. All who come to church have to be decently clothed. The younger portion of the small congregation were particularly smart and gaudy, but none of the girls wore anything more gay than plain cotton dresses. Many of the old men and women contented themselves with a blanket closely wrapped round them. One group, in particular, attracted my attention among the males. A young fellow, with a long blue shirt reaching to his knees, and above it a rather well-cut Eton jacket, sat next to a very old fellow with snow-white wool, who considered himself sufficiently got up in a blanket of many colours ; and next him a fine, tall, well-built man, clad in what had evidently been at one time an embroidered lady's night-shirt, and under it a pair of well-worn tweed knickerbockers, was taking charge of some blind aged relation, and looking after his comfort most energetically by poking any boy in the ribs who seemed to be pressing him in too close.

The singing was perhaps the most astonishing part of the whole service, and would have done credit to any ordinary church choir in England. The Kaffirs take to part singing very quickly and Mr. Watson, the under-missionary, an enthusiastic musician, spends all his leisure in teaching the large choir he has been able to select from among the boys and women, which accounts for their wonderful proficiency. When Sir Theophilus Shepstone visited the station, the school children greeted him by singing "God save the Queen" in English.

In the afternoon there was a German service for those of the neighbourhood who cared to come, but in all the congregation only numbered twelve, including children. Afterwards Herr Marensky took me for a walk through the settlement, and we paid visits to many of the kralls, all of which were in the highest possible degree of cleanliness and order. Every krall had its store of mealie cobs hanging outside to dry, and many had large pockets of Kaffir corn as well. A funeral took place in the evening, and the whole population followed the coffin to the God's acre, just outside the boundaries. The singing was very touching and sweet, and no one could again call Kaffir an ugly language after hearing the hymns sung over the grave. When the service was concluded, the men all stayed behind gathering stones, with which they filled the poor fellow's grave, to prevent the jackals and hyenas unearthing the coffin.

During the day the newspapers by the post-cart arrived, and in them was an account of the attempted assassination of the Kaiser. The indignation and horror expressed by all sufficiently showed that distance had not dimmed their loyalty for "Vaterland." In the evening the ladies gave us some music selected from Moody and Sankey's hymns, and several national airs, before the whole family retired to rest at ten o'clock.

Next morning, after breakfast, I was obliged to leave, although I should have much liked to make a longer stay. While I was saying good-bye to Herr Marensky, a Kaffir came to the study, and made

some complaint to him, the nature of which I did not understand till I saw him open his mouth wide, and then squat down on the ground outside. Herr Marensky took down a case of instruments, selected one, and for a second leant over the man; but before I had time to see the operation he had extracted a huge black, three-fanged tooth in the most masterly style, and without even removing the large pipe from his lips. The wretched Kaffir never moved a muscle of his countenance, or uttered a groan, but for a long time sat disconsolately in the same spot, spitting out the blood which, however, he carefully covered over with sand before he went away. Herr Marensky is as good a doctor, and perhaps the best surgeon, to be found in the Transvaal, with the exception of those at present with the troops, and who are called in whenever their assistance is procurable.

As a parting present Herr Marensky gave me various photographs of his station and family, all of whom came out to wish me God-speed on my journey as I rode away.

I stayed the night in Middelburg with Captain Persse, and slept in his tent on an impromptu bed of tanned skins which Captain Carrington was taking up with him to Fort Weeber, to make into ammunition-pouches for the volunteers. It was a bitterly cold night, and in the morning all the water was frozen over, but I managed to keep pretty warm. My host rode back to the waggons with me next morning, but we were not successful in coming across any bôk.

Next day we killed several blesse- and spring-bôk, so we spent Thursday in making a large supply of beltong from their flesh.

The process is very simple. Strips of flesh, the thickness of a man's wrist, are cut out of the animal, rubbed with salt, and then all put together into a fresh skin to "sweat" for several hours. The strips are then hung up in the sun till dried quite hard, which it only takes about twenty-four hours of the fierce African sun to effect.

We had intended making a start for Leydenburg the following day, but Jantze awoke me with the news that Wildebeeste, our forelouper, and the forelouper of the other waggon, had bolted during the night. The only reason they had given the other boys who remained for being discontented was that the meal we had last given them was "too coarse." The drivers, of course, were aware of their intention to leave, but to us professed to feel as much astonishment and anger as we did. We were now left with only the two drivers, and Francis our cook, to manage the two spans of oxen the two waggons and all the horses, so we had to turn to ourselves with a will, to get things done properly. I at once sent off a letter to Herr Marensky, asking him to send me out a couple of boys who would act as foreloupers, and leaving the amount of wages to be settled by him, so as not to let this interfere with my obtaining the boys.

While we were breakfasting on Saturday morning, we saw a long black line of bôks descending the hills at our back, and making for the water. For a long

time we watched, and at least *two miles* of them had descended before A. and I started with our rifles to cut them off.

We came upon them unawares, and had a capital opportunity for a steady shot, of which we availed ourselves, and knocked over a couple; and then started off after the startled herd, who scattered in all directions. A. and I were soon separated, as he followed a fine old ram which he had wounded, and I, having an eye to the pot, singled out a fat young doe to follow up, and a very long chase she led me in the rear of a herd of some hundred others before I even got a shot at her, which from the excitement and heat of a long ride I missed. The lot now took up the hill, and I had to get off and rest my horse by walking him up; when I got near the top I left the horse and crawled up to reconnoitre, and much to my satisfaction saw the herd, with my young bòk standing nearest of all to me, only a couple of hundred yards away, exhausted after their long run, and waiting for me to appear before starting off again.

I waited a minute or two, lying flat on my back, so as to recover my steadiness, for my hand was shaking too much from the violent exercise of walking up the steep hill, to take a certain shot; then changing position, I sat down with an elbow on each knee, and got a fine bead on the shoulder of my especial fancy, fired, and when the smoke cleared away, had the pleasure of seeing it lying motionless on the same spot, and with a bullet clean through its shoulders.

After I had cleaned the carcass, and cut off from it the head, neck, and other parts not fit for food, I had a great deal of difficulty in getting it upon my horse's back. The horse did not object to coming close up to it, but just as I was lifting it on to the saddle, off he would start, not liking the look, and the bôk would slip down on to the ground ; but I at last circumvented him by putting my shirt over his head, as I had nothing else to blindfold him with, while I made the bôk all secure to the saddle. Many of the horses never get over their dislike to the smell of blood ; but this one from the first rather liked it than otherwise, for I came upon him one day licking the bleeding carcass of a newly-skinned bôk which was hanging up to the waggon. Possibly this was only to obtain the slight salt taste contained in blood.

Salt seems to be absolutely necessary to all animals at times, and when the natural salt-pans fail in their supply, all the herds of bôk are attacked with a kind of mange called bronsick. Horses and oxen are subject to the same complaint if they are not supplied with an occasional supply of salt. I have often seen both horses and oxen licking each others' skins to extract the salt from them, and the oxen constantly lick the rims and trek-tow, which is saturated with their salt sweat. When there is no grass at all for the oxen, they will keep alive for days if there is plenty of water, provided that they are supplied with a handful of salt apiece during the night.

The next Sunday arrived with no answer from

Herr Marensky in reply to my letter, asking him to send us our boys. But irrespective of whether they came or not, we had decided to make a start the following morning, as we had now only seven days left in which to reach Leydenburg, a full 100 miles' distance. It was not for months afterwards that *I* received Herr Marensky's letter, which had miscarried.

As his station was suffering from an epidemic, he feared sending me any of his boys as servants, but added, "I should have much liked to assist you in obtaining trustworthy boys, for it is a great pity that strangers always get the worst in the colony. Your own boys left you, I am led to understand, because they feared the dangers of fighting to which they might be exposed with you."

Mr. Hartogh had for the last few days been a little reserved about something or another, but had only expressed it by not coming near us; so we asked him straight out if we had done anything to annoy him in any way, and expressed our sorrow if we had. At first he would say nothing but that we were Englishmen, and that he knew his house was not what we were accustomed to; but before long it came out that our only offence was that we had not made more use of his house, or asked him for enough supplies from it. Our explanation that it was so utterly opposed to all our ideas for such perfect strangers as we were to quarter ourselves without any invitation upon him, and that we were already almost ashamed for having received so many presents and so much kindness, and having

disturbed his arrangements to the extent we had, did not appease him half as much as our promise that, if ever we should again come back his way, we would live entirely upon him ; and when once he was convinced of the honesty of our intention, his good temper returned.

On our last evening we had our supper at the farmhouse, and also accepted their invitation to have breakfast with them before starting in the morning. As we went away Mr. Hartogh said, "When you come back you will not use me well unless you come and eat with us two or three times every day, and send your boys oftener to say you want some meal, or some butter, or have a dinner ready for you and your friends at such and such an hour."

Next morning Mrs. Hartogh had a most sumptuous breakfast prepared for us before our departure. She said that we should not have time to cook our own in the confusion of making a start. Pork-pies, hams, chickens, sausages, eggs, cold meats, and sweets, and preserves in great variety, were all upon the table : but although we made superhuman efforts, I fear our appetites did not satisfy her. She insisted on our carrying away with us supplies of eggs, sausages, larded meats, bread, rusks, milk, and butter, sufficient to keep the whole party for a month ; and the only thing we could persuade them to accept from us in return was a photograph of ourselves and the waggons, which had been taken as we were leaving Pretoria.

The first movement of the waggon, much to our disgust, showed us that the iron box of the hind

wheel had broken loose where it joined the wood, from the heat of the weather having warped the wooden wedges which surrounded it, and kept it firm; so we had to outspan again, and set to work and mend it. Just as we had finished it to our satisfaction, Jantze took it into his head to put a few finishing touches, and while our backs were turned, in his efforts to make it fit closer to the cap, hammered the box too far through the hubb, and we had to undo all our previous work, and take out all the wedges we had put in, before we were again ready to trek off.

Kaffirs have a most ingenious habit of fully acknowledging that they are to blame, without having a shadow of an excuse to offer for their conduct, yet not being in the least degree ashamed of themselves. After we had been remonstrating more firmly than mildly with Jantze, for his stupidity in touching the wheel, he waited till we had finished, and then answered, "Yes, Misare, me am stupid; all right!" and without a notion of his impudence, evidently thought he had heard enough of the matter.

As we were so short-handed we had to do all the forelouping ourselves, and also the greater part of the inspanning and outspanning; but luckily the oxen were now so well broken in, that they followed the track as well by themselves as when led. We had a very long tiring second trek before we came to water in the evening; but as the grass was wretchedly poor, and barely enough to give the oxen a mouthful apiece, it was necessary to let them have plenty of water to fill themselves out with it, as there was nothing else.

CHAPTER XX.

Water scarce—Ammunition runs short—Laziness—"One over"—
No Market—Our Roads divide—Stalking a Donkey—Oxen
begin to fail—A bad Stick—Ugly Country—A Boer's Farm—
Obtain a Guide.

NEXT morning, Tuesday, 25th, after we had treked about half a mile, we came to a patch of fairly good grass, which had escaped the general burning, so we at once outspanned to give the oxen a feed ; but we had to go without our own breakfast in consequence, for there was no water to make our coffee, and if there had been, there was no mess about to make a fire to boil it at, or cook our meat ; so we had to content ourselves with bread and butter, and were thankful enough to have such an unusual luxury to indulge in.

We treked off again at twelve o'clock, although the sun was beating down fiercely, and made it very trying work for the oxen ; but water was necessary, and we had unwillingly to give them the extra labour. I had a long ride after a blesse-bôk in the afternoon. With my first shot I had wounded it slightly, and as my horse was fresh I soon rode into it ; but on putting my hand into my pouch for a cartridge, I found it was empty. I then rode right alongside, but my horse took fright and sheered off each time I attempted to hit the bôk's head with the butt end of

my carbine. At last the bôk laid down, and I got off to try and compass its death with carbine and knife combined ; but the instant I dismounted, the bôk rose up and limped slowly, but still faster than I could keep up with on foot. A dozen times I attempted to hit it from the saddle, but with no success, and a dozen times the bôk laid down and got up again before I was near enough to touch it on foot. There was not a stone far or near ; and at last, much disgusted at my carelessness in leaving the waggon with an empty pouch, I had to leave the bôk, for darkness was coming on. I sincerely hope the poor beast recovered from his wound, but most probably the vultures benefited by my loss. Every night the cold grew more intense, and we congratulated ourselves on having brought our ulsters with us, in addition to a plentiful supply of blankets. Of a morning every liquid, from water to oil, is frozen, even inside the waggon, and the edges of the blankets which covered our mouths were stiff from the frozen moisture of our breaths upon them. The sun, during the day, made it just as hot as it was cold at night, and the thermometer inside the waggon registered on an average 90° ; but there was usually a fresh breeze, which made the heat not only easily endurable but very pleasant. Both cold and heat are of such a *dry* character, that even a delicate invalid is not injured by the sudden changes, provided he takes ordinary precautions, such as changing into very warm clothes as the sun goes down, and always wearing flannel to prevent any chance of a sudden chill. The aspect of the country we were now travelling through was dark, dreary, and desolate beyond descrip-

tion. All the grass had been very recently burnt off, and for miles and miles our road lay through black and dusty downs, with not a vestige of habitation or vegetation, as far as the eye could reach. The occasional herds of bôk which appeared on the rises, and then started off as we approached, lent a certain amount of excitement to what would have been otherwise an almost too desperately monotonous and depressing journey at this time of the year. While the present system of yearly burning off all the grass of the country is pursued, there can never be any stock of feathered game, for nine out of ten of the birds must be destroyed in such enormously extensive fires.

Our fourth day's trek seemed to take us out of the game district, for we only came across three or four very small herds of blesse-bôk during the whole day's trekking. A very strong hot wind blew all day in our faces, and bore along such clouds of sand that we felt disinclined to leave the waggon, as our eyes were too full of dust to see the sights of our rifles, even if we had been able to get within shot of any game.

It is a terrible country for extracting all the energy out of a man's composition. One old farmer was most candid in his confession of laziness and want of energy. He was discussing the chance of ostrich-breeding on his farm, and expressed his desire to have a few, but for his dread of their increasing rapidly, as he would have so much additional labour in superintending their culture, although he was quite aware of how paying a specula-

tion it was. He proceeded : " I always plan out the work for the day, and apportion it so that *one pair of hands* may be left over, and that pair be *my own* ; and then, if anything pressing turns up suddenly, I can make one man leave his plough, or whatever he may be at, to attend to it, so that there may still be the *one over*. I do not use horse ploughs, for that entails a white man's employment, and I should so often not have one, and then should be obliged to turn to myself. I never want too plentiful crops either, for that entails an unprovided-for supply of labour to bring them in ; and in that case again there would not be able to be *one over*." We suggested that this was an unheard-of condition of mind in an English farmer, but our friend replied, "Och, yes ; but let your most industrious English farmer come out here, and in a year he will be of just the same mind as I am ; for what is the use of having more than one can make use of ?" To an Englishman this seems an almost incredible feeling for any man to have ; but, besides the effect of a hot climate in causing a general listlessness, there is a slight amount of truth in the old man's assertion that there is no use in having more than a certain quantity of produce, for there is absolutely nothing for the farmer to spend his money on, when he has once got his house, garden, and stock to the degree which seems perfect enough to him ; he then finds that a minimum amount of his own labour will keep all these up, and deems all else but comfortable subsistence superfluous.

At present the outside colonists of the Transvaal

are not sufficiently *educated in comfort* to even know how many wants they really have, and to recognize the deficiencies in their scale of comfort ; and the only means of improving their education is by lessening the difficulties of transport. The country is now quite stagnant, and so it must remain until the bullock-waggon has ceased to be the only means of conveying produce to a market, and for bringing into the country the comforts and refinements of the towns.

During the morning trek, as our oxen walked faster than those in P.'s waggon, we were some distance ahead when we came to a place where the track branched off into two other smaller ones, to the right and the left, both appearing to be equally used—or more correctly not used—for there was no fresh spoor on either ; but as the left-hand road appeared to lead straight in the direction of Leydenburg, we turned the oxen on to that. We had to trek a long distance before there was water, where we outspanned ; and not long after, P. rode up to tell us that, acting on his driver's information, he had taken his waggon on the other road, being the better of the two. As the roads met further on, we decided each to continue on his own road, rather than have the delay of one waggon retracing its way to join the other.

As we had seen a few spring-bòk on our way along, I walked out with my rifle, for the ground was too thickly covered with rocks and stones for a horse to be of any use. I saw no bòk about, and was just returning to the waggon, when I spied the

back of some large grey animal a short distance off, moving slowly along behind a ledge of rock. I made a long *détour* to have the wind in my face, and then proceeded very cautiously to stalk whatever new kind of *bôk* it might be. While after this new *bôk*, I came upon the spring-*bôk* I had originally set out after ; but although I was within a very few yards of them I would not fire, and so disturb the strange *bôk* I was stalking, and which I had now made sure of, as I was hidden from it by a large rock, which would enable me to get as close to it as I chose. At last I reached the very rock it was behind, and, putting my sight down altogether, so as to shoot point blank, I turned the corner ; but what was my extreme disgust to find out that the strange *bôk* was nothing more than a grey donkey ! While I was recovering from my *chagrin*, the ass's owner made his appearance. He was a Kaffir, armed with a rifle ; and, although he could speak no English, I made out that he was after the *bôk* which I had come upon ; but that seeing me coming, and trusting more to my aim than his own, and also not liking to shoot when a white man was there, he had waited patiently and kept out of sight. I could not, even if I had wanted to, have explained the reason of my not firing at the spring-*bôk*, which was a matter of much astonishment to the Kaffir. He followed me to the waggon, and there Jantze elicited from him that our road was as good, or better, than that which P.'s waggon had taken, and that one trek would take us to his "boss's" farm, where we could very likely procure another boy as forelouper.

I gave him a "pooza" of spirits, and he then departed, riding his donkey, which could not have weighed more than his master, to watch for the bôk, and poach one when they were lying down in the dusk of the evening, and he could get up close to them, concealed by the rising mists.

A Kaffir is a splendid stalker, and will crawl and wriggle a mile along ground where, to all appearances, there is not enough grass cover to hide a snake. He never fires at a bôk unless within a hundred yards of it, but generally manages to be within ten before he pulls the trigger. The Kaffirs who have associated with whites seem to lose much of their natural hunting craft. Our own boys, although very keen indeed, had no idea of stalking, and acted on the belief, most fallaciously attributed to the ostrich, that if they could not see the object they are stalking, it follows that the animals could not see them.

While having dinner, I shot a couple of partridges which came up to within a few yards of the waggon, as if to see what we were doing. They were almost exactly like the English birds, and the male bird only differed in having no horse-shoe marked on his breast. No bird, animal, or insect in South Africa is exactly like its European kindred, although many bear a close resemblance. The snipe, at first sight exactly alike, has a totally different flight, and a few darker feathers about the neck; the rabbit has thinner legs and larger ears; and the butterflies, with the exception of the painted lady, are all different, although occasionally closely allied.

The oxen were nearly worn out by their long

morning trek, so we did not start till the sun was setting, and very soon had to outspan ; as, after crossing a broad sloop, we found ourselves wandering in tall tambootie grass, and were not able to find any trace of the path. The cold was so intense that, without troubling to light a fire and cooking anything, I ate a few biscuits, and then turned in under my sheepskin karosse, as the only place where I had a chance of keeping warm. I was out at daybreak, and made a tour round to discover the path again, but found that we had left it the other side of the sloop, and had followed a game track instead from the point where we crossed over. We had some difficulty in turning the waggon round again, as the ground was very boggy ; and when we at last succeeded, it was only to stick fast in the bank the other side of the sloop. First we tried digging away a passage for the wheels, but finding that the oxen were still unable to pull it out, we were forced to unload the hind part of the waggon, which delayed us for more than six hours. As the track we had come down from the road was very precipitous, I got on my horse Cricket to explore the ground, and, if possible, find a way to join the right road again, without reascending the hill.

There appeared to be an open track over some dark-coloured ground, which, to my eyes, looked as firm and as hard as rock. My horse manifested a good deal of reluctance to go on it ; but, in spite of a previous experience of the non-advisability of doing so, I forced him on with spurs and whip, and was punished in consequence ; for, after a few yards, the treacherous top layer of bad soil gave way, and down

sank the horse right over his girths, into soft, clinging, consistent mud. In springing from its back, I gave my thigh a wrench, and for some moments was unable to move; but it was only benumbed, and I was soon able, with Jantze's assistance, to help poor Cricket to extricate himself, but by which we were delayed for another hour; and, after all, had to keep to our original road and ascend the hill.

My horse was never quite the same after this accident, and seemed to have lost all his affection for me; I had the first sign of it only a few hours later. A fine orebie crossed the road in front of me; I took a running shot and broke its fore leg; but it still went on as if unhurt. I watched it until it lay down some distance away, and then started off on Cricket; when within easy range, I sprang off and threw the reins on the ground as usual; but the instant I turned my back to fire, instead of my horse standing as it had done hundreds of times before, off it started at full speed, and galloped to the top of a hill some distance off. The waggon was close by, so it did not much matter in this instance, as I sent Jantze after the horse, while Francis and I dragged up the bók, which was dead.

I petted Cricket, always fed him out of my own hand, and made much of him for weeks afterwards, but was never able again to repose any confidence in him; and unless within reach of the waggon on foot, never dared to fire without either passing the rein under my arm or tying him to a tree, both of which are at times most inconvenient

necessities. It is of vital importance to a hunter that he should be able to place the most perfect confidence in his horse, as he may often have to trust to its speed when his own eye or rifle have played him false.

For our next trek we had the ascent of a very long weary hill, and so weak and tired were the oxen, that I feared they would break down before reaching the summit ; but the plucky little fellows toiled steadily on, and when at last on level ground seemed to pick up their strength, and treked along quite merrily. Our road lay along the very top of the hill, upon a narrow plateau not more than fifty yards wide, with an almost perpendicular descent for many hundred feet on either side. As far as we could see for miles and miles were high peaks covered with huge rocks, and broken up by deep, dark ravines. The stream we crossed in the morning wound in and out far down below us like a silver snake. A few stunted shrubs and the shrivelled-up grass were the only signs of vegetation. It was far the finest view I had seen in Africa, and for wild savage beauty could not be surpassed. But, nevertheless, it was an uncanny looking country and neither good for man nor beast. As I looked down on it a sense of desolation and loneliness stole over me, which Jantze gave exact expression to in his broken English, after gazing for some time with rather an uneasy look on his face : " Ah, bah ! no good that place ; plenty much holes ; track quick ; get away from here."

At the end of this plateau the Boer's house we were seeking came in sight, situated far down below,

in a gorge. High, precipitous cliffs surrounded it in the form of a horse-shoe, and a well-planted garden, with a few belts of blue gums, gave it from the distance a very comfortable home-like appearance in the midst of such a gloomy solitude. We were an hour descending, and then had to send for a guide to bring us to the house, as the track was full of mud-holes, and the ground on either side little better than swamp.

The owner came out himself; and although he could not speak a word of English, gave me to understand through Francis that he was glad to see me, and that he would himself drive the waggon for us over safe ground to his house. He then took the whip from Jantze, rather to the latter's disgust, and we were able to pick out a firm road up to the door of his house, where I outspanned. The Boer very kindly allowed the oxen to be driven to a plot of fairly good grass, which he was reserving for his own beasts, and it was a real pleasure to see them hard at work on the first feed they had enjoyed for more than a month past. Not a mouth was raised from the ground, as if they were determined to lose no time, and to make the most of their opportunity. My new friend, the Boer, invited me into his house, and gave me the usual cup of coffee; but as he had a large can of milk, I asked for that instead. His house was in the wretched condition that most of the Boers are content with: the walls and floor covered with cow-dung, no furniture but a rough table and a few stools; the rafters were hung with mealies and beltong, and a bundle of whip-stick reached from one

end to the other. His bed consisted of a heap of skins flung down anyhow in one corner; and the rest of the room was littered up with buckets, spades, sacks of mealies, and bundles of skins, around and through which the chickens and ducks roamed at will. I was not sorry to get out again into the fresh air, and the Dutchman came down to the waggons to inspect the guns, &c., with which he was much pleased. He had never before seen a breech-loader, and was perfectly astonished at the rapidity of loading it; but I could not induce him to fire a shot with it, as he did not believe that it was safe. He was very anxious indeed to buy powder and caps, but of course I could not let him have any. As I was tired of never knowing when on the right trek, I tried to induce him to give me a boy as a guide to Leydenburg; but for some time was unsuccessful, as the boys he offered were afraid of the Macatees, who had lately attacked several farms on the road; and the Dutchman himself advised me not to try the road, adding that he wanted to go to Leydenburg himself, but did not dare leave the farm. At last, however, the boy who had been hunting on the donkey volunteered his services, if the master would allow him. But that there was some difficulty about, as he was his master's right-hand man, and could not well be spared. It was only on the promise of my sending him back a box of caps and a little powder, as well as paying the boy 1*l.*, that he consented to his accompanying me. The Dutchman wanted me to stay the night, so as to let the oxen have a good feed and rest,

then starting early by daylight, push right through the country, where there might be a stray lot of Kaffirs on the look-out for plunder. I should have taken his advice, but I knew that the oxen were too weak to endure such a long day's work as his plan would have given them. I bid the Dutchman farewell ; and then, under the guidance of Seul, as our new boy was called, set off a couple of hours' treking before sunset ; and the oxen, refreshed by their unaccustomed good feed, went along merrily.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Dismal Valley—A Mud hole—Rigging out—A Night Trek—
Ware Kaffirs—The Dusselboom breaks—A Compulsory Halt
—Leydenburg—Waggon-makers—High Prices—Speculators.

SOME three miles from the Boer's farm we entered into the most hideous place I have ever been in. It was a valley with high hills on each side, and so narrow that when once in there seemed no exit at either end; but the grass had lately been burnt, and looked as if a dismal black pall had been stretched from the summit of the hills to the bottom of the valley. I was very anxious to get out of it before we outspanned, but before we reached the end I was obliged to, as darkness came on, and there were bad mud-holes in our road. The shadows on the hills gave the place a still more unearthly and ghostly appearance, and the boys were frightened out of their lives. Seul declared he would go back, but I gave him a large "pooza" of raw spirit, which inclined him to roll up in his blankets and go to sleep instead. To make things worse, a biting, howling wind came sweeping the valley from end to end. Although it was only six, I turned into bed; and even inside the waggon, with all the blankets and skins I had on the top of me, the cold pierced through, so I expect the boys must have been half frozen before morning.

At the first streak of daylight, the boys, without being told, fetched up the oxen, and we were on the trek before I felt inclined to turn out and face the raw morning air. During the night I had heard someone moving about the back of the waggon, and on inquiring about it, I was told that the wind was so violent that Francis, who was the most unmitigated coward, fearing it would roll the waggon away, had got up and put on the break. His alarm must have been genuine, or he would never have left his warm blankets unless fear of being run over impelled him to.

We crossed the stream without any accident, although it looked just the place for a bad "stick," and were just commencing the ascent of a long hill at the end of the valley, when down went the front wheels, through a crust of hard earth, over the axles into deep black clay. First of all we tried to force the oxen to draw it through, but with no better result than the breaking half-a-dozen yoke-keys and one yoke, in frantic efforts to avoid the cutting strokes the boys showered down on their backs, and at last, fairly tired out, they sulkily refused to pull. Seeing that it was worse than useless expecting the oxen to extricate the waggon as it was, we outshamed them and set to work with the spades. After a couple of hours' hard work a trench was dug from each fore-wheel to the other side of the mud-hole. The oxen were inspanned again, and with their first pull brought the front wheels clear, but to no purpose; for the hind wheels, over which the heaviest weight had shifted, broke through another crust of earth and stuck fast in a worse position than we were in before.

Flogging the tired and now dispirited oxen was mere cruelty, so they were again outspanned. It was evident that the waggon was too heavy to get through with any amount of digging, so reluctantly I had to set the boys at work to unload everything, while I employed myself cutting the long tough tambootie grass to lay on the mud and make it more consistent. In the middle of our toil I was delighted to see A. riding up to us. He had left P. in even a worse plight than ourselves. His waggon had stuck in a mud-hole similar to the one we were in, but all the spokes of one of the wheels had been broken against a large stone, in trying to pull through. This necessitated his taking off the wheel and having it mended before he could get along any farther, and as the nearest wheelwright was at Leydenburg, twenty miles away, it would take at least a week to put him on the road again.

To unload the waggon took another two hours, but the labour was not grudged when we saw the waggon safe and sound on the firm land the other side. We packed in the stores again anyhow, so as to get in one good trek at all events before sundown. Seul insisted upon our outspanning for the night in an open place, to enable us to keep a good look-out. He advised us to do without fires, and was so very urgent about it that we had to give up our hot coffee and turn in without anything better to eat than dry biscuits.

We tied the oxen up doubly secure to the duselboom, and also put a chain through each of their neck-straps, to prevent the possibility of the

fastenings being cut without awakening us. Seul had his own rifle, and each of the boys had one out of the waggon, ready loaded, so that if molested we should not be found unprepared.

The night passed without any adventure, but it was with a feeling of relief we saw the sun rise once more, and then all the precautions of the night before seemed absurd.

As it was Sunday we determined to observe our general rule, and spend the day where we were outspanned ; but in the afternoon Seul, who had been out with his rifle after some rhy-bôk which appeared on the top of a hill opposite, came back to the camp with the information that there were a lot of Macatees on the other side of the hills. Although they might not have any hostile intention towards us, and possibly did not even know of our vicinity, yet we judged it best to inspan and get out of the way as soon as possible.

Darkness came over very soon after we had started, but the stars gave us enough light to trek by. Our road lay between two high hills, precipitous enough to be called cliffs, and ran in and out between mighty boulders of craggy rock, which at a distance entirely hid the road up. It was the very place Kaffirs would choose for an attack, and while going through we kept our rifles all ready for use. We several times crossed and re-crossed a stream which ran through the valley, with no accident. At last we came to the end, and here the road crossed the river in a broader and deeper place than we liked the looks of at

night ; but there was no help for it, and in we splashed, with the oxen pulling up the opposite bank. In the very centre, there was a sudden sharp jolt, and a stop, then another jerk and a crash. To our intense disgust the waggon stood still, and the oxen went on with the dusselboom trailing behind them, which had broken off sharp, right at the locks. Here was a chance for the Kaffirs, if there were any about ; stuck fast, with the water up to the boards of the waggon, we were quite helpless. Luckily there were none about, as otherwise we should have fallen an easy prey. We had to light all the lanterns and candles we possessed, so as to see what we were about in tying on the dusselboom. We were in a brilliant light ourselves, and yet unable to see more than ten yards beyond the waggon, and could have been picked off one after the other by a single man with a rifle.

Our new boy Seul proved himself invaluable, and seemed to work as well under the water as above it, not a bit minding the cold, for it was now freezing hard and a bitter wind was blowing. After two hours' work the dusselboom was in a manner spliced up again by means of numberless rims tied to all parts of it ; of course the whole strain of the heavy waggon now fell on the joining.

It was an anxious moment when the oxen first started off again ; but after one or two creaks and tugs the rims held firm, and we were soon out and on the other bank. Oxen and boys were tired out, for we had now been inspanned for eight hours, but

Seul would not hear of outspanning, although the road was full of mud-holes, and we could hardly see a yard before us. At last a compulsory halt was made; for happening to diverge a little from the narrow trek, down went the front wheel into a deep mud-drain running alongside the road, and sank until the floor of the waggon prevented it sinking any deeper into the slime. The wheels on the other side were clear off the ground, and the waggon was only held from falling on its side by the mud and reeds against it. It was far too dark to attempt getting out of the mess, so we outspanned the oxen and made up our beds as best we could on the damp, marshy ground, which did not keep us from going to sleep directly we were underneath the blankets.

Next morning Seul informed us we were within twelve miles of Leydenburg, but as a glance showed us that it would be hopeless to attempt pulling the waggon straight again without unloading, it was doubtful if we should be there before night. However, we set to work with a will, and were once more under weigh by noon. We outspanned on the way for dinner, and arrived in Leydenburg true to our appointment on July 1st, just as the darkness was closing over the little town, so we were prevented from seeing more than the outlines of the houses in the main street.

A. had ridden on some hours before, to find out a place for the waggon to outspan, and get what letters there might be waiting for us, and also to see if Mr. White was ready. He met the waggon outside the town, and showed us the way to an

empty space opposite the store of Messrs. Henwood and Rosaveare, whose manager, a friend of Mr. White's, received us very kindly, and invited us to supper at his house just as we were, in our boots and breeches, no coats, unwashed and uncombed. Here we found a letter from our future companion himself, informing us that he would be delayed several days ; but as our waggon wanted very extensive repairs, we were only too glad that he was not ready and waiting for an immediate start.

The first move next day was to get the waggon unloaded, and up to the waggon-maker's yard. We put all the stores, rifles, &c., under a small square tent lent us for the occasion, and on the top of all I made up my bed ; for although the manager pressed A. and myself to sleep in his house, I did not care about leaving all our valuables in the charge of the boys, besides running the risk of catching a severe cold when I again came back from a close room and sheets, to the waggon and its rough accommodation.

The inspection by the waggon-maker showed us that the waggon was in a far worse condition than we had expected. Besides requiring a new dusselboom, we now learned that a new axle for the front wheel was absolutely necessary, as the old one, made of wood, was split almost in two. All the tyres of the wheels needed shortening, and at least eight felloes required to be replaced. The very frame, we were assured on all sides, would have to be strengthened with bolts and plates before the waggon could be pronounced perfectly fit and safe for the rough and broken trek we were now bound on.

Having a waggon put to rights at all in a far away place like Leydenburg is no light matter. But when it is a case where time is of consequence, it becomes almost an impossibility. It needs a great deal of coaxing, in the first place, to prevail upon the wheelwright to give any promise at all as to when it shall be finished ; and when that promise is once given, the only chance of it being fulfilled is to pay a personal visit at least twelve times every day to see that your work is being attended to. On the other hand, on no provocation whatever must the man who wants his waggon quickly allow impatience to manifest itself in words, or even go too far in his expostulations at what he considers causeless delays ; or in a minute he will be told to take himself out of the yard and his waggon elsewhere, if he is not satisfied ; and satisfied he is obliged to be, as the probabilities are that there is not another man competent to do the work within fifty miles, at nearest.

The English village smith would hide his head with shame at the prices charged for any work of this kind. For instance, our new axle cost 11*l.*, and all other repairs in proportion. But it must not be supposed that the waggon-maker is the only one who expects and makes these large profits. Every single article of consumption is in the same ratio. At the time I was there Australian flour was selling at 5*l.* the 100 lbs. ; lead and sugar were both retailed at 1*s.* per lb. ; tea, of the poorest blend at 4*s.* ; a bottle of beer cost 5*s.* ; a bottle of champagne 1*l.* ; biscuits at about 3*s.* per lb. ; and squareface gin at 7*s.* 6*d.* the bottle, although it costs but 1*s.* 6*d.* on

the coast; a tin of milk was 4s., and one of jam 2s. 6d.; hams 2s. 6d. per lb., and bacon not much less. Of course there are many circumstances to be taken into account for the, at first sight, outrageous prices of goods and labour of any kind. The primary cause is naturally the high rate of transport from the coast.

At this time 50s. per 100 lbs. was gladly paid as carriage for waggons from Durban; and a few months later, on my return, double that sum would not have procured one.

Added to this high carriage is the interest on the goods for the three months that will elapse between the order being received in Durban and their delivery up-country. This is a far more serious item in South Africa than can be conceived in England. Here, to every man who has money, it is of the greatest possible importance to have it always at hand, as far more money is made by speculation in mealies, horses, waggons, meal, spirits, tobacco, or oxen, than by any legitimate trading. It would not be a rash assertion to state that not five men who have made "their pile" in South Africa have made it without some lucky hit or other. The only men who have ready money at their command, perhaps, in the Transvaal and in Natal, are those whose business it is to make contracts with the Government, and those who speculate on the rise or fall of the most important articles of trade. A fortune can very easily be made out of one good speculation in such an article as forage or grain. The lucky speculator gets an inkling that the