

under ground and out of the reach of jackals and vultures. The burying party arrived and found the corpse still unmutilated, for the charred embers and the still standing walls had kept off the animals which would otherwise have feasted on it. The boys buried the body and then returned to the kraal, but there is no stone or memorial to mark the exact spot where the poor fellow lies. No retribution was ever exacted from his murderers, and in fact it was never made certain who they were, but the particulars were all gathered from boys who had heard the details from the participators in the crime. Like many another murder by Kaffirs, it would never have taken place but for the provocation and violence of the whites in the first instance. Although two wrongs do not make a right, yet all the blame must not be attached to the blacks, who merely followed out the example set them of the stronger oppressing the weaker, and obeyed the omnipotent law which the British Government itself is guided by in its dealings with South Africa—that “*Might is Right.*”

After hearing the history of Hart's Station I walked round to have a closer inspection of the scene of such a tragedy. Parts of the four walls were still standing, and the door-posts had not been much burnt. Round about were many heads and horns of koodoo, wildebeeste, and sarsapi, and among them was one magnificent pair of swart-vitpensens or sable antelopes. Exposure to the weather had much destroyed them, and one horn was cracked in two, or else I should have felt inclined to call for them on my way back as a memento of the place

and story. A rude bench still remained outside the window, and also a broken hutch in which some animal had evidently been kept, and the heap of logs was still untouched which had been collected together for fuel. The little hut is now occasionally used by wandering Kaffirs as a shelter for the night, but it will be long before another white man will be found to live in it, and perhaps share the same fate.

While at Hart's the tsetse fly first made its appearance, and I suddenly discovered three or four on my horse. It did not seem to mind them being on, and they certainly cannot sting or irritate in the same manner as the ordinary forest fly. In size the tsetse is slightly larger than the ordinary black house-fly and it is not unlike it in shape and colour; a little greyer, and with faintly marked bars of grey and black across its body, like a wasp. Its sting is of the most extraordinarily penetrating nature. One has sometimes settled upon my leg covered with the thick moleskin breeches which will turn the sharpest thorn, and almost the instant the insect has alighted I have felt a sharp prick like a needle, as the proboscis pierced through the breeches and through my skin as well. But the stab once given there is no more pain at all, even if the fly is allowed to feast for a considerable period. On my own flesh the sting never raised any mark beyond a small red spot, and caused no irritation or swelling at all, but possibly on another's it might cause more inflammation.

It is a strange problem why this fly should work sure death to any domestic animal, with the excep-

tion of the donkey (and even this exception is disputed), and yet that all the wild game, and amongst them many small and delicate bôk, with tender skins, should not be affected in the least by it. A story is told of the experiment once having been tried of breeding in the tsetse district, on the chance of the young ones becoming naturalized to the sting; but the enterprising experimenter quite forgot the fact, that his breeding-stock were not so naturalized, and they of course were stung and died before any result was obtained.

As soon as we were sufficiently rested our march was resumed. For some three miles further we kept along the footpath, and then Woodward, under whose direction we moved, turned off to the left at almost right angles to our previous direction, and we proceeded, but more slowly, to pick our way through the bush, which here and there changed into woods. We took as our guiding beacon a high peak of rock which showed out clear from a low range of broken-up hillocks, whenever we were on any slight elevation. All day long we had kept up a careful watch for game; but, much to our surprise, not even a blue wildebeeste or quagga crossed the path. At starting off in the morning we had made up our minds not to fire at any small game; but as evening drew near, and the pangs of hunger made themselves felt, our resolutions grew very weak, and I fear that any bôk, however small, which had afforded me an easy shot, would have successfully tempted me to fire at it. As it was, not a living thing did we see; and although we put off making our camp for the night as late

as possible, we at last had to halt without any meat, but to make up for it we discovered a small hole of clear water between two high rocks, which lay in the bed of a now dry stream. The boys were heartily glad that their work was done for the day, they had lagged behind considerably the last few miles, and shown evident symptoms of fatigue.

Our arrangements for the night were soon made. First we selected a thick clump of thorns and cut a passage right into the centre of it, large enough to form a stable for my horse, which would afford an ample protection for it from the lions. At the entrance we swung the tent, and in front of that made up the fire for our cooking; while on the other sides the boys erected huge fires for their use, as well as to keep off the lions. Hungry as we were, there was nothing for us to do but share the boys' supper of mealie-meal pap, and we had the extra delicacy of a few dried peaches to give a flavouring. While the pap was being cooked we employed ourselves in cutting and collecting any patches we could find of fresh green grass for the horse, and were able to provide it with the best feed it had had for months. So as to counteract the effect of the unaccustomed green food, it had some of the crushed mealies as well, but it was only on compulsion that it eat them when we would supply no more grass. Jacob meanwhile had been cutting bundles of the long soft grass, going all round with his assegai, and a bundle of this he presently brought up to form our beds. Over our frugal supper we were at all events able to congratulate

ourselves upon having kept to our resolution of not firing at any small game, and I really think it made the pap taste better ; and we never breathed a syllable to each other of how ready we should have been to break it had an opportunity presented itself. Almost before daylight had disappeared we heard the distant "umph, umph" of a lion ; and by the time it was dark two of them were patrolling round and round the camp, evidently attracted by the chance of making a meal on my poor horse. The boys piled up their fires yards high, and the flames shot up into the air, casting the most grotesque shadows around, but giving us a very cosy and cheerful appearance. By the time we had finished our pipes, and, as a make-up for the poor supper, had a tot of square-face apiece, we were ready to turn in.

My bed of soft aromatic tambooti-grass felt more comfortable and grateful than any feather bed ever did before, and I was very soon oblivious of the growls of the lions, the noise of the boys, and the uneasy movements of my horse whenever one of the lions took a nearer turn round than usual.

We were up before the sun, and made our breakfast on mealie-pap, and a very unsatisfactory breakfast it was ; for although a man might easily accustom himself to such kind of food, it is not nearly strong and stimulating enough for men who are in the habit of eating an unlimited supply of meat daily, and are taking heavy exercise. It does not matter what quantity one eats at a meal, for within an hour or so its effect has passed off, and leaves one as

hungry as ever. About noon we arrived at the peak which had been our guiding beacon, and from it selected a clump of trees in a straight line beyond as our new marching-point. During the morning's walk of at least twelve miles we had seen no living animal of any description; and, what was much more discouraging, had not come across any fresh spoor. All the sloots we had crossed over were dried up, and there did not seem to be any immediate prospect of water. The trees sheltered us to a great extent from the sun, and the walking was easy, so we did not delay long at the midday halt, but several of the boys had fallen behind during the tramp of the morning, and we had to wait for them to come up. As soon as they were all present, we set off again, for it was evident we were not yet in the game country, and indeed the scarcity of water was of itself sufficient to account for the absence of game. The afternoon march was a very weary one; we all began to feel the want of water severely, and the weak food we had had for the last thirty-six hours made Woodward and myself all the less able to stand the heat. I had my horse led the whole way, so as to keep it fresh in case of being wanted for hunting purposes; but although with nothing to carry, it was looking as tired and thirsty as we were. The sun sank very low in the sky, and still we saw no sign of either game or water; but just as it disappeared below the tops of the trees, we came to a broad slood, with a white sandy bed, in which here and there were growing large patches of green flags. For another mile we pro-

ceeded up the dry channel, on the chance of coming across perhaps a reed-bòk, or other animal, but without success, and when we came to a convenient spot we made our camp for the night. Water of some sort had been assured to us directly we saw the green reeds. We had hoped to find a pool still full in some sheltered spot; but as we did not, the boys at once set to work with the spade and their assegais to dig a hole down to the roots of the green flag. A couple of feet of dry sand were cleared out, and I began to fear that the boys were deceived in their calculations, but a few more inches uncovered a layer of black muddy slime. As this was thrown on the shelving sides of the hole, the moisture trickled back into the centre of the cavity, and in an hour's time we had a pool of water half a foot deep, and constantly replenishing itself as we emptied it. The first bucket we gave to my horse, who was daintier than we were, and only sipped the mixture, which rather resembled black pea-soup. However, as Woodward remarked, it was meat and drink at the same time. The mealie-meal pap had a decidedly repulsive appearance when made of this black water; still, it did not much affect the taste, and made it go all the further, but the coffee was not at all a success. We constructed a stable for my horse on the same principles as on the previous night. There was plenty of grass about, which afforded capital feed, and we were glad not to be obliged to give him any crushed mealies, as under the present aspect of affairs it looked very probable we should want them for our own food before long.

The boys were utterly disheartened, as they had expected to fall in with buffalo on the first day. They sat round the fire rubbing their hands over their stomachs with the most woe-begone countenances, and encouraged each other in the most gloomy prognostications of our position. To lighten their hearts a little, I presented each boy with a small bit of tobacco from our own rather scanty store, and it had the effect of making them take a little happier view of the situation. They had collected two huge stacks of firewood, each as big as a small hay-stack, because, from the nature of the country, they expected more lions than usual; but we were disagreeably disappointed, for we never even heard one until we awoke in the morning, and a far-distant growl told us that the king of the forest was returning home. Even our hunger could not disguise the fact that mealie-meal pap is a most insipid article of diet, and when made with black water no man can desire a less tempting breakfast. But it was that or nothing; so after devouring as much of the stuff as we could force down, we started off on our third day's adventures, with deep vows that something should die before we made our evening camp, and that we would not again go to bed hungry. Our best chance of finding water, and therefore in all probability game, was by keeping along the corner of the sloop, which, to all appearances, when full, ran into the Sabie.

CHAPTER XXX.

Inyati! Inyati!—A Lioness—Meat in Profusion—The Boys gorge themselves—More Buffalo—A narrow Escape—A fine Giraffe.

BEFORE we had gone many miles along our new course, the nature of the country changed. The trees gave way to thorns again, and a short crisp grass took the place of the long tufts we had hitherto been walking through.

The boys grew more hopeful, and quickened the pace of their own accord. Soon we came across some very fresh spoor of imparla, going in the same direction as ourselves, and a mile further on we came upon quite a large pool of sweet clear water. After we had plentifully drunk of it, and both horse and boys had as much as they desired, Woodward and I enjoyed a splendid bath, which quite set up our spirits again, and made us feel as fresh and jolly as when we started. While we were bathing, the boys had been carefully examining the damp soil all round, which retained the spoor of every animal that had been to drink, it was in places quite beaten down with numberless marks of game.

Any quantity of imparla, quagga, and blue wildebeeste, and several lions and giraffe, had been about only the previous night; but, much to our dis-

appointment, we could not pick out a single buffalo spoor which had been made since the last rains. With so much game about, there was no doubt about getting something before night, and we saw that our pouches were full of cartridges, and rifles all ready, before we again set off. As there could be no difficulty in again hitting off the others who were still following the sloop, I mounted my horse, and with Jacob set off to make a wide détour to the left. The thorns were so thick that I had some difficulty in getting through them; but the boy, unimpeded with clothes, slipped through like an eel. A herd of pigs dashed out of some bushes close to us, but skurried away without giving me a fair chance of a shot.

Very soon afterwards a long line of imparla appeared crossing an open space upon a piece of rising ground to our left. I left my horse where we were, and with Jacob cautiously made my way towards them, to obtain an easy shot. The line must have been half a mile long, and seemed as if it was never coming to an end. I was adjusting the 400-yards sight to my rifle, thinking I would not risk getting any closer as the bôk were affording a clear shot, when Jacob, by a low, long whistle, drew my attention to the ground at our feet, and I did not need him to tell me that what I saw, was quite fresh buffalo spoor. So fresh, in fact, it looked, that for some moments we peered through the bushes on all sides of us, expecting to see the buffalo themselves. We thought no more of the imparla, which had disappeared into the bush while we were deliberating, but turned all our attention to the nobler

game. On closer examination we discovered that the spoor all led in the same direction, and at right angles to our own line, so in all probability the herd, which, from the spoor numbered a couple of hundred, either had or would cross the path of Woodward and the other boys. There was no difficulty in following it up, for a wide path had been forced through the bush, and broken twigs everywhere showed the way, without our even having to look on the ground.

The spoor led straight to the sloop, and there turned up along the side. As the rest of the party were behind us, we waited for them to come up. We had not very long to wait for their arrival, but my patience was nearly exhausted notwithstanding.

The boys were so delighted that they could hardly restrain themselves from shouting and dancing. Woodward and myself were almost equally elated, though we did not show it in the same exultant manner. So as not to be impeded in our movements by the packages the boys carried, we determined to follow up the sloop until we came to the first likely place for water, and from thence leaving a couple of boys to prepare our camp for the night, start off on the spoor of the buffalo. Fortune favoured us; and just at the spot where the herd had themselves turned off from the sloop, we found a pool of water still left in a cleft of the rocks. It did not look at all inviting, as the surface was completely covered over with green blotches, but still it was better than we had any right to expect to find without digging at that time of year.

Only waiting long enough to give my horse a

drink, and let the boys wash their mouths out, we set out again on the spoor. Jacob kept his position in front, and I close behind him with Woodward near me, and the other boys pressing close up to us. Suddenly Jacob dropped as if he had been shot, and with arm stretched out towards a rise to our right, and with eyes almost starting from his head, hissed out "Inyati! inyati!" and there, following the direction of his arm, about a mile away, we made out a mass of great brown-looking objects slowly moving along amongst the trees. We held a short consultation with the boys, and then I with half of them started off to head the herd by a circuitous route, while Woodward and the remainder followed up the spoor in their rear.

The thorns grew thicker and thicker at every yard we advanced; and although I was now on horseback, I had great difficulty in keeping up with the boys, for the ground was covered with loose pieces of quartz and rock. I had taken my heavy double-barrel rifle from Jacob at the first sign of the buffalo, and given him my Martini-Henry to carry instead. At last we came to the end of the thorns, and on passing out of them suddenly saw the buffalo within a hundred yards of us, evidently alarmed by the noise we had been making on our way through the dry crackling bushes.

As we emerged they set off galloping at right angles to us. Setting spurs into my horse, I was almost alongside of the racing herd in an instant; but my horse, frightened at the noise the huge beasts made crashing through the underwood, the thuds

of their hoofs on the hard ground, and their bel-lowings and snortings, began to plunge and rear violently. I jumped off, and either from being too excited and unsteady to take any proper aim, or from my horse pulling my arm as I fired, made a clean miss at a splendid bull tearing past, not fifteen yards from where I stood. The herd only increased their speed, and the line still continued to pass by me at the same distance. The first failure and disappointment steadied me in an instant, and taking a more quiet aim at the shoulder of one of the hinder ones, I had the satisfaction of seeing him—for it was another bull—stumble forward and fall over within twenty yards of where he was hit. Jacob had now come up and handed me the other rifle, with which I hit the very last of the line, but did not kill it. Leaving the bull where it was, on we dashed after the herd, but they struck for the thickest thorns and soon distanced us. When I had time to think of scratches, I discovered that all that remained to me of what had once been a flannel shirt was the neck, shoulders, and a few long ragged strips; the rest of it being left on the thorns we had pushed through, and my body looked as if I had been scarified all over.

Jacob had left me to try and follow up the wounded buffalo, which had turned off from the herd, always a sure sign of a mortal hurt. As I was riding back alone, in the direction of our camp, from a clump of reeds and grass, at some little distance from me, I caught a glimpse of an animal raising itself for an instant, and after a hasty look round it sank down again out of sight. At first, seeing it so

indistinctly, I thought it was a doe reed-bòk, but while I was still watching, I perceived that it was a lioness, for she again raised her head and neck to have another look-out to discover what all the disturbance was about. She saw I had observed her, and without attempting to hide again, sank down low and went skulking off through the long grass, but presently she had to cross an open space before she could reach the shelter of the bush. Seeing this, I jumped off my horse and put up my 300-yards sight, which I judged the distance to be. Sure enough out she came, and taking a steady aim, I fired; but I had misjudged the distance, which was nearer 400, and instead of hitting her in the heart the bullet passed through the foreleg nearest to me. She went down for an instant on the ground, roaring horribly, but before I could load again had disappeared in the reeds on the other side. While I was attempting to hit upon her tracks some of the boys came up and soon found several spots of blood.

Nothing, however, would induce them to follow her up in the reeds, and I myself, after several unsuccessful attempts to keep on the spoor, had to give it up as a bad job, and retrace my steps towards the camp. I had heard several shots from Woodward, and soon after came up with him. He had not been in such a good position as I had, but nevertheless had killed a bull. The boys had already been at work on both the dead buffalos, and were soon loaded with such heavy weights of flesh that they staggered along under them. Evening

was approaching, so we lost no time in making for the spot we had fixed on as our camp. The two boys we had left in charge, in anticipation of meat, had already lighted the fire to cook it at; and in a very few minutes dozens of sticks were stuck in the ground leading towards the fire, on each of which were spitted eight or ten knobs of flesh. The boys took handfuls of the flesh only just warmed, and, eating it as they went, started off to bring back more loads of meat. Woodward selected various titbits from each load as it was brought in, and he also told one of the boys to cut out for our use pieces from the rump of each buffalo, and also the kidneys, which are the most dainty bits of the whole meat. Jacob returned while we were still busy, grinning all over, and bearing the tail of the wounded buffalo he had followed up and killed, as a trophy of his success. Our camp looked exactly like a butcher's shop, for from every twig and branch were hanging long strips of raw meat, and marrow-bones, and pieces of skin were littered all over the ground.

My horse had shown great signs of weakness during the day, and had on several occasions stumbled very badly, which made us fear that the fly-poison was already beginning to affect it, although not supposed to do so until the rainy season set in. As the smell of the fresh meat, and the trails of the boys carrying it and leading right up to our camp, were sure to attract lions from all directions, we were especially careful in making a secure stable for the horse, and in having an ample supply of firewood. We also had the gourds and buckets filled with

water, in addition to the billy and pipkins, as we knew that nothing in the world would induce a boy to go and fetch water after dusk when there was any chance of a lion being about. The tempting odours from the frizzling meat made our hunger almost unbearable, and it seemed that never had kidneys taken so long to fry before. Woodward, who was chef for the occasion, at last declared them to be sufficiently cooked. They quite recompensed us for the waiting, as they were done to a turn; and never had kidneys tasted so well as these did. Fried in their own fat, and tender as possible, from being so fresh killed that they had not any time to cool, they made a dinner for hungry men, who had been three days without meat, that I shall never forget. Marrow-bones, of course, we finished up with, and over our pipes and tot of square-face were able contentedly to watch the boys.

It was such a scene as I am powerless to describe. Each boy sat at the fire in front of his own particular stick or ramrod, on which were the little knobs of meat; but beside each was a pile of long strips about an inch thick, and some of them a yard in length. While his knobs were slowly roasting the boy would take one of these long strips, containing at least half a pound of meat, and, holding one end in the flame, would let it get toasted for a few seconds; then he would place that end in his mouth, and begin to chew it, placing the still uncooked end in the flame, and at the same time watching that the knobs on his stick did not get burnt. For three hours or more not a boy moved from the fire, except to

cut up a fresh supply of meat or to have a drink of water. All this time they hardly spoke a word, so intent were they on gorging themselves ; but as the night advanced they broke into a low, monotonous sort of humming chant, during which, one after the other, they recounted some adventure of the day, or expressed their delight at so much good food, the others all the while keeping up an accompanying chorus of the humming chant. Occasionally they would raise their voices to a yell, and then sink them so low as to be almost inaudible. Woodward and myself turned into our blankets, and were soon lulled asleep by the monotonous but not unpleasant singing. All through the night the boys alternately ate or sang, and several times when I awoke I saw them still hard at work chewing down the yards of meat. The natural consequence of this gormandizing followed ; and next morning, when we wanted to make a start, three-quarters of the boys were utterly unfit to proceed, being literally drunk, to all appearances, from the huge quantities of meat they had consumed. Their eyes were rolling, they could hardly walk straight, and they spoke and looked as if they were insensible to what was going on around them. Under these circumstances, there was nothing to do for it but stay where we were for the day, and make the best of a bad job. Woodward and I, accompanied by Jacob and two of the other boys, who had not made such beasts of themselves as the rest, started off to find the spoor of the buffaloes, and, if possible, follow it up until we came upon them again.

I took my horse with me, but led it instead of riding, so as to tire it as little as possible, and have it fresh for any sudden spurt I might want to make. We soon came upon the spot where we had left the spoor the previous night, and for several miles followed it up with no difficulty. But soon we came to a place where another lot of buffalo had crossed those we were following, and as it was only a few hours old we turned to them and left the herd we had been after. The fresh trail led us straight towards the sloop on the banks of which our camp was situated, and presently crossed over it.

On the other side the herd, which we could see by the spoor in the sand of the sloop to number some thirty or forty, had loitered about a little, plucking some tufts of green grass, and the spoor was very warm when we again hit off the line of it through the bush. We used now greater precaution than ever; Jacob went ahead of us, creeping through the grass and bushes, and taking advantage of every piece of cover to have a good look-out over the ground ahead of him before even entering on any open space. His low whistle presently announced to us that the game was close at hand, and on crawling up to where he lay flat on his face behind a clump of Tambooti grass, we saw the herd not above four hundred yards away from us, quietly feeding, and quite unconscious of danger. They were just too far away for us to fire, and in our position we could not either advance or turn to one side without being perceived by them; so there was nothing for us to do but stay where we were until

they either came closer to us, or changed their ground so as to allow us to creep up nearer. The wind was in our teeth, so there was no danger to be apprehended from that source. Very slowly the herd moved away, and gradually all disappeared in the bushes. We this time made a wide *détour*, so as to come upon them broadside, instead of behind. When within what we knew must not be far from where they were, I left the horse, and we crawled along, imitating as best we could every movement of Jacob, who slipped along in the most contorted positions as fast as if he had been upright. We heard a bull snorting before we came within sight, and almost immediately after the foremost appeared slowly moving along, with their heads on the ground, feeding. Jacob handed me the ten-bore; Woodward took the Martini-Henry. Three bulls were now within fifty yards of us, so picking out the first and Woodward the last of the trio, we took aim and fired almost simultaneously. Mine did not fall, so I gave it the second barrel to make sure, as it was dashing off with the rest of the herd, who, with their heads down and tails waving, were madly making off through the bushes. My bull, although with two bullets in it, was not yet dead, and stood savagely glaring at us as we emerged from our cover. But as it was trying to rally its remaining strength for a rush, it fell over, quite dead. I sent Jacob back for my horse, and mounting, galloped after the herd, which had made a turn in the direction of our camp, but on the other side of the sloop. As usual, they made straight for a thicket

of dense thorn, into which it was impossible to follow them. Just before they reached it I came up close enough for a snap shot, luckily wounding a cow, which turned off from the herd and made across the slood. The bullet from my second barrel fell short, and by the time I crossed she had disappeared. The ground was too hard to retain any spoor, so there was no means of following the cow up in the thick bush, where we could pass within a stone's throw without observing her.

As we had now killed two, we made our way back towards camp to despatch boys back to the spot for the meat, and also the horns off the one which had fallen to my share, which happened to be remarkably fine ones. Jacob was left behind to guard the carcasses. As we were nearing the camp loud cries attracted our steps to the right, and presently we became aware that one of the boys was perched upon the top of a high rock, and hallooing at the top of his voice. We called out to let him know of our presence, and he then yelled back that we were to be careful, as a wounded buffalo was down below him on the other side of the rock. There, sure enough, when we had made our way round, appeared the cow I had wounded beyond the slood. The ball had passed through the lower part of her belly, and the blood was oozing out of the wound on both sides. As she became aware of our approach she turned round and faced towards us, swinging her tail backwards and forwards, tossing her head with its sharp-pointed horns up in the air, and snorting and groaning with rage. Deceived by her helpless

appearance, and in spite of Woodward's expostulations, I jumped off my horse and walked towards her, hoping to move round so as to get a broadside shot at the shoulder ; but as I walked round she did the same, and never exposed any part to me except her neck and head, protected by the horns, with eyes all red and bloodshot glaring fiercely beneath them. She looked anything but a pleasing object ; froth was dropping from her mouth, and with her tail she occasionally switched the bleeding wounds, and smeared her sides and back all red with blood. Twice I walked round her at a distance of some thirty yards, and twice she moved round so as always to face me. If I had been armed with the double-barrel ten-bore I should not have cared, but with the Martini-Henry it did not do to risk a miss, as there was only the one chance. Gradually I decreased the distance between us, and was just meditating giving her a bullet fair below the forehead and just above the muzzle, where there is a small vulnerable spot, when she cut short my deliberations by putting down her head and charging straight at me as if she was not wounded at all, and had the full power of her strength. I aimed steadily and fired, but the ball glanced off her horns, and she came on only the faster and more furiously. I turned and ran, but the soles of my boots were slippery, and every instant she gained on me, as I went back one step for every three I took forward. Woodward was in a straight line ahead of me, and did not dare fire, as to hit the buffalo the bullet must have passed through my body.

Suddenly my foot slipped, and down I went head over heels, my rifle flying up into the air as I fell. The cow was within a couple of yards of me, and in imagination I felt the beast's hot breath upon me. With a sort of convulsive acrobatic scramble I managed, more by instinct than reason, to double myself up behind the trunk of a small tree not more than a few inches in diameter, which happened to grow between the cow and myself. The slim trunk bent double and cracked as the full weight of the beast came against it, but luckily for me she struck it fair between the horns, and was hurled over on her side half-stunned; there the beast lay for an instant helpless, which gave my companion time to run up and put a bullet through the heart, after which she never even moved a muscle. The whole occurrence had taken such a moment that I had not had time to be frightened myself; but Woodward's face showed that he thought he had spoken to me for the last time, and I could hardly persuade him that I had sustained no injury at all, as from his position it had appeared to him that my fall was occasioned by the cow's horns running into my back. I made up my mind on the spot that I would never again face a wounded buffalo at close quarters when there was no real occasion to do so; and as no harm came, the lesson was not thrown away on either of us, for we were both more cautious for the future.

We proceeded to cut the best meat off the carcase of the cow, and with that and the tail as a trophy and memento of my narrow escape, we set off

to camp. Loud were the exclamations of our boys when the Kaffir, who had been a witness of my adventure, narrated it with many exaggerations and additions of his own. The generally expressed opinion was that I must have "eaten some very powerful medicine" to have had such a lucky escape; and several of the boys in private inquired what sort of charm I wore as a protection against such accidents.

The boys had been gathering different plants and bulbs, which they boiled together to make some sort of "mootie." Copious draughts of this had cured them of all the ill effects of their gorging. Nevertheless, they feasted on late into the night in spite of their recent illness; but as they were now more accustomed to the meat diet, they were able to proceed on the trek next morning. We had a capital breakfast of buffalo-steaks before starting, and the boys loaded themselves with enough meat to last for several days, in case of not falling in with more game. We kept the same direction towards the Limbombo Mountains, and at our mid-day halt they did not look more than twenty or thirty miles distant from us. During the afternoon a solitary giraffe crossed slowly through the trees in front. I jumped on my horse, but the giraffe, suddenly aware of danger, started off at a great pace, clearing the ground in long awkward leaps. For some distance the bull—as his dark-coloured skin showed him to be—rather gained on me than I on him; but luckily the bush was too low to hide him from me. Gradually his pace slackened, and, putting the spurs into my horse, I

was very soon close alongside. I determined, however, not to waste a chance by firing too soon, and urged on my horse closer and closer. As the huge ungainly animal grew more and more tired his gait became very unsteady, and several times he brushed very heavily against the trees in efforts to avoid them. He kept switching his long dark tail high above his back, and then down again, and from side to side. I had my Martini-Henry with me, so I could trust to its penetrating even the thick, tough skin of the kameel. It was only now a question of time for me to get up quite alongside, and soon I was within a few feet of the swinging tail. I put in the spurs again, and my horse, making one bound forward, placed me level with the animal's shoulder; as I passed him, whether by accident or design, the giraffe kicked out so far with his hind hoof that my horse was almost hit by it. To give an idea of the giraffe's height, the muzzle of my rifle was considerably elevated as I put it up and fired right in behind the shoulder. For an instant the animal stopped dead, and my horse passed on beyond. While I was loading again the giraffe turned off to one side, but I was again close to it in a few bounds, and this time put a bullet through the neck. Down toppled the lofty head, and with many convulsive struggles the great carcass lay lifeless before me. I could not help thinking what a pigmy I looked beside it, for it must have measured full eighteen feet from the top of its little hair-covered horns to the hoofs.

The giraffe differs in its mode of progression from most other four-footed animals, which move a right

fore-leg and left hind-leg at the same time, or *vice versa*; but the giraffe moves both his right legs simultaneously, and then follows with the left. The eyes of the giraffe are the most beautiful and appealing of any animal I ever saw, and it is supposed to be able to see both before and behind without turning its head; but, from the position of the eyes in the skull, I never could see why it should enjoy superior advantages of vision to other animals. A giraffe is the most defenceless animal imaginable, and has nothing to show fight with even if so inclined; it is easily tired out and run down, so although fleet for a short distance, it does not afford much sport. Unless the hunter has opportunities of utilizing the skin, it always appeared to me rather wanton slaughter destroying giraffe, as neither difficulty nor danger attended their chase. They are of every shade of colour from very dark brown to yellow, varying according to sex and age, but the markings or blotches of light colour on them all, seem to be very nearly identical. An old bull is of a deep dark brown, an old cow is a sort of dark yellowish brown, and the younger ones are of a light brown with almost a shade of purple in it. They are seldom seen in companies of more than eight or twelve at a time, and two or three together are far more commonly met with than any larger numbers.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Rain sets in—"Cricket" is lost—Blue Wildebeeste—A wounded Bull—The Boys "tree'd"—A pleasant Camp—Iguana—A black Rhinoceros—The Martini-Henry—Wild Pig—The Boys return—"Cricket's" Death—Tsetse Fly.

SMALL clouds had appeared in the usually clear sky during the afternoon, which had gradually become blacker and bigger as evening approached, and soon we had not to think about where we should get water for the night, and be able to make camp, as a slow drizzling shower commenced, and made us wish to get under shelter. We soon found a convenient spot, and lost no time in stretching out our tent over the still dry ground under the far-spreading branches of a large mimosa growing from the top of a mound, which had kept the wet out like an umbrella. Just as we had succeeded in lighting a fire with the already damp wood, the long-collected storm burst upon us, and poured down a pelting, pitiless deluge, which soon put out our fires, and made us take refuge in the small tent, and there eat in a despondent mood our almost raw supper; and although raw meat may be very digestible, we did not find it very pleasant to the taste. The boys made up the best stable for my horse that circumstances would permit, and I put one of my blankets and a couple

of empty sacks over its back to keep it as warm as possible.

The boys themselves crouched round the trunk of the tree, and there managed to procure some shelter from the blinding tempest, erecting a kind of shed with branches, and wattling it with grass and twigs. Our little tent kept out the wet perfectly, and a trench dug round the sides carried away all the drippings. It was impossible to have any fires, so we had to trust to chance that no lions came our way, and that the rain would make them feel inclined to keep dry at home. Woodward and I lay down side by side, and were soon fast asleep. We were rudely awakened, however, by a crashing, snorting, and thumping outside, and on looking out of the tent we discovered that my horse had broken the double rims which tied it, and made its escape. The cause of its alarm was not hard to discover, for a growl proceeding out of the darkness, which seemed to fill the whole air, sent us both back with a bound to the protection of the tent, as we could not see a yard in front of us, and were unable to fire; but we knew that the lion would not spring at a great white thing, the nature of which he was ignorant of. It was perfectly useless to think of attempting to seek my horse that night, as not a boy would have moved away from the others, even if there had been any light to search for it by. We heard distant roars, which probably proceeded from some more lions pursuing my poor horse. A shot or two fired on chance into the darkness soon drove off the one who seemed inclined to investigate our camp, but all

through the remainder of the long uncomfortable night we heard occasional growls too near to be pleasant. At the very first streak of dawn, although it was still pouring with rain, we set off on the spoor of the horse, which we could now easily follow in the soft muddy soil. For some five or six miles we followed it up along the identical trek we had come the previous day. A lion had been after it the whole distance that we tracked its spoor; but at the point we left off the lion had evidently had enough of it too, for its spoor showed that it had pulled up, and after walking round several times in a circle, made off in another direction. We returned to camp draggled, dreary, and despondent; but a lull in the rain-storm, and a glimpse of sun showing out, warmed our bodies and cheered up our spirits. It was a difficult task to get the fire to burn, but we had providentially covered up a little fuel when the storm first came on, and when this once blazed the heat soon dried enough fresh wood to make a fire large enough to cook our breakfast at.

We held a council of war, to which we called in the assistance of Jacob and a couple of the more intelligent of the boys. By their advice we picked out two of the other boys, gave them a rifle apiece with ammunition and provisions for a week, and sent them off on the spoor of the lost horse, with instructions to follow it up, even if it had returned to the wag-gons, but on no account to return without it, and if dead to bring its skin; which directions left them no loophole of escape from rigidly obeying our orders. When we had seen the boys off, Woodward and I,

each accompanied by a boy, started off in opposite directions to hunt the neighbouring country; but towards noon the storm recommenced, and we both returned to the camp about the same time, drenched to our skins, cold, and disappointed, as we had neither of us come across a living animal of any description, neither had we discovered any recent-looking spoor. The rain continued in the steady deluge of water that only tropical countries experience, and soon everything was swimming around us. The tent luckily kept out any wet from above, but the ground underneath gradually became very spongy and damp. After eating some pieces of meat which had remained over in the frying-pan from our breakfast, we turned in between the blankets, and did our best to forget our discomforts in slumber. My dreams all night were of floods, shipwrecks, and inundations, and I was hardly a pleasant sleeping companion for Woodward, as my struggles, he assured me next morning, were most violent to escape my fancied watery grave. We both woke up with severe colds, and for a week afterwards our voices were like ravens', and we regretted that we had no tallow candles to rub on our noses. The rain continued all the next day without a moment's intermission, and as it was out of the question to attempt hunting, as we could not see fifty yards distance in the blinding downpour, we just stayed where we were, huddled up in our tiny tent, the atmosphere in which had now become like that of a Turkish bath. Just as evening was setting in the wind veered round to north, and presently the black

clouds cleared off, and the sun came out just in time to set upon a clear fine sky. All the firewood, however, was now so thoroughly soaked that we were unable to raise sufficient fire to cook any meat; but we managed to boil a billy of coffee by means of the grass which had formed our beds, and been kept somewhat drier under the protection of the tent. Just as the light was leaving us a troop of blue wildebeeste appeared through the bushes, quite close to the camp; and by great luck, in the uncertain light, I managed to kill one of them, which came in very opportunely, as our larder was almost empty.

A red sky at evening had led us to expect a fine day on the morrow, and we were not disappointed, for the sun rose brilliantly and soon dried up all the moisture from the ground and trees, and drove away all the damp mists and vapours.

We were not long in getting all the boys loaded, and striking our camp. Before leaving the boys placed sticks and pieces of grass in various positions to explain to the two who had been sent after the horse that we had moved on, still in search of game, and pointing out the direction we intended to take. Within a very few miles we crossed and recrossed the constant spoor of giraffe, buffalo, blue wildebeeste, and an occasional rhinoceros and lion; but although there must have been abundance of game all round, we never came across any the whole day through, and had to make our dinner off the blue wildebeeste of the previous evening.

Next day we again fell in with buffalo, and were successful in killing a couple of fine bulls; but as the

bush was very thick, and the country covered with huge boulders of rocks, the herd managed to get clear away without giving us another chance, so it was not a very exciting day's sport. We followed up their spoor again next morning; but, warned by their lesson of the night before, they kept a better look-out, and were off on two occasions when we had stalked up to them, before letting us get a shot. Discouraged, but not beaten, we kept steadily on their spoor. As we were quietly following it along, suddenly the bushes opened to our right, and a splendid bull buffalo dashed out and crossed in front of us. We gave him the benefit of our two rifles, but neither bullet stopped him, and on he went crashing through the thorns. Several of the boys were after him at full speed, while we followed them at a more leisurely pace. After a long tramp one of the boys came back with the intelligence that the wounded bull had hidden himself in some tall reeds growing in the broad channel of a dried-up sloop. The shouts of the boys told us the direction we were to follow; but when we had arrived on the high banks, although the shouts seemed close to and all round us, not a single boy was anywhere to be seen, and it was not for some time we perceived that the boys, in their infinite terror of the wounded "inyati," had forsaken their native element, and taken, like so many monkeys, to the protection of the trees. From their lofty hiding-places they all at once yelled out their advice to us to do likewise, and also informed us of the whereabouts of the buffalo.

We fired several shots into the reeds, and threw

numberless stones, without eliciting any response from the wounded beast. As we could not waste all the day in waiting for it to die or come out, Woodward and I determined to make our way close together through the reeds and find it. The boys looked on in horror at what they thought our foolhardiness, but we knew that the beast was wounded badly, and trusted that one of us would kill it, even if the other missed. We had great difficulty in forcing our passage through the long, sharp sword-reeds, and received many severe cuts and scratches on our way; but we had the satisfaction of coming across the buffalo at his last gasp, and another bullet knocked it over as it attempted to rise preparatory to making a last charge.

The boys would not forsake their leafy retreats until they were well assured that the enemy was vanquished, by seeing us emerge from the reeds with its tail. Instantly thereupon they slipped down, and were soon up to their elbows wallowing in the warm blood. The horns were so fine that we determined to preserve them; so, much to one of the boy's disgust, we insisted upon his carrying them, and distributed his former, but now reduced load, of provisions amongst the other boys. On our way back to camp we killed another cow, and a young one too, which proved a most welcome change of diet. There is as much difference between a young cow and any other buffalo as between a heron and a woodcock. The former is only eaten out of necessity, but the latter is a most toothsome delicacy, and equal in flavour to the very finest

venison from any forest in Scotland or park in England.

We made our camp for the night by the only good water we had tasted for a couple of months, and there was almost an unlimited supply of it.

It was discovered more by chance than anything else, as none of the boys had any knowledge of our present neighbourhood, and it did not look a likely place. Several acres of ground were covered thickly with large ragged rocks, piled up one above the other. On the chance of coming across a panther or lion, we were climbing over them, and in the very centre came upon a little open sandy space, on two sides of which, deep down to the foundation of the rocks, were two clear pools of water, one of them not less than six feet deep, and evidently supplied by a spring. We indulged in the luxury of a bathe in the deeper pool, leaving the other of equally pure and good water for the drinking and cooking supplies. We took the opportunity of thoroughly washing our shirts, &c., and for several hours our costumes were as simple and natural as that of the boys themselves. While we were bathing, a large iguana made his appearance on the side of the rock we were sitting on; but after observing us with suspicion for some seconds, he waddled off leisurely. We jumped out of the water, snatched up a couple of the boy's assegais, and set off in pursuit.

The iguana changed its dawdling crawl to quick darts, which carried it along far faster than we could have followed up if it had been on the level. It would have undoubtedly escaped as it was, for

the rocks cut our feet at every step, and prevented our getting along very fast; but, unfortunately for the silly creature, a slit between two rocks tempted it to seek its protection; and from there it had no means of escape, as with our slender assegais we were easily able to reach it. We soon succeeded in despatching it, and had more difficulty in pulling out the body, but were successful with the boys' assistance; on measurement, it proved to be a very large iguana, being nearly seven feet from tip of tongue to tip of tail. The boys skinned it and made pouches out of the rough hide, but they did not waste the body, which was soon roasting on their sticks. I tried the flesh and found it very palatable indeed, hardly to be distinguished from chicken, only a little richer and more succulent. Every hour we expected to hear the shouts of our boys returning with the horse, as they had now been absent from us six days. We had very little hope of seeing the horse itself again, and if it was brought back we knew it would now be valueless, as the unfortunately-timed rain would have finished the work of the tsetse fly. Darkness came on without any signs of them, and we turned in rather anxious as to their safety.

We had more trouble with lions than we had ever before experienced during the night. As our camp was some little distance from the wood, the boys had been lazy, and had not brought up nearly sufficient fuel. Several lions commenced prowling round outside the camp early in the evening, so the boys made up huge fires, and were continually throwing burning brands out into the darkness to keep them at a

respectful distance. We ourselves went to sleep as usual, knowing that the boys would be quite certain to keep the fires up without our assistance. Between two and three the boys awoke us with their yells, and begged us to get up and fire our guns, as they declared there were dozens of lions standing all round and glaring at them. The firewood was all exhausted, and the fires were just expiring. The growls certainly sounded very close to us indeed, and we lost no time in firing off our rifles in the directions they proceeded from, but without doing the lions any damage. It was of no use our attempting again to go to sleep, as the boys roused us up at once with fresh terrors. The air of the early morning was very cold and raw, so we were very glad to see the sun rising above the trees, and to feel its cheering rays. No amount of fire warms one like the sun, or so soon takes out the stiffness and cramp arising from lying upon the cold, damp ground.

To give the boys who had been sent after the horse another chance of coming up with us, we remained where we were for the day, and not at all unwillingly, as the abundant supply of water, with the unexpected opportunity of bathing, held out irresistible attractions.

During the day Woodward and I went off with a couple of the boys to try and find the buffalo again. While we were following up the spoor of a small herd, a black rhinoceros came bustling through the bushes quite close to us, but went on, apparently not even inconvenienced by the two shots we had at it. Not having any horse, it was useless to follow it up,

so we continued after the buffalo. The spoor of the small herd we were following joined into the spoor of a larger one after we had tracked it for some distance, and soon afterwards we sighted the whole of them, feeding in among the trees. The wind was behind us, so we had to make a very long circuit round. While we were doing this the herd moved forward unperceived by us, and we suddenly came face to face with their leaders quite unexpectedly. Instead of charging forward at us, as I had been led to expect they would do under the circumstances, the whole herd wheeled quickly round and beat a retreat, with their tails flying over their backs, and such a stamping and snorting that we heard them half a mile away. One of their number, however, was left on the ground *hors de combat*, with a Martini-Henry bullet through him. It had entered on the left side, through the fleshy part of the hind-quarter, and, piercing all the entrails, had made its exit clean through the right shoulder, smashing the bone into splinters. It was the best instance of the crushing penetration and force of the Martini-Henry that I ever saw. An old bull had also been severely wounded, but had followed on behind the herd, not delayed by several shots we fired at its hind-quarters. We followed up the spoor for about a mile, and had just passed through some very thick thorns, when the boys gave an agonized shout, and bounded past us for their lives. Instantly facing round to see the cause, we just had time to spring aside, and let the old bull we had wounded, and who had taken shelter behind a clump of thorns, charge past us; and I

gave him another bullet right through the belly as he passed. The now mad brute wheeled round again, but we were both safe behind the trunks of trees. For an instant the bull stood still, glaring round with his blood-shot eyes and frothy mouth; then, perceiving me, he made a rush straight at the trunk which protected my body; but he had to pass within a yard of Woodward, who, with his muzzle almost touching the animal's shoulder, put a bullet into his heart, and it dropped dead right against my tree. There were seven bullet-wounds in its carcass; three of the bullets had passed right through, and the other four were embedded in the flesh of the hind-quarters. Covering the body up, we set out for the camp, so as to send back the boys for meat. On our way, a herd of wild pigs trotted leisurely out of the reeds, as we walked through a dry sloop. As I wanted a new ammunition-pouch, we bowled over a fine fat hog, whose skin made excellent material for belts or pouches when well cleansed and greased. The hog had a splendid pair of tusks, but as we had no hatchet with us we were unable to cut them out of its head. The wild pigs here, as elsewhere, were all covered over with lice and other vermin, which made them very disagreeable beasts to carry about. The only way to utilize their flesh is to tear a strip of skin off the whole length of the backbone, and then to cut out long V-shaped slices on both sides of it. The boys had quite lost their calculations as to the direction of the camp, and led us a very long roundabout tramp before at last declaring that they had no idea where we were,

or which road to take. It was long past noon, and we were feeling seriously uneasy, when one of them some distance off recognized a clump of trees we had passed on the preceding day. When this was reached we were able to find our own spoor, and, following it up, soon reached the camp, but not before the sun had gone down, and only just in time to avoid passing a night out. Nothing had been seen or heard of the other two boys, much to my disappointment, as every day's hunting showed me more and more the necessity of having a horse to make sure of running down wounded game. The boys had spent their day in making huge piles of firewood, so as not to have our rest disturbed as on the previous night. They had also killed a very large boa-constrictor, nearly eighteen feet long, which had been crawling about right inside the limits of our camp. It was too late to send out after the meat of the buffaloes we had killed, and as there was plenty in camp it made no difference. When the boys went next morning for the meat, they found two lions eating the old bull, so they were afraid to interfere, and came back in great haste to let us know of it; but when we arrived on the spot the robbers had taken themselves off. They had utterly destroyed the buffalo, mauling and tearing what parts they had not eaten. In the afternoon we made a twelve-miles march to the south, and camped very near the line of our route in coming. I shot a pig with remarkably fine tusks while the boys were making up the fires, &c., and instantly another gun was fired off at some distance in answer to the dis-

charge of my rifle. Our boys at once put it down to what it was—the two boys returning, and very soon they made their appearance, guided by the shouts from our camp and an occasional discharge of a rifle. There was no horse with them, but instead they had brought its skin, still quite moist and fresh. They had followed the horse along the trek we had come, straight back to camp; and the boys assured us that the horse had never stopped for sleep or food over the whole distance of sixty or seventy miles, until it found itself on its accustomed feeding-ground close to the waggons. They had rested twelve hours at the waggons, and had then started off with it; but the effect of the cold rain became more plain every hour. By the end of the first day's tramp the horse could hardly get forward at all. Next morning they had great difficulty in raising it up, and had been obliged to trek very slowly, and give the horse every opportunity of resting. The third day it seemed a little better, and they had made a long march; but the next morning it had absolutely refused to move at all till the sun had been up some time and warmed its poor diseased bones. The next day it had suddenly fallen down dead as it was being led slowly along; and, according to their instructions, the boys had skinned it, and brought the hide as a sign of their obedience.

There were large discoloured blotches scattered all over the inside of the skin, and the boys described the body as having been diseased all over in the parts where the skin was discoloured. Its bones were all showing through the skin, and it had lost all

its strength and appetite before it died. The hair on the dry skin was rough, and standing the wrong way. I was sorry not to have myself seen the body of the horse, and so to have had more accurate information, and to have been able to see the exact nature of the diseased places, and how deeply they penetrated, as also the condition of the blood and stomach, and possibly to discover in what the tsetse fly differs from the other species of poisonous insects.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Provisions run short—The last Buffalo—No Water—Thirst—Tongas—The Waggon again—All safe—Koodoo—A long Ride—Creviceing—Russell's Store—A Digger's Quarters—Diggers at Home—Frozen in Bed.

THE boys brought most reassuring news from the waggons. Oxen and horses were all doing well, and had much improved in appearance since the rain had caused the grass to shoot up and afford them good feeding. The boys left in charge, although very anxious for our return, had not had any trouble with strange Kaffirs, and had been successful in killing several quagga and blue wildebeeste, so they had not run short of meat, which would prevent their becoming discontented. We were now already beyond the time we had counted on as being absent from the waggons, and our supplies of provisions were all at a very low ebb, some—including the sugar and coffee, and gin—were entirely run out. We had killed so many buffalo, and such quantities of other game, that the first excitement had passed off; and as we had no means of transporting their skins to the waggon, it was very useless slaughter.

Now, too, the last chance of again having back my horse, which would give me very greatly increased facilities of running down rhinoceros or

hunting lions, was gone, and all the hunting would have to be done on foot.

Taking all these reasons into consideration, we determined to start back at once on the homeward journey. The boys were delighted when they heard our determination, as they had begun to fancy that we were taking them on and on to certain destruction by tribes they knew nothing of, or had only heard wild fables concerning their predatory habits.

Next morning the boys were up early of their own accord, and stepped out more briskly, and lagged less behind, than any day since we started.

While we were enjoying our mid-day rest under some cool leafy trees by the side of a small sloop which contained an occasional pool of green slimy water, Jacob, who had been prowling all round in search of spoor, came hurriedly back with the news that a herd of buffalo were making straight along the banks of the sloop for our resting-place. In an instant we had hidden ourselves in the high reeds, and were awaiting their approach. I took the left-hand bank, and Woodward the right. We had not long to wait before the buffaloes, some forty or fifty in number, appeared slowly walking along, feeding as they came, and on my side of the sloop. As if from sheer contrariness, a slight wind, which would have been most welcome during our hot march of the morning, now sprang up behind us. I was in hopes the herd would come within shot before they had time to scent our presence, but it was not to be. The foremost old bull pricked up his ears, and stood stock still, with his nostrils in the air, drawing in at

every breath a deeper suspicion that there was danger about.

Two others came up and joined him, and seemed to form a committee of investigation ; for, leaving the old fellow where he was, they proceeded very suspiciously a hundred yards nearer, which brought them within about four hundred yards. There they stopped for an instant ; and then, possibly catching sight of one of the Kaffirs, who had not concealed himself sufficiently, or who was incautiously looking out, the pair wheeled round and rejoined the herd. I had put up my rifle, meaning to fire as they turned round, but did not, on the chance of their still coming on ; but it was a vain piece of prudence, for the whole herd now turned off and disappeared at a gallop into the bush, and although we followed for some distance we were unable to again come within sight of them. We started off on our march, and tramped steadily on for several hours, without coming across any sign of water. It was to no purpose that we sent the boys out in every direction, as evening approached, to find either a water-hole or patch of reeds where we might dig one. The sun went down upon us still thirsty, and with no prospect of drink. Another mile or two we dragged on, stumbling over stones, branches, and thorns in the dim light ; but at last we could proceed no further, for we could not see a yard ahead of us, and the boys were almost crying with dread of lions. We lighted our fires and prepared for the night ; but the meat we ate only made the pangs of thirst more insufferable. Twelve hours does not sound very

long to go without water; but no one who has not experienced it has any conception of the real pain such a forced abstinence occasions, especially in a broiling sun and working hard. Next morning we did not delay for breakfast, but started off the moment there was light, our only thoughts being to find water.

We had on the previous day crossed the trek we had made coming in, and we now turned slightly out of our direct line home to find a water-hole we had passed, and which we expected to find full; but, to our intense disappointment, the game had been beforehand with us, and there was not a single drop in the basin. The next likely place was another ten miles further on; and as we had now been twenty-four hours without a single drop of moisture passing our lips, and in that time had walked some thirty miles, we felt that our case was really becoming serious. Our mouths and lips were all blistered and bleeding, our throats smarted with dryness, and our tongues were parched and cracked. It was of no use complaining, and off we set again, but rather feebly, for the sun was beating down his fiercest rays upon us, and making our sufferings intense. It seemed the longest ten miles I ever walked, although we were only a little over three hours in accomplishing the distance. The last quarter of a mile before we came to the sloop in which were the reeds at the bottom of which we expected to find our water was the longest bit of all, for thick thorns and reeds impeded our progress, and made it very difficult work moving forward at all. Jacob, taking the

spade from the boy who usually carried it, was the quickest; and before we were half way through, his shouts announced that he had begun digging, and that he could tell from the reeds that water was there. When we arrived at the slood he had already made a hole a couple of feet deep in the sand, and the black mud soon after showed; gradually the water oozed out, and, with more delight and eagerness than ever iced champagne was drunk, we scooped up handfuls of the mud, and sucked out the moisture through our fingers, while waiting for a pool to form in the bottom of our hole. In half an hour quite a nice pool had collected, and we drank time after time of the cool, but thick and nasty-looking stuff, until we could drink no more, although still feeling thirsty. To prevent the large quantity of water on empty stomachs making us ill, we had a fire lighted, and proceeded to cook breakfast at once, for thirst had prevented our eating earlier.

We stayed by the pool until the sun was very low in the heavens, not liking to leave the vicinity of the water; but as we were sure of more for the night, we at length started off to do another trek before sleeping. I do not think that there is any more delightful sensation possible for a man to conceive than the first trickling of water over his parched palate when he has been for over twenty-four hours deprived of it. During our next day's journey we came upon a party of Amatongas who were out on a hunting expedition, but they had not been at all successful, and were very grateful for the body of a quagga which I shot and presented to them. They were

wretchedly armed; only two had muskets, and the others carried nothing but assegais. The two muskets were muzzle-loading, and the barrels made of some metal resembling tin, and not much more durable.

The Amatongas, or Tongas, occupy a strip of country covering a hundred miles, south of Delagoa Bay, and having indefinite northern boundaries. Their neighbours on the west are the Swazis, who being a strong and brave tribe, keep their weaker brethren in a state of constant fear and trembling. The Tongas are remarkable among all other tribes from their horribly mutilated and disfigured countenances. When young the flesh of the cheek-bones and forehead is slashed and cut in parallel lines; and as they grow older, and the horrible wounds are cicatrized over, they attain the most repulsive appearance imaginable. In stature they are as a rule moderately fine men, but in character they are notoriously cowards and thieves. The party we met were absolutely nude. The only attempt at clothes being a band for putting cartridges in, worn over the left shoulders of the two who carried rifles, and who were probably petty chiefs or indunas to be possessed of such coveted distinctions.

Late in the evening of our next day's trek we again passed Hart's Station, and made our camp for the night a short distance beyond it. If possible, I should have liked to push on to the waggons; for, besides the feeling of anxiety as to their safety, the prolonged absence from them made me feel quite

eager to be back again, and enjoy the comforts of being at home. So many months constant living in my waggon, had inclined me to invest it with many of the feelings of a real home, as indeed it was. It is a very common saying in South Africa, that if a man once gets into the way of waggon life, and learns to enjoy its monotonous existence, he will never settle down to any other mode of life; and that although for a time he may leave it and take to another occupation, yet the longing for the old life will prove too strong for him, and a few years will find him, once more "upon the trek." We finished our breakfast next morning, which happened to be Sunday, before the sun was risen, and then Woodward and I started off to walk the twelve miles, leaving the boys to follow along as slowly as they pleased. When we arrived the lazy drivers were still soundly sleeping, but the foreloupers had let the oxen out of the kraal, and had untied the horses, which were all grazing within sight. Our first attention was paid to these, and off we strolled to inspect them. Only one casualty had happened during our absence; one of the oxen in my span had received a rather severe wound in its hind-quarters, from the horn of another ox. The flies had settled on the raw place, and had caused great inflammation to set in. The boys were quite helpless, and it had never crossed their minds even to attempt any healing measures. We lost no time in having the ox driven in, bathing the wound in warm water until all the filth was thoroughly cleansed from it, and the inflammation had somewhat subsided, and then put on some cooling

healing ointment chiefly composed of lard and zinc, which we found most efficacious in preventing wounds inclined to be inflamed from festering, whether on man or beast. Where cold-water bandages can be kept on, there is no more sure healing process; and I have seen most horrible cuts and broken bruises join or be closed over in a very few days under the plain cold-water treatment. There may often, however, be a difficulty in obtaining water pure enough to bathe a wound with, and in that case the zinc ointment will be almost as useful.

On carefully overhauling the waggon, not a single article of any description—ammunition, food, or knick-knacks—was found wanting, and I do not believe that one of the boys had either appropriated or eaten any article which did not belong to them of right. As a reward for their fidelity we presented each one with some little present. Jantze was made perfectly happy with a very broad and gorgeous cord and leather ammunition-belt, which A. had left behind, and the other boys each received some article of cast-off wearing-apparel. The day was spent in preparing the waggons for a start on the morrow, as we had determined not to linger where we were, as there was no object to be gained, no large game being in the vicinity; and as we were quite ignorant of what had taken place in relation with the Kaffirs for the last three months, we might by staying longer where we were be exposing ourselves to unnecessary risk of losing our oxen and waggons, and very probably our lives into the bargain. We decided on taking the waggons back by

the most direct route, in fact that which had formerly been used by the carrying company of which the ill-fated Hart was a servant. It had become a matter of importance to me to receive letters; so as W. had no objection to take sole charge of the waggons into Leydenburg, not now distant more than a week's journey with the fresh and fat oxen, I made up my mind to take the best horse I had, which had been left behind with the waggons, and ride in by myself. To Spitz Kop by the nearest road, it was only seventy-five miles, which I could do in one day by making an early start. There I could stay the night, and easily ride on to Leydenburg next day, as it was not more than twenty-eight or thirty miles distant, on horseback. While outspanned from our first trek we settled up with all the boys who had accompanied us hunting, and then dismissed them, giving some small present to each. To one a "Bushman's Friend," as the cheap open-bladed knives are designated, which are chiefly used for skinning and killing game, and any other rough purpose. Another was made the proud possessor of a many-coloured handkerchief; and others carried off with them lengths of brass wire, Kaffir picks, lumps of lead, strings of beads, and other valuables of a like nature, according to their own choice and selection.

There was not a discontented soul amongst them when they set off, some returning to Delagoa Bay, others to their various kraals situated in all parts of the Sabie Valley. We retained in our service Jacob and one other only, who had been nicknamed Sar-sapi by the boys, for some reason known only to

themselves. Jacob still occupied the same position as my especial body-servant, and the other assisted with the oxen. Both boys we chose on account of their readiness to work, and the signs they had shown of courage.

While the waggon was slowly trekking along I took a circuit round Pretorius Kop, Jacob with me, in search of game, as our larder had almost run out. On the far side we passed into a country more sparsely dotted with small clumps of thorns, and my boy was not long in pointing out to me a fine pair of koodoo horns rising above the top of a low bush. Advancing cautiously we discovered that there were a male and two females in company. Dismounting from my horse, and leaving him at a distance, I followed Jacob, who glided along through the grass like a serpent; and although he was encumbered with my rifle, he managed to get along quicker than I could comfortably follow. We succeeded in creeping up to within a couple of hundred yards of the bôk before they became aware that danger was near. But it was too late for them to profit by their knowledge; for while the male was sniffing the air, and looking suspiciously in our direction, I had an easy shot, and knocked him over with a bullet right in the centre of his chest, which penetrated half way through the length of his body. The koodoo, or kudu has, the finest horns of any bôk in Africa, with the exception of the sable antelope or lion-killer. The horns are very thick and heavy, and are often three and a half feet in length, but their beauty lies in their spiral shape. They often complete two circles, the tips