

turning outwards and forwards. The bôk itself is often five feet high at the shoulder, and from eight to ten feet from tip to tip; its colour is reddish-grey, with a tinge of purple running through when the sun shines on it and the hairs glisten. It has three white spots on each cheek, and a white chin. The bôk I killed was almost full-grown, but had not such fine horns as I had previously seen. The meat is rather dry and insipid, so I was very glad of the opportunity of killing a couple of pheasants which appeared close to the waggon soon after I rejoined it. The African pheasant bears not the most distant resemblance to any other pheasant, and indeed has no proper scientific connexion with it at all. It is really a large species of partridge, but has the one peculiarity of the pheasant, that it generally roosts in trees or on bushes. It was the last night we were to spend together outside civilization, but to keep up our spirits we had a most excellent dinner.

Steaks of koodoo, broiled pheasants, marrow-bones, boiled rice and peaches, all flavoured with the same but most relishing of all sauces—the sauce of hunger—formed a repast which any gourmet might well envy our enjoyment of. The horse I was to ride had all the crushed mealies given it would eat, to fortify it for the long journey of the morrow over rough and hilly country.

I tied up on the back of my saddle a blanket, in case of accidents and having to sleep out, and put a few necessaries in the saddle-bag, including a tin pannikin, either to drink from or cook in. In the morning there was nothing to delay me; so after a

hearty breakfast I said good-bye to Woodward, and set off with my rifle over my shoulder, and, as a precautionary measure, I put my revolver on my holster, and took a supply of ammunition for both. The trek lay between high tambooti grass on each side, and in many places I had difficulty in finding it out. About ten o'clock I arrived at Sand River, which here runs over a rocky bed, through a very pretty valley well covered with dark green bush and many-coloured cacti and creepers. In the crevices of the rocks laying in the channel of this stream large quantities of gold have been found, but it has now been thoroughly worked out by adventurous gold-seekers. Creviceing is far the most pleasant form of all gold-mining, and is occasionally very paying indeed. The particles of gold washed out of the crumbling sides of the stream, or collected into the flood from the top soil of the land below the banks—when the rivers burst out of their proper courses, swollen by heavy rains—gradually sink to the bottom of the surging mass of mud and water, as it tears downward, and, whirled hither and thither by the force of the water upon the rocky bottom, at last find a safe resting-place in the many cracks and crevices between the rocks. In the dry season, when there is little water in the stream, the creviceer carries on his operations, and carefully cleans out these deposits of small stones, sand, and gold-dust. By means of a wash-pan, the gold, if there be any, is soon separated from its worthless accompaniment.

Occasionally the rift in the rock is so deep that the miner finds it necessary to blast the rock, but he

takes care not to blast deep enough to let the current sweep out the bottom layers of the contents, for in them all the most valuable particles of gold, being the heaviest, will sure to have their hiding-place.

At Sand River I stayed long enough to give my horse a drink of water, and ungirthed the saddle to give him a breather. On the top of the hill, above the river, I came upon a party of our boys, who were returning home to their kraal near the Sabie Falls. Their cheerful "Amba gashly, amba gashly," the usual mode of parting salutation, meaning "Go gently or peaceably," rang upon my ears—a very welcome sound in the huge still solitude—and gave the road a more cheerful aspect in my eyes. It was past noon when I pulled up at Witwater River, and then, after first carefully looking all round, in case of any Kaffirs being about, I off-saddled my horse upon the top of a broad open grassy knoll, where it could find some pickings of nice fresh young grass. In half-an-hour I again put the saddle on, for I had still at least twenty-five miles to go, and it was nearly two o'clock. My horse, refreshed by the rest and feed, now cantered over the next ten or twelve miles very briskly, and before long I was at the foot of the Berg, two miles from the summit of which Spitz Kop is situated. The ascent, nearly two miles in distance from the necessary curving of the path, took me over an hour, and my horse was showing symptoms of being "fagged," when at length we were on the top, and Spitz Kop stood out clear in front. I made straight for the foot of the Kop, round which the direct road runs to the little digger township,

and very nearly came to grief by the attempted short cut, as my horse was bogged in some swampy ground, and it was with great difficulty that I was able to extricate it. Once on the road—which is a good one for such an out-of-the-way place—I was a very short time in covering the three miles into the township, and pulled up at the door of Harry Russell's store just at five o'clock. I was at once bidden to off-saddle and make myself at home, which I was not at all loth to do after my seventy odd miles' ride over rough country. Russell could not boast of very superior accommodation, but the hearty welcome to the best he could provide made up for all else. I was very eager for news, but he had none but bad to give me. Rumours of fighting, and cattle being lifted, were rife from all parts of the country, and the inhabitants of Spitz Kop were themselves seriously uneasy about their personal safety.

My host's sleeping-room and *salle-à-manger* were both in one, and, as a specimen of the life men are obliged to live who seek for gold in a country far off from any civilization, I will attempt to describe it as accurately as I can remember. The walls were built half-way up of mud and stones, and the upper portions were of boards which had evidently been brought up in the form of boxes containing provisions. The room was about eight feet long by five broad, and the top of the thatched roof about seven feet high. At one end was the door, composed of two lids of boxes nailed together. The window at the other end was simply constructed by knocking a square hole out of the wall, which, in wet or severe weather,

could be closed up by fixing a piece of board in front of it. There was no attempt at paving of any description. In the centre of the room, upon four uprights stuck into the floor, was nailed the lid of another box; and this served as table. In like manner, on each side of it, were constructed two seats, one broader than the other, which served as a bed. Adjoining the door stood a box on its side, with the lid upon hinges, which served for a cupboard, as well as a side-table, and facing it stood a cask of spirits; and piled on the top of it was a miscellaneous collection of saddles, mining tools, riding and driving gear, a few books, clothes, medicines, potatoes, boots, and fifty other odd articles of daily use. On the walls were nailed various pictures from *Punch*, the *London Illustrated News*, and the *Graphic*. Under the table was a sack of oranges, and trodden into the floor, and littering it up, were the remains of many meals, mixed up with plugs of tobacco, eggshells, orange-skins, broken pipes, pieces of paper, shavings, and drawn corks. The table itself was covered completely, and piled high with dirty plates, tins, knives, spoons, and forks, two candles stuck into weights for the scales, Worcestershire sauce, and preserved milk, a tin of Keating's Persian insect powder, and a half empty pot of marmalade. The frying-pan with the remains of breakfast, balanced on the top of a bottle of pickles, and sugar, pepper, and mustard, all held in tins or pots intended for other purposes. The waggon had often presented a scene of confusion, but such utter chaos as there was in this room it had never before been my lot to come across.

I very eagerly fell in with my host's suggestion that we should have our tea at once, and presently a boy appeared with a frizzling frying-pan full of most tempting slices off a leg of pork, and a kettle full of tea. From the cupboard a new loaf of very well baked bread was produced, and—luxury of luxuries—a supply of most excellent salt butter. Our tea despatched, we adjourned to the store adjoining, where by degrees nearly all the miners collected, and I was introduced to each one as he came in. Although spirits and beer are kept in the store, none is ever sold in the evening; but if a man wants a glass, he can always take one for nothing. By this wise precaution there is never any overdrinking of a night, and consequently no quarrelling. The store is frequented by those who wish for a little society and gossip, but who yet do not wish to visit the canteen, where they will be obliged to drink whether they wish for it or no, just for the good of the house.

In no part of the world have I ever seen such an assemblage, drawn from such various and wide apart elements of society, as were collected in the little store. Not more than a score in all, there were representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland, an American and two Australians, a Frenchman, German, and Swede, more than one whose nationality no one could define, a Jew and a Spaniard. Although all were dressed in the same coarse mole-skin trousers, thick woollen jerseys, and stout rough coats, several at once attracted my attention as evidently having been accustomed to vastly dif-

ferent modes of life. Several games of euchre and monte were played during the evening on the counter, which served as table and settee; but no gambling of any sort took place, and the highest stake played for was a pair of new hob-nailed boots. Russell himself was briskly occupied at times in serving out supplies to various customers who looked in. An ox was to be killed on the morrow, so each man put down his name for so many pounds from whatever part he especially fancied. A digger's store has to keep a large assortment of goods, and the shelves of the small room were filled with the most incongruous articles. In one division were preserved milk, boot-laces, and castor-oil. Next to it came two babies' bonnets, several coils of fuse, pots of pickles, and carbolic acid soap. The latter is the only soap used by diggers, as it serves to keep their hands from chapping and blistering, either from the intense heat or severe cold. A large box of newly arrived boots was in one corner, and in the other were kept the barrels of Cape brandy and pontac. Digging tools of every description lined the walls, and the ceiling was festooned with rows of cups, basins, plates and jugs. Tin ware of all descriptions was mixed up with dried onions and frying-pans. A great deal of very rough chaff was carried on between the visitors to the store, but there was not much wit in it; and if there had been, the foul language it was wrapped up in would have prevented it being amusing. I had often heard that a digging was the worst place in the world for bad language, but I was not even then prepared for the reality.

Most horrible oaths are used, not at all as opprobrious epithets, but merely as endearing familiarities.

Store-keepers at diggings have better times when the diggers are only doing moderately well, than when the gold is being found in quantities. If a digger is only making his five or six pounds a week, he thinks "What is the use of saving the little I can out of this ; .I had better spend this, and wait for the good time coming to make my pile;" and, acting on this principle, expends every farthing he makes. When, however, he is making his twenty pounds a week, he strives to live as economically as possible, and thus lay by enough to make his required fortune and leave the diggings.

No stores are paid for with ready-money. Bills are delivered on the last Saturday of every month, and they are expected to be paid on the following Monday. Gold dust is taken instead of coin, at a fair price ; for although it is some five or six shillings below the Mint price in England, yet the gold often contains so much dirt and particles of quartz that the buyer loses over the transaction.

By ten o'clock the store was deserted, and I was quite ready to turn in. My bed was on one of the seats in the dining apartment, and Russell gave me out of the store a large supply of blankets, &c., and I had nothing to complain of. I felt the change in the atmosphere most severely, and was almost frozen during the night, in spite of the three blankets I had over me. On the preceding night the thermometer had never been below eighty degrees ; but at the high elevation I now was in there were ten degrees

of frost, and the ground in the morning was covered with white glistening hoar frost. When I awoke I was literally frozen, and for some minutes my limbs were so numbed that I was unable to move out of bed. The board had tumbled off the window, and a cold cutting draught had been blowing through and making the room like a refrigerator. The sun was up when I stepped outside, and soon put new life and warmth into me. My ablutions were performed in the stream running close to the door, and I indulged in a cold bath, much to the amusement of several diggers who passed by on the way to their various claims. I had ordered my letters forward on to Spitz Kop; so as the weekly mail was due at eleven o'clock I decided to wait and see if there were letters for me; as if I left any behind me, there was no knowing when I should see them again; and even if I did not leave till noon, I could still get into Leydenburg before dark. As luck would have it, the postman, a Kaffir, was this day unaccountably late, and never made his appearance until between four and five o'clock. There were no letters of any importance either for me, which made the delay all the more annoying, as it was of no use my attempting to ride into Leydenburg until next day. The news from the front—that is from the forces who were against Secocoeni—was as bad as it could well be. A troop of the Diamond-field Horse had lost nearly all their horses, which had been driven off by the Kaffirs, and that in broad daylight, while they looked on helpless to prevent it. Three forts had of necessity been evacuated, cattle had been lifted, and farms attacked,

in all directions. To make matters more immediately alarming, during the evening a farmer rode into the township with the intelligence that his own cattle had all been carried off only the previous day from his farm, some twelve or fifteen miles distant, and that pursuit had proved fruitless, for the thieves had made their escape with the spoil through the Sabie valley.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Stories of Boers—Curious Report—Back in Leydenburg—Cattle-Lifting—A false Alarm—A Ball—Off to the Front—Leydenburg Armoury—A long Trek.

THE diggers at Spitz Kop had some months previously made themselves a very substantial lager in the heart of the encampment, and had dug a deep trench round it, and altogether made a very efficient protection for themselves in case of attack. They had also organized a nightly patrol, who kept guard over the village, and kept the lager ready for immediate occupation. Their chief and most serious cause of alarm was the scarcity of fire-arms. In all, not above ten rifles and a dozen revolvers could be mustered together in case of attack. My rifle and revolver were very eagerly eyed by several; and I was induced to sell my rifle—which I did not much value, as I had seldom used it—at the same price it had cost in Natal. I could have obtained a higher price if I had asked it, or by taking it on with me to Leydenburg, but I only parted with the rifle to do what lay in my power in assisting them towards making an efficient defence in case of need. During the evening I again attended at the nightly gathering in the store, taking my seat upon a sack of potatoes. The talk turned upon the Boers and their ignorance of

anything outside their own farms, as well as their general thick-headedness in regard to any matters foreign to their own immediate occupation. One old digger, who had come from the Diamond Fields, had a fund of queer anecdotes and stories about them, which kept his audience in roars the whole evening, as his occasional words of Dutch gave them additional point.

Ten or twelve years ago a great meeting of Boers was called together in the Orange Free State, to discuss the question of introducing a line of telegraph through their State. A telegraph inspector had been sent for, who at great length, and in the clearest manner, demonstrated the mode of construction and advantages that would accrue to the Free State from the invention. The meeting listened most patiently to the explanations, but with many a muttered "Almachte," and occasional nods and winks of disbelief in the marvellous powers assigned to the telegraph. The explanation over, several members of the meeting proceeded to speak upon the subject, both in favour of and in opposition to it, and the meeting was almost evenly divided in opinion as to the advisability of the scheme. At last one aged and much revered father of the people arose, and with many scathing remarks on the short-sightedness and reckless running after new things which he observed in the young men of the state, proceeded to point out to them that the idea was quite impracticable. "Does not the proposer of the motion," said he, "put forward that one of the chief advantages of the scheme is that at all times and seasons

we shall be able to hear news from all parts of the other colonies as well as our own? Even supposing all this to be true, which I very much doubt, the deluded man has utterly forgotten the fact that even now the waggons have to cease from running during many months of the year, owing to the lack of water, and that therefore this telegraph would all die off from thirst before it had been started a month in the summer weather." The words of this Nestor were greeted with shouts of applause; not another word was listened to; in vain the more educated portion attempted to argue and reason. "There was no water, and that was an end of it." The motion was put to the vote and condemned as impossible and absurd by an overwhelming majority, and to this day the Free State is not supplied with telegraph. Whether the foregoing is a true bill I never had an opportunity of ascertaining, but I have no reason to doubt its full veracity. Another story, of much the same character, I can well believe. An old Boer living on his farm up country, but who had once seen the sea and the coast-line upon an occasion when he had once come down with his waggons to market, was told by some traveller that a steam-boat service was about being established between the Cape and Natal, asked, with the purest good faith, "Where they outspanned of a night?"

Vague rumours of how a party of diggers had made an attack upon a company of Delagoa Bay boys who were returning from the Diamond Fields with their earnings of a couple of years, and had been ignominiously repulsed and only escaped with

their lives, were also discussed in very guarded terms. If there was any truth in the report—which I do not think there was—the white men who were guilty of such an iniquitous affair ought to have been lynched by the other members of the community. It was very much such another affair which occasioned the murder of Hart; and when the various outrages by Kaffirs are traced to their source, it is generally found that the Whites have only themselves to thank for them, although the innocent are often made to suffer for the guilty.

On going to bed I took very good care to take with me an additional supply of blankets; but I was more acclimatized and less tired, so did not feel the cold at all disagreeably. Next morning, after breakfast, I bade good-bye to my host, and set off for Leydenburg, and I could not suppress a feeling of anxious fear for the little community I was leaving, so far away from succour, and exposed to the attacks of such powerful enemies. The day was wet and windy, and the road lay through a gloomy tract of broken boulders and sterile wastes. About noon the sun broke through the clouds and the rain passed away; I off-saddled at one of our camping-places on the way from Leydenburg, and to all appearances no waggons had been on the road since, for the tracks of our wheels were still quite distinct. I had been looking forward to again looking down upon the Sabie valley from the same point as we had previously had such a splendid view. All was changed, however, and I scarcely could recognize it as the same place. The murky atmosphere had

driven down the clouds, and instead of seeing the valley stretching away for miles below me, filled with winding streams and numberless breaks and kloofs full of many tinted trees and flowers, it was filled with white fleecy clouds, with here and there the tops of the higher peaks just breaking through them, and looking like black rocks in the midst of a white foaming sea. While I was standing gazing down, the sun, gaining more power, pierced through the masses of nebulous matter, and allowed strips of the sides of the hills, clothed with green bush, to peep through, and lighten up the view. I could have stayed where I was for hours, watching the ever-varying effect of light and shade; but I had still a dozen miles or more of my journey to perform, and I wished to be in before darkness set in at all events, and there is not much light after six o'clock in the north of the Transvaal during the winter months. The white tents of the 13th regiment, and the red coats of the sentries, were a very welcome sight to me, and gave Leydenburg a very homelike appearance as I cantered down the long hill at the foot of which the township is situated. At Messrs. Henwood and Roseaveare's store I found several friends, and received a most hearty welcome back from Mr. Roseaveare, who was himself there, and also from Mr. Shepherd, and others, who had been growing anxious for our safety after so long an absence and no news of any description from us. I found a large budget of letters awaiting me, and had the next two days well occupied in answering them.

Postage comes to a heavy item in the expenditure of any large Transvaal firm. Letters to England cost 1s., and to other parts in proportion. As letters from England to the Transvaal only cost 6d., it seems rather hard that the people living there should have to pay double for all the letters they send away. The expenses of bringing a letter in must be precisely the same as that attending a letter being sent out, so there does not appear to be much reason for the different tariff. The inhabitants naturally hoped for improvement in their postal arrangements when the country was annexed by the British government, but at present there is no indication of any change for the better, and the Transvaal has still to be content with a weekly communication with the other colonies.

Every day fresh reports of disaster and cattle lifting were brought into the town, and almost daily detachments of the mounted police, and any volunteers who were willing to join were despatched to attempt to recover the stolen beasts, and punish the thieves. A farmer, by name Maclaughlan, had 280 cattle carried off, and was unable to recover a single head of them. A few days after an impey of some 400 Kaffirs had the impudence to make a raid upon a farm only two miles outside the town, and carry off with them over 400 head, besides several horses which were out at pasture. This was too much to be borne, and eighteen mounted men set off in hot pursuit. On the second day they came up with the Kaffirs, who after one volley, in which they killed one of their pursuers and wounded three others,

turned tail and bolted, driving off the cattle in every direction. Some they managed to drive off helped by the close nature of the country, many more they stabbed with their assegais, and the volunteers only succeeded in bringing back with them 180 oxen and four horses out of all that had been stolen. Three companies of the 13th Light Infantry were stationed at Leydenburg, for the protection of the town; every day farmers treked in from the 'surrounding country to avail themselves of the safety afforded them. These outspanned inside the lager which was situated close to the camp, and pastured their herds as close by as they could find grass.

Armed patrols paraded the town at night, and every householder had full instructions given him as to his proceedings in case of a night attack. Several ladies I knew slept with pistols under their pillows, and I have no manner of doubt that they would have used them to good purpose had occasion arisen for them to display their valour.

One evening, just as we were sitting down to dinner a great scare was created by a man, who had been sent on a message to the camp of the Diamond Field Horse, returning back to the town with the alarming news that on the other side of the ford, at the extreme end of the township, he had seen a party of mounted Kaffirs, who had attempted to seize him. The capture of the horses of the volunteers the preceding week gave colour to his otherwise improbable statement, for mounted Kaffirs had been seen in all directions since the seizure, and the Kaffirs are too clever to let such an opportunity of lifting cattle as

their possession of so many horses afforded them slip by without taking advantage of it. A patrol of mounted police, backed up by a party of the 13th, were sent to reconnoitre, but returned shortly without having seen a sign of either Kaffirs or horses, and the man's story was put down to his alarm.

During the night, however, when all quietly-disposed people were asleep, suddenly two shots rang out sharp and clear, and without doubt proceeding from the centre of the town. In an instant the alarm of "The Kaffirs are here!" was spread from house to house.

The scare earlier in the evening, although proved false, had infected people with a sort of nervous excitement, which made them all the more ready to believe the worst now. Presently the tramp, tramp, tramp of the soldiers came down the road, and all were expecting the sounds of firing and the shrieks of the Kaffirs every instant to pierce through the still night air. The orders given to each head of a house to remain inside, with all its occupants, until warned to come out, and for every man to be ready to defend his own house, were, however, remembered and well carried out. Not a man disobeyed, and there was neither confusion or alarm in the streets, whatever there might have been in the houses. All anxiety was soon put to rest. The soldiers were heard returning; and as they passed each house, the reassuring intelligence was given that it was another false alarm, but this time a far more criminal one. A man, either from mischief or malice, had deliberately fired off two barrels of his revolver in the

street, without any cause or reason. He had either not attempted to escape, or if he had was unsuccessful, for he was apprehended by the picket and marched back to the camp of the 13th. Arrived there, he passed the night in the guard tent, and next morning was delivered over to the civil authorities. A considerable amount of interest was evinced in his trial, which took place during the morning; but as the evidence was quite clear, the case did not take long to settle, and the offender was mulcted in a very heavy fine of, as far as I can remember, about 40*l.*, for having so disturbed the peace of the community.

In the evening of the sixth day after my arrival Woodward came in with the waggons. He had not had casualties of any description, and the horses and oxen were both well and strong, and fit for an immediate start, which I was myself anxious for, as every day the danger increased of the township being so closely surrounded by Kaffirs that it would be impossible for a waggon without an escort to make its escape. The oxen, too, which had to be driven some way from town to pick a scanty feed, ran a daily chance of being lifted by some passing band of Kaffirs. The waggon had undergone such severe work since it had left the waggon-maker's hands, that just for the sake of making sure I again sent it to the yard to be thoroughly overhauled. Very little of importance needed doing to it, and it was almost as good as when it started on the trip after a few repairs had been effected. I passed my days in riding out with the officers of the 13th, sometimes taking a gun on the chance of a partridge, duck, or

small bôk, but oftener making journeys out to inspect the scenes of recent attacks on the farms from where cattle had been lifted, &c. As the officers were expecting orders almost daily to move to the front, they determined upon giving a dance before leaving, to mark their sense of the civilities and kindness received from the inhabitants of Leydenburg. It was no easy matter to secure a room ; but that difficulty was at last settled by Mr. Stafford Parker, the former President of the Diamond Fields, giving up his house for the occasion. All Leydenburg was in a state of intense excitement during the preceding few days, and the stores were all turned inside out by the ladies in efforts to match this colour with that. The gentlemen were almost as nervous about their apparel; for in such far-away places a man does not think black clothes of any sort, and much less dress clothes, a necessary part of his wardrobe. Personally I had no garment which could by any possibility do duty in a ball-room, but I was able to borrow from one of the regiment dress-clothes which were a sufficiently good fit. The night of the ball arrived; and unfortunately the afternoon had been very wet, which made the various paths to the ball-room very muddy, and awkward for the ladies with satin shoes and trains. From the camp we drove down in an ambulance waggon drawn by eight mules, and it did as well as any private omnibus. The house in which the dance was to be held had a broad stoop, as a verandah is termed in South Africa, and this had been tastefully hung with crimson baize so as to form a long passage the whole length of the house. The dancing-

room was entered from one end of this promenade, and at the other was situated the supper-room. At the back of the house a tent had been put up, and this was used as a card-room for the recreation of those who did not devote themselves to the worship of Terpsichore.

Here there was also a plentiful supply of "square-face" and "three star," to satisfy the wants of those to whom tea, coffee, and lemonade were not sufficiently stimulating beverages. By half-past eight o'clock the guests had mainly arrived, and very soon dancing commenced to the strains of a piano, cornet, and triangle, played by three privates of the regiment. No one could have believed it would be possible that ladies living so far from shops and fashions could have been dressed as tastefully and well as those who presently appeared; and several might have been suddenly transported from an English ball-room for any difference one could detect in their toilettes.

The men were not so happy, and every possible description of black coat was represented, from a frock-coat to a short-tailed jacket. There were very few dress-coats, but the only wonder was that there were any at all so far away from a tailor's shop. All the ladies were gloved, so it was not of much importance, as far as comfort was concerned, that several of the gentlemen were minus those articles of attire. The music was very fair, the floor capital, and dancing was carried on with the greatest spirit until supper was ready, and even then the dancing-room was never entirely deserted.

It was far into the next day when the party broke up, and there was not one person present who had not thoroughly enjoyed herself or himself, as the case might be; and the only regret of the evening was that we were obliged to leave off at all, and that we should separate so soon.

The very next day to the dance two companies of the 13th started off to the front under their major; leaving only one, with Captain Cox, to defend Leydenburg.

This created much dissatisfaction in the town, as one company was not considered a sufficient protection for the most important place, and indeed the only town, throughout the whole unsettled districts. It was an unpropitious day for a start, as the rain poured down unceasingly. The wind blew directly in the faces of the men as they marched along, almost freezing the blood in their veins, and they were afforded no protection by their drenched clothing. To make matters worse, the transport waggons selected to accompany the force were very slow and unmanageable, and the soldiers had continually to halt and dawdle about in the cold and wet till they came up to them. Captain Cox and I rode out to see the last of them some twelve miles out, where they were making their camp for the night, and a vastly uncomfortable place it looked too—high up among the hills, exposed to all the wind and rain, and nothing to look out upon but black rocks and deserted hill-sides.

Woodward had left me some days previously for Newcastle by the direct route, passing Lake Chrissie.

Going this road instead of round by Pretoria over a hundred miles is saved; but I was of necessity obliged to visit Pretoria before leaving the Transvaal, so very unwillingly we had to say good-bye to each other, and we never met again while I was in the country. I was not, however, without a companion for my journey, as Mr. C. Shepherd had made up his mind to accompany me to Pretoria by the slow, but comparatively pleasant ox-treking, rather than take the post-cart, and endure two days and nights of extreme hardship and discomfort. Two ex-volunteers, friends of his, were also anxious to proceed on the same journey, and they too joined my company. By way of precaution I got a rifle and ammunition from the Government store, by the Landroost's permission, for one of the ex-volunteers, so that we might all four be well armed in case of any collision, the probability of which was more deeply impressed upon us every day by all whose advice we asked. To start was a case of "must" with me, for my oxen were daily losing the strength they had gained below the Berg, and in a very few days more would not have been able to move away at all. On the day of leaving I went to the magazine to pick out a rifle. There was in it a very large assortment of different kinds of obsolete rifles, which had been sent at various times, and any quantity besides of useless ammunition, as none of the cartridges were intended for the rifles that had been supplied. There were also some magnificent tusks of ivory, a present from Secocoeni to the Queen. They were the largest tusks I had

ever seen, and each one weighed more than a man could carry.

We had purposely not announced the time of our departure to the boys, so that they were taken unexpectedly by surprise, and had no time to object, when just before sundown, at the time the oxen were driven in to the kraal, we ordered them to be inspanned, all the impedimenta packed up, and the waggon made ready for an immediate start. I had made my adieux earlier in the afternoon, so there was no delay in setting off; and just as the sun disappeared behind the hills, the whips cracked and we were again on the trek. We had been assured that our chief danger, if danger there was, lay within twenty miles of the town. It was known that bands of Kaffirs were stationed upon all the hill-tops round Leydenburg, and the fear was that one of these might notice our exit, and make an attempt to carry off the oxen during the night. By not moving till darkness set in we had as far as possible prevented our departure being noticed at all; but, to make sure of being completely safe by daylight, we treked on till the morning star arose, and had accomplished nearly twenty-five miles before we outspanned and turned in, for extreme cold made bed a most desirable place.

The oxen were chained up doubly secure to the dussellboom, so that they could neither be cut loose, nor the chains untied, without our awakening. Next morning while breakfasting, we observed two moving specks of red coming down the road which crossed a ridge of hills six or seven miles in front of us. By means of the glass I soon made them out to be

soldiers, and when we met they turned out to be two companies of the 81st and one of the 13th, on their way to reinforce the Leydenburg garrison. Their scouts had reported several large bodies of Kaffirs about the hills, so they were half expecting to be fired upon in every narrow gorge the road passed through. The major in command advised us to turn back with him and take the lower road to Middelburg ; but as there were four of us well armed, and with plenty of ammunition, we did not think that we had much to fear from any lot of Kaffirs who would think it worth their while to molest one waggon.

We came early in the afternoon to such an excellent position for outspanning, that we determined to go no further that day—a broad open space, with a clear stream running along one side of it, and fairly good grass. Not even a cat could have approached within three-hundred yards of the waggon without our perceiving it, as there was not even an ant-heap to afford any cover.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Secocoeni's Kop—Shells—A plucky Ride—Torture—Zuikerbosh
Kop—Dangerous Meeting—Mapock—The Annexation.

MY two new companions had only the previous week completed their service with the Volunteers, and were on their way to Pretoria to try and enlist again under more favourable terms. From them I had the first accurate description of Secocoeni's Kop. From the accounts in the papers I imagined it to be a sort of sugar-loaf mountain, but in reality this Kop is a huge succession of frightful peaks and ravines, intersected by deep clefts piercing into the earth, and with many artificial tunnels and connexions cut between the different parts.

The whole mass is formed of a black flinty rock, the sides of which are sharp as the blade of a knife. The difficulties in storming such a place are almost insurmountable. Even when one height has been gained with considerable loss of life—for the besiegers would be exposed all the time they were making the ascent—nothing important is effected, as a deep ravine has to be descended into and crossed over before the next peak can be gained. The first one has then to be left garrisoned, or else the Kaffirs will occupy it again before the soldiers have well left it. There are

hundreds of these sort of natural fastnesses, and, in fact, the kop is formed of a series of them. Each one is connected with the other by interminable caves and burrows, along the sides of which the Kaffirs have hollowed out holes like bunks, in which they can lie unseen, and fire from loop-holes, perfectly secure themselves, although a foot of solid rock only separates them from those they fire at. The kop is nearly thirty miles round, and on the far side has a drop of some 2000 feet below the level of the side nearest Leydenburg. Down this descent is situated a rich and fertile plain, full of Kaffirs and oxen; but in the plain the vapours and mists rising from the marshes of the Oliphant river are certain death to the white man, although not injurious to the Kaffir. No man who has not actually visited the spot can form any conception of the difficulties that lie in the way of subjugating Secocoeni. But events have proved that it is a far more arduous undertaking than the Government at first had any idea of. Three years ago the first attack was made by Boer Volunteers; they later on gave way to Volunteers sent by the British Government and under British officers. These were found unavailing, and regular troops, assisted by artillery, were despatched to the front, and one of the most efficient special officers was put in command; but when I was leaving South Africa the last news was that the troops had been obliged to retire from before Secocoeni's Kop, and at the present time no success of any kind has attended the efforts of the Government to defeat him.

When the artillery was first ordered to the front

many said that the war was as good as over, for the Kaffirs would never show at all in the face of cannon. For the first few days the shells did great execution, and established a great dread upon the Kaffirs, but then they became accustomed to them and only made fun of the gunners.

A party of them would appear upon the top of a rock a mile away, dancing, jumping, and waving coloured blankets or boughs of trees to attract their attention. The gun would be carefully aimed and fired, when the smoke cleared away the rock would be quite cleared of the Kaffirs, but they were very far from being injured by the shell, for the instant they perceived the flash of the gun each man would drop down behind the rock, and be safe in a natural bomb-proof gallery. The shell would then strike the rock and explode, instantly the boys would again emerge, pick up the pieces of metal, and the process would be repeated, much to the irritation of the artillery but amusement of the Kaffirs themselves, as well as of many of the colonial volunteers, who were able to give the regular soldiers the Job's comfort of "Did not we tell you how it would be?" One shell, however, scattered destruction right and left through the enemy, but not by the orthodox means. The shell fell upon soft ground, and for some reason did not explode. The Kaffirs for some time from their hiding-places watched it cautiously; but when, after several hours it still lay harmless, they mustered up courage and approached it. On examination, they found that it was coated with lead which would be

valuable to them for the purpose of making bullets. Accordingly, bearing it off in their arms, they carried it to their kraal. Making up a fire, they placed the shell in an iron pot over the flames, with the idea of so melting off the lead. While they were sitting, huddled up together round the cheerful blaze, after the manner of Kaffirs, and extolling their bravery and sagacity in capturing the shell and thus obtaining a supply of lead, the shell gradually became hotter and hotter, till at last the combustible matter inside was ignited by the heat, and the shell exploded, carrying death and mutilation in all directions. A boy, who was taken prisoner some days afterwards, carried the story to the camp of the volunteers, and great was the satisfaction felt by the gunners, who had vainly been attempting to give their insulting foes a lesson. The boy declared that over thirty Kaffirs had either been killed or wounded by the explosion, which was a larger number than all the other shells put together had killed.

Captain Clarke, who was in command of the volunteers, had established a reputation far and wide, both among his own men as well as the niggers, for his undaunted courage, and ignorance of what fear was. He gave one proof of his intrepidity only a few weeks previous to the time I arrived in Leydenburg. A company of the Zulu police were encamped at the foot of a hill occupied by Kaffirs, and had orders to allow no one to approach. One afternoon Captain Clarke as usual, rode up to visit them, and made the usual inquiries if they had seen anything fresh ?

"Yes," the men answered; "a party of the Kaffirs had come down the hill, bearing a white flag."

"And what did you do?" said Clarke.

"Oh, we fired on them as soon as ever they came within range, and they at once retreated back to the protection of the hill."

"Well, you did very wrong indeed," replied Clarke; "for it was a flag of truce, and you ought to have allowed it to approach, and heard what they had to say."

It was too late then, however, to blame the Zulus for what they had done, as they fancied, in obedience to orders; but the mischief was done, and it only remained to undo as much as possible of it. Leaving his arms behind, and telling Lanky Boy, his constant attendant, to do likewise, Captain Clarke turned his horse's head towards the Kop, and rode unmolested right into the heart of the Kaffir camp. In Kaffir, he apologized for his men who had fired upon the flag of truce without being aware of its nature. His apology finished, he turned his horse's head again, and was gone before the astounded Kaffirs had time to make up their minds as to what course they should pursue towards him. Not one man in a thousand would have dared to do the same; and it was only the perfect coolness and the self-control he exhibited which saved his life. No one knew better than he did the horrible fate of a man taken prisoner by Secocoeni's Kaffirs, and yet he never hesitated an instant in going among them.

A man going into the fight here does not pray that he may preserve his life, but that he may not be so

wounded and disabled as to be prevented from blowing his own brains out rather than be taken prisoner by these fiends. Several bodies were found from time to time, upon which the Kaffirs had worked their fearful torments. The particulars are too sickening for description, but out of some hundreds of cuts and wounds upon one body which an eye-witness described there was not one which would have caused death by itself, so there was no room to doubt but that the unfortunate wretch had been for hours the sport of their savage, inhuman passions.

There is a Boer still alive in the Transvaal who once witnessed the torture of two of his companions. They all three formed part of a commando, but were separated from the rest and surrounded in a rocky gorge. The lucky survivor managed to hide away underneath a ledge of rock, and escaped the eyes of the Kaffirs, but his two comrades were taken prisoners. The blacks proceeded on the spot to put them to death by every diabolical process of slow torture that it entered into their brains to conceive. The man concealed was obliged to look on, and was himself every instant expecting to be discovered and share a like fate. His agony of mind must have been almost equal to the physical suffering of the other two, and the two or three hours of dread suspense turned his hair a silvery grey, although only a young man, and the very mention of the place was sufficient to drive him almost into a fit for long afterwards.

During the night there was no necessity for us to take any precautionary measures ourselves, as the

boys, who had been thoroughly frightened by the reports of the soldiers, were on the alert all night through, and as they can see like cats in the darkness, we did not feel the slightest anxiety in trusting to them to awake us on the approach of any strangers.

Distrust of strangers is rather a curious feature of life in the wilds. It is a good maxim to expect every man to be a rascal, and to mean you no good, until you have good proof to the contrary. When possible it is always advisable to keep to one's own party, or, if necessary, be content with one's own company, rather than consort with strangers. This sounds a very inhospitable rule, but after all it is easily broken, and there is very little risk of a man ever repulsing one whom he would gain any advantage from either socially or otherwise. A man carries his character to a very great extent in his appearance, and fewer mistakes are made in physiognomy by those who live in a wild country than by dwellers in a civilized town.

We made a trek next morning to Zuikerbosh Kop, or as it is sometimes differently spelt, Segoe Bush, or Sugar Bush. On the way I shot a very fine specimen of the African turkey, which belongs to some species of ibis. Below the kop there stand the ruins of a farmhouse burnt during the last war by the Kaffirs. As there was a clear running stream to afford us a plentiful supply of water, we here outspanned, and I proceeded to skin the bird I had shot, leaving our mid-day meal to be prepared by the boys, but under my own supervision. Before the pots were

boiling on the fire two Kaffirs approached us from our left, carrying rifles in their hands, and armed in addition with bundles of assegais on their backs. While these were talking to the boys, up came two more from the other side armed in the same manner; then another pair appeared as if climbing out of the stream, and they were joined by several other pairs who seemed to rise up out of the earth. The boys, on being questioned through Jantze, said they were out hunting, and had not killed any bôk; but as they had no dogs with them their story did not "wash," as no Kaffir ever hunts without his dog. While these were being questioned, several more pairs joined them, making a total number of sixteen, all armed as well as we were, and evidently picked, strong men into the bargain. I did not require Jantze's evident looks of distrust and terror to have my own suspicion that all was not right; but on looking up at my companions from where I sat, leaning against the fore-wheel, and skinning my bird, I was reassured, for I saw that they were on the alert, and ready in case of accidents.

Shepherd, although apparently intent on making his pipe draw better, had within reach two loaded guns. One of the late volunteers, to all appearances fast asleep, nevertheless had one hand upon the locks of his rifle. The other had taken up his position upon a rock close by, from where he had an excellent view of the oxen which were quietly grazing a few yards off, and was occupying his spare time in polishing the barrels of my double-barreled gun, which I knew was like all the other fire-arms,

loaded and ready for use. My own rifle was leaning against the wheel by my side, and I presently took the opportunity of one of the boys asking me for some cooking material to get into the waggon, and, without being seen, slip my revolver into my shirt, and put another handful of cartridges into my pocket. The Kaffirs gathered together in a group some ten yards from us, and seemed to be waiting for something to happen.

Suddenly from round the turn of the hill up galloped two more Kaffirs, one of whom was evidently the chief of the party. The two new arrivals were armed only with rifles, but had belts of ammunition over the left shoulders. They rode up to the group and spoke a few angry words with them which Jantze could not understand, but a discussion followed, attended with much pointing and gesticulating. Then the one we supposed to be a petty chief asked Jantze who was "boss," and on Jantze pointing me out to him he came forward and offered to shake hands; but, warned by a glance from Shepherd, I ignored the offer, and continued quietly skinning my bird and taking no notice at all. Another council was held by the whole party, and then through Jantze they expressed their desire to be given some oxen, as also some powder, lead, and spirits. Our reply was forcible and to the point, but I fancy Jantze was too much disturbed in mind to give a literal translation. Anyhow, they were quite made to understand that they would get nothing, and that the sooner they made themselves scarce the better we should be pleased. There

were many angry glances and scowling faces at this message, and we four prepared every instant to shoot down the first man who either raised his rifle or laid his hands on his assegai. Again they requested us to give them "skoff," *i.e.* food, but this proposition we again declined to accede to. More angry glances, and a heated discussion, followed this fresh refusal; but I fancy that they saw that there was nothing to be got out of us without fighting, and that the chances were that they would come off second best, as we were fully prepared for them, and our superior quickness in the use of arms and coolness of aim would have made up for the overwhelming odds of nearly five to one. Suddenly, without another word to us, the two mounted men set off at a gallop, and the others followed as fast as they could run in the direction of our oxen. Snatching up our rifles we followed them, but seeing us coming they made no attempt to drive the oxen off, and were soon lost to sight behind the hills. As in all probability they had only gone to bring up reinforcements, so as to make more sure of their prize, we inspanned the oxen at once, and taking up the pots and pans with the uncooked dinner in them, we resumed our trek, hurrying on the oxen as fast as possible.

About twenty miles further on was a farm belonging to a Dutchman named Grobber, where several farmers were collected together in lager. Here we knew we should be safe, so we never allowed the jaded oxen to rest until we arrived at the farm just as darkness set in. We received a very kind welcome, and were supplied with milk,

eggs, and bread. From our description of the head of the party, the Dutchmen had no difficulty in putting him down as a brother of Mapoch's, who was known to be on friendly terms with Secocoeni. It was a very providential circumstance that, instead of being alone with my boys, I had three other white men with me, or the Kaffirs would never have gone away without taking the oxen with them; but they had probably calculated on only finding one white man in charge, and were so taken completely by surprise.

Mapoch himself is a treacherous, cruel savage, at present on good terms ostensibly with the Government, but probably only biding his time to break out at a favourable moment and carry murder and rapine far and wide. His power is very much feared by all the farmers, as far away even as in Middelburg; one large farmer there commenced a new house, but left off until he was safe from any fear of an attack by Mapoch. This chief has some ten or twelve thousand able-bodied warriors at his command, and nearly all are well armed. His territories are in the very heart of the Transvaal, and at any time he may openly break out. In course of a few years it will be necessary to call upon this chief to disarm his warriors and give up the arms, and this will probably bring about another *little* war which will unsettle the whole of the country, and in which many lives and much money will be thrown away.

Now that the Transvaal has been annexed by the British, the question of whether the act itself was justifiable or not has no further importance, for what has been done cannot be undone without loss of prestige.

On the other hand, it has imposed very many duties on the Government, which at present there is very little inclination shown on their part to fulfil. The most important duty, perhaps, is to keep such an armed force as will give protection to the settlers from the tribes on the borders, as well as those living inside. There is no doubt that the expenditure needful for this will be enormous, and will have to be borne by the Imperial Government almost entirely; but yet this point ought to have been considered before the British flag was planted over the land. At present there is hardly any protection offered to life and property throughout two-thirds of the entire Transvaal, and in consequence the value of land has rather deteriorated than increased during the last two years, except in the vicinity of the towns. No one questions the fact that at some time or other our rule will be a beneficial change for the Transvaal; but the advantages as yet only appear very dimly in the mists of the future, and with good reason the Boer, who only looks to the present, can ask himself, "What good does British rule do me in exchange for the higher rate of taxes I am called upon to pay in support of this new régime?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

Middelburg to Pretoria—Blaubank Diggings—An undignified Appeal—Volunteers standing off—Miserable Trekking—Boers—Threatened Famine from Drought—Maritzburg—Conclusion.

WE had no further adventures on our journey into Middelburg, which we reached just seven days from the time we had left Leydenburg. The township was full of volunteers who had served their time, and were being sent back to Pretoria; but they were of a low class, and made the town anything but a desirable abiding-place, from their constant drunken brawls and nightly disturbances. Two of the oxen had been knocked up by the hard trekking away from Zuikerbosh Kop, and the bad grass had told very much on the others, which had the additional work thrown on them. In Middelburg I tried everywhere to buy two more pairs to lighten their labours; but the war, and the need of oxen for transport, had driven the price to such an exorbitant figure that I was obliged to do without them.

As we were all anxious to reach Pretoria I made a very short stay in Middelburg, not having anything there to keep me, and we were quite ready to start as soon as fresh supplies of meat had been laid in. It was the first time for many months that I had been obliged to buy meat, but there were no bôk

along the road, and therefore no chance of supplying the larder with venison. The grass became worse and worse as we advanced towards Pretoria, and the last three days there was hardly anything at all that the oxen could catch hold of. To make matters more discouraging, I was positively assured, by every one we passed on the road, that below Pretoria right down to Natal there was literally no grass at all, and that all transports had ceased, and any waggons that necessity obliged to go had to carry sufficient mealies or forage to supply their spans from town to town. I had passed through all the dangers of the last six months without ever having been laid up or disabled for a single day; but on the day we left Middelburg, when the journey was so nearly finished, I had my only accident in a most ignominious manner. While cutting a loaf of bread with my heavy hunting-knife, which had an edge like a razor, the blade slipped through the loaf, sliced deep into the flesh between the forefinger and thumb of my left hand, cutting through the sinew, making a very nasty-looking gash. There was too much blood flowing to attempt to sew the severed parts together, so I bound it up tightly with a wet bandage, which I kept cool and moist with constant supplies of fresh water. I had always been under the impression that a cut between the finger and thumb was generally followed by lock-jaw, and every moment expected to feel a difficulty in opening my mouth. After several hours had passed, and my jaws felt the same as usual, the alarm on that score was dissipated; but I could not take my hand out

of a sling for many days afterwards, and was quite incapacitated from shooting ; but there was very little to shoot at, as all the bôk had treked away to richer pastures, and partridges and coranne were very few and far between. We were seven days on the trek between Middelburg and Pretoria, making just a fortnight since leaving Leydenburg. A few miles out of the town we met several companies of the 80th, two companies of Carrington's Horse, and some mountain guns, on their way to Secocoeni's Kop, and from them heard that very active operations were intended against that chief, so that, if possible, he might be brought under, before the rains set in and horse-sickness commenced. All the officers in command were very sanguine of complete success, and were confidently looking forward to returning covered with laurels before three months were over, but I expect that they soon had their high expectations dashed to the ground.

The name of Carrington's Horse has been given to two entirely separate classes of soldiers. The original Carrington's Horse were men picked out of the 24th Regiment, and, under the instruction of Captain Carrington, of that regiment, turned into what were called Mounted Infantry. A second lot, who are often confounded with these, consist of volunteers, who were raised and brought to a high state of efficiency in the war of 1876-77 by the same officer, who himself at this time was second in command of the forces against Secocoeni, and who had the reputation of being able to do more with the Volunteers than any other officer in South Africa.

We treked right through the main street of Pretoria to our former outspanning ground, close to the English church, and had an admiring crowd round the waggon inspecting the buffalo, koodoo, and sable antelope horns, which were hanging outside. That night, the first time for many months, I had a really choice dinner at the "European Restaurant," which had been improved and increased since I had last been there. The whole town was in a great state of excitement. Every day fresh rumours were brought in, either from Secocoeni's Kop or from down south. Another great topic of interest was the newly-discovered Blaubank gold-diggings, which were situated some sixty miles from Pretoria, in the direction of Potchefstroom. These diggings had been first worked many years ago, but were deserted as not paying. A farmer, however, living on the spot had lately discovered several very good specimens of alluvial gold near the former site of the diggings. The Gold Inspector had proceeded there, and, with other miners who flocked to the spot, had also found sufficient quantities of the precious metal to warrant him in declaring the digging a paying one. Much scepticism was displayed by many who had known the place in former days, and feeling ran very high on the question, as several of the leading townsmen were interested in the movement; and at last the genuineness of the finds became rather a dangerous subject of conversation in public places, as any man whose credit or interest was concerned might personally resent any doubts that were shown in the matter.

The Government was in desperate need of volunteers, but all who were not friendly to it declared that they went the wrong way about obtaining them. All the papers were full of alluring proposals to join the forces, and enlisting depôts were formed all over the country, but yet very few volunteers came forward. Every day men whose term expired refused to re-enlist under the terms offered, and the companies at the front were daily diminishing in strength, and all the best men leaving. Huge placards were stuck all over the walls of Pretoria, and distributed broadcast, of which the following is a specimen:—



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

For the Front,

and

GRAND ATTACK

on Secocoeni's Town.

LOOT AND BOOTY MONEY.

Better Prospects than the Blaubank Gold-diggings.

Pay awarded, £5 before leaving.

SAME RATIONS AS A GENERAL.

ENROL BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

I was irresistibly reminded of an American news-sheet, or else a playbill at Astley's, when I first saw this brilliantly-conceived puff.

Another placard "invited discharged Volunteers to rejoin, and add more lustre to the credit they had already won." This sort of claptrap might possibly do very well to attract ignorant, simple clowns; but as the men who chiefly form the corps of volunteers are in many cases as well or better educated than the composers of this balderdash, and in all cases are men who from constant brushing about in the world have their wits all about them, it entirely failed in its desired effect, and hardly a volunteer came forward from Pretoria. What the men wanted was terms which would make it worth their while to give up occupations in which they earned from 6s. to 10s. a day in a town where they had a fair share of comforts, and plenty of the society of their fellow-men, with very little hard work to do for it. As volunteers, under the terms offered, no man could possibly have cleared more than 4s. or 5s. a day after paying all his expenses; and there were several instances in which a man, after serving out his time and receiving no pay at all, was absolutely in debt to the Government for money advanced to him to buy and replace horses, which had died one after the other from the exposure and neglect they had been necessarily exposed to. A great deal was said about the want of patriotism shown, and surprise expressed at men waiting to haggle over £ s. d. when their country's interests were at stake. In theory patriotism is a very beautiful sentiment,

but in a country like the Transvaal it has to be left out of calculation entirely. The only ones who could possibly be expected to be touched by its influence are the Boers, whose country it undoubtedly is. The English who have settled there, or whom chance has brought within its boundaries, have no love or natural affection of any description for the soil. Most of them do not care if the Kaffirs overrun the whole country as long as they themselves escape, for they have no vested interest of any description, and carry all their capital and stock in trade either in their brains or in their pockets. The other portion of English residents are those in a better position, who own stores, canteens, or farms. These men, although willing to pay a moderate sum for their own protection, and desirous enough of supporting any form of government which will procure them a peaceful life and facilitate trade, would be the very last to volunteer themselves for offensive purposes, and only on the most urgent necessity would even consent to bear arms for the defence of their own personal property, naturally looking to the Imperial Government for their safety and security from danger.

The Boers, who always before have been the opponents of the various internal tribes, as well as those on the borders, must now be entirely left out of those classes from whom volunteers may be expected. If indeed the Boers were found ready to enlist they would be made of different stuff to all other men. The British Government said to them, "You are incompetent to manage your own affairs,

and quite incapable of defending yourselves. You allow the Kaffirs to overrun your country unchecked, and they are continually in a state of ferment. Our borders are threatened through your helplessness. Through cowardice or through inability to resist, you give in to the audacious demands of native chiefs, and so destroy the prestige which ought to belong to white men; and in consequence, in our dealings with them, we find that they are far less easily intimidated, and have a far higher opinion of their own prowess than they otherwise would. In consideration, therefore, of these points, we are determined on taking your land away from you and ruling it ourselves. If you resist, so much the worse for you, as we have you entirely at our mercy; we can cut off all your supplies, and can also march up half-a-dozen regiments to shoot you down. If you give in we will manage all your affairs for you, keep the Kaffirs completely under our thumb, guarantee you complete safety from them, as our troops will always be at hand to protect you, and we will give you largely increased facilities of commerce, and many other advantages as well." The Boers made no armed resistance to our demands, not because they believed all the fair promises, but because they had the sense to see that opposition would in the long-run prove futile, and serve as an excuse for taking all their liberty and privileges away from them.

These men, now they were being solicited on all sides to enlist in the Volunteer service, and leave their land and houses to endure hardships and

dangers, to assist the Government which had taken away their country from them, naturally refused to render them any service whatever, and must have chuckled inwardly at the plight its policy had brought the Government to.

In Pretoria I sold off every article out of the waggon which I could possibly spare, as it not only made it lighter, which was of great importance with my jaded oxen, but I also obtained three times the price for my surplus stores that they would have realized in Pieter Maritzburg. I was sorry to part with many articles which had often contributed to my sport and comfort; but as I was leaving South Africa almost immediately, there was no further use for them. From Pretoria I only took with me two boys, my driver Jantze, who had been with me from the start, and one forelouper who had come to me from Woodward. The other three boys, who had come with me from Leydenburg, found situations in the town, and were very willing to be left behind. My forelouper had been anxious to come to Pretoria in order to draw some three pounds due to him from the Government for services under Captain Clarke; but through not having complied with some formality he was unable to obtain his money, and in consequence went away with a very firm determination never again to work under Government employ. The grass near the town was very poor, and the oxen, although doing no work, were daily looking thinner; so on the fifth day after my arrival I again inspanned and treked off to the South, amidst the farewells and kind wishes of many who had been good friends to me while I was in the Transvaal.

I could not yet use my left arm, so had to take a large supply of meat for the road, as I should not be able to shoot any bôk. The grass as far as Heidelberg was better than I had been led to expect, and judging from it my hopes revived of making a quick run through to Maritzburg without losing any more of the oxen. Every day after leaving Heidelberg however, it became scarcer and scarcer. To make matters worse, a very strong hot wind sprang up which blew almost continuously, bearing along with it huge dust-clouds, which filled the waggon with dirt, and made everything uncomfortable and disagreeable. A lovely open blue sky overhead seemed quite out of place with the hurricane blowing down below. A north-west wind is always the most disagreeable that blows in the Transvaal, for it has travelled over thousands of miles of the hot dry sands of the desert, and by the time it reaches the Transvaal has become a scorching blast, charged with minute particles of salt sand, which inflame the eyes, irritate the skin, and make life under the circumstances anything but pleasant. The oxen too, very soon felt its effects; their eyes became sore, and their shins hot and rough. Three of the oxen were running loose, and one had died before I crossed the cis-Transvaal and entered into Natal. Just over the frontier, and about twelve miles from Newcastle, there was some very good grass upon the top of a hill close to a canteen and store. As I arrived there on a Saturday afternoon I determined to hold over until the Monday, so as to give the oxen the full benefit of the improved feed. While

there, half-a-dozen waggons loaded with ammunition bound for Leydenburg under a convoy of the 80th, arrived from Newcastle and outspanned. The officer in charge, who had only joined a few months previously, was in a sore fix with the Boers who owned and were driving the waggons. These refused to trek more than ten miles a day, at which rate of progression the stores of the party would be consumed before they arrived at their destination. The Boers, to make matters worse, only treated his orders with derision and his entreaties with stolid indifference. Under these circumstances he was obliged to ride back to his starting-point, and fetch out one of the regular transport officers, a colonist born, who ought in the first place to have had charge of the expedition, as no stranger could possibly be expected to know how to manage Boer waggon-drivers, who are of all men I ever saw the most pig-headed, lazy, and obstinate.

In the cool of the evening, while I was sitting smoking with the owner of the canteen, a fine herd of cows was driven past us by the boys, and kraaled in separately from the rest of his stock. Upon my inquiring the reason, he replied, "Those belong to my daughter."

"Is your daughter married, then?"

"Oh no, but she is going to be very shortly; those are her marriage portion."

He then explained to me the system pursued by the Boers and colonists in general to make provision for their children. Whenever a girl is born, she is given a heifer by her parents. All the offspring of this heifer then belong to the girl; but to pay the

expenses of their shepherding and feeding, every second bull born of the original heifer or her descendants belongs to the parents. When the girl grows up to a marriageable age, she does not go empty handed to her husband, and often has a herd of several hundred head in her own right. If the original heifer dies before it has had a calf, the father replaces it with another out of his own herds. By this means the girl is no expense to her parents at all; for by the time she has finished her education she has enough cows to form a dairy, which she manages herself, and makes more than enough to pay her keep, by selling the supplies of butter, milk, and sometimes cheeses. When she marries the father is not called upon to provide any dower, as the girl has it herself, and so there is no sudden draw on her parent's means. The boys are not treated in the same manner. "Because," said the Dutchman, "if the boys had a fine herd of their own without having worked for it, they would become intractable, and would want to be off to the town to sell their oxen, and would soon become drunken, worthless fellows." The boys are first taught to read and write, which is quite sufficient learning for them, and then they are set to work on the farm. When they want to marry they are usually given a portion of the farm, and still all live together, occasionally buying more land, until gradually a little colony is formed. From this system of brothers all settling down near each other, one of the most powerful causes of the tendency in the Dutch people to deteriorate from their original high character and physique, has had its origin, for in many parts of

the Transvaal every family for miles round has so married in and in that they might as well all be brothers and sisters.

The physique of the typical Boer has entirely changed within the last fifty years. The men who drove out the Kaffirs before them, and with indomitable pluck and perseverance treked on and on into unknown wastes, were strong, sturdy, broad-chested fellows, averaging not more than five feet ten each. Nowadays the ordinary Boer is a tall, lanky, hollow-chested, stooping-shouldered lout, who looks as if he had been allowed to run to seed.

At Newcastle I again met Mr. White, who had been down there some weeks, and we had a long chat over the pleasant time we had passed together; and when we at last said good-bye, it was with every wish that we might again meet each other.

The remainder of my trek to Maritzburg had very few pleasant incidents connected with it. The grass grew daily less and less, until there was in parts absolutely none at all, and the veldt was as bare of vegetation as an asphalt paving. Forage was very seldom procurable, and when it was, fetched such an exorbitant price that it was impossible to entirely feed the oxen on it. Several times I paid 4s. for a bundle weighing about seven or eight pounds; and as each ox would easily eat two at a time, and look very little better for it, the expense of feeding them was more than they were worth. They had, however, been such good servants, that I could not let them starve; and as they would not eat