

CHAPTER XVII

OLD CAPE COLONY

Broad streets of pleasant shade
And houses plain and white,
Where the broken sunbeams made
A green and gold brocade
Of shadow and of light ;
'Twas how it looked, I know,
Old Cape Town long ago.

And little running streams,
With little bridges spanned,
Whose waters caught the beams
In sudden glooms and gleams,
Flowed down on either hand,
And music made, I know,
In Cape Town long ago.

Between the leafy rows
With hats beneath their arms
And silken coats and hose,
The gay and gallant beaux
Ogled the ladies' charms ;
For eyes were bright, I know,
In Cape Town long ago.

And sailors, tawny-faced,
Along the causeway rolled,
With shawls about the waist,
And pistols silver-chased
Stuck into every fold :
For pirates came, I know,
To Cape Town long ago.

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And in the Bay outside
The flute and galleon
Swung slowly to the tide,
And from their portholes wide
The bright gun-muzzles shone ;
They kept good guard, I know,
In Cape Town long ago.

The fleets of cloudy sail
Swept in upon the breeze ;
Their crews with scurvy pale
Leaned shoreward o'er the rail
At sight of grass and trees ;
Full glad to see, I trow,
Old Cape Town long ago.

And when the sun went down,
Bright sparks of twinkling light
On water and on town
Like jewels in a crown
Bespangled all the night,
And spread a golden glow
O'er Cape Town long ago

AND now let us turn away from these main events of our history to wander for a little in its more pleasant and unfrequented bypaths. What was the life of those old people? How did they spend their time? What were their amusements? Of what fashion were their houses and their dress? What did they talk about?

All these questions may be answered with a good deal of particularity, for besides the old records which are fuller of familiar detail than such papers are generally, a large number of travellers of all nations and all points of view, and, be it said, of all degrees of accuracy, have left us their impressions. If you were to believe the opinion these writers have of one another, you could not repose belief in any of them. Peter Kolbe was among the first, and by all accounts he was a notorious liar, spending his time in drinking and smoking and hastily collecting at the end of his stay the waifs and strays of information he had picked up in

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the taverns and on the stoeps to satisfy the curiosity of the noble patron who had sent him to the Cape. His remarks on the Hottentots, however, are said to have been the work of a learned Dutch official from whom he borrowed them, and are, no doubt, more valuable. Then there was Père Tachard, van der Stel's delightful Jesuit friend; there was Le Caille, the astronomer, a learned man, but nothing of a writer. There was Thunberg, the Swedish botanist, and his more famous friend and fellow-countryman, Sparrman, whose book has much in it of interest to us. Lichtenstein, the German friend of Janssens, is excellent, though somewhat biased against the English; and Sir John Barrow is also excellent, but biased against the Dutch. His bias sinks into friendliness when compared with the opinion of that sturdy John Bull, Captain Percival, who seems to have gone through the world like Sir Willoughby Patterne, "looking over his nose with an air of indignant surprise." Supereminent among them all is, of course, Burchell, that great naturalist and observer; but for entertainment and familiar and sympathetic observation commend me to Lady Anne Barnard, whose husband was Lord Macartney's secretary in the First Occupation, and whose letters to her friend Dundas were edited not very long ago by Mr. W. H. Wilkins. Besides these there are a host of sailors, soldiers, explorers, and sportsmen (whom even to name would be a wearisome business) who have left accounts of South Africa at one time or another.

From all these books, then, let me set before you a picture of the old Cape life as it was in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time there was no Port Elizabeth, only a military post at Algoa Bay; there was no Grahamstown; there was no Durban, no Bloemfontein, no Pretoria. The whole social life of South Africa was centred in Cape Town, though at the end of our period Stellenbosch had already

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a respectable antiquity, and that character of dignified somnolence, as of "Sleepy Hollow," that it still possesses. From Cape Town civilisation sloped away by rapid degrees to barbarism; the Dutch farmers round its skirts, and as far away as the Breede Valley, were often considerable signiors who lived in houses as stately and beautiful as those of good families in Europe, but farther away the lonely Boer grew ruder and ruder in his way of living. The colonial mansion became a hut of sun-burnt brick or wattle and daub, in which the whole family often occupied a single room, and the Boers themselves were almost as savage and unkempt as the Kafirs with whom they fought or bartered cattle.

To begin, then, with Cape Town. Under the great shadow of the mountain which never changes, it is now so altered that were it not for the majestic outline of superincumbent rock you would not recognise it in the pictures of Barrow and Burchell and others of its old delineators. Yet to this day, if you leave its main streets and explore towards Signal Hill in the more ancient part of the town, you will find that much remains as it then was. The streets in those days (as they are still) were broad and straight, so broad that the double row of oak-trees could not throw their whole surface into shadow. Along their either sides flowed little streams, canals taken from the river of sweet water which refreshed in days still more remote the sailors who first came to its banks. There being something of a slope in the ground these canals were stopped here and there by sluices, from which the water could be turned into the gardens behind the houses that lined the street. In front of these houses was a sort of verandah or stoep, a broad stone platform, with deep stone benches upon it, and sometimes overshadowed by a pergola on which hung a luxuriant vine or pomegranate or clambering rose, or all three together. In

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this pleasant arbour sat the Dutch during most of the day, drinking their wine or coffee, which latter was kept hot upon a charcoal brazier, the men smoking their pipes very solemnly, "seeming to be wrapt up in the most solemn and thoughtful dignity," and the ladies embroidering upon their tambour frames. The houses themselves were stately and beautiful, a white expanse of wall, relieved by great teak doors, usually of the kind that open in a lower and upper half, with long brass hinges curiously shaped, a fanlight above ornamented with lattice-work, and small-paned windows with ribbed shutters, frequently painted green, folded back against the wall outside, or shut close to keep out the noonday glare. The roof would either be flat and made of a kind of solder or cement, or thatched with a velvety-brown reed which grew near by, and roof and wall would meet in the most gracefully shaped and fancifully curlicued fiddle gables, often ornamented by a piece of statuary from the hands of that pleasant artist, Anthon Anreith. The door led into a great hall which cut the house in two, and was usually itself cut in half by a screen of carved wood and glass. The front half served as a hall from which opened rooms on either side, and the back half was used as the dining-hall. With these two halls there would be usually four other great rooms, and sometimes a second storey, and, if it were a house of consequence, you might pass right through into a courtyard paved with brick, shaded with vine or pomegranate, and with a pleasant fountain playing in the centre.

"The Dutch are remarkably neat in their houses," says Captain Percival. "The floors, staircases, and furniture are kept exceedingly clean and highly polished, the floors of their halls and most of their ground floors are of broad square red tiles, highly polished, glazed, or painted; the walls and ceilings stuccoed or painted, and the wainscotting adorned with looking-glasses and

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branches. Their sitting-rooms are very neat and clean : the furniture, indeed, is usually clumsy in the extreme, and looks very awkward, though kept in excellent order. Several houses, however, are not inelegantly furnished." The furniture at which Captain Percival turned up his nose was in reality very charming. High Dutch clocks in mahogany cases, ornamented with brass dials, and suns and moons that rose and set, and ships that rocked ; stately armoires of cedar-wood, big enough to hold all the thrifty housewife's fine linen and stiff silk dresses and petticoats ; "rustbanks" or settees of antique design ; capacious chairs, well suited to the generous proportions of their owners, and solid tables which groaned three times a day with their loads of steaming viands. The Dutch ate in a manner that appalled even their sturdy English visitors. At breakfast, besides tea and coffee, there was ordinarily a boiled leg of mutton with perhaps a dish of stewed beef. This first meal was at eight, but it was preceded by a cup of tea or coffee served in the bedroom after the manner of the Indian *chota haziri*. At dinner and at supper there would be roasted beef, mutton, venison, fowls, all cooked with rather too much grease to suit delicate palates. "A goose swimming in oil," says our captain, "is no uncommon dish ; or a piece of veal roasted to rags, and covered with rancid butter turned into oil, with which the meat, when it gets cold, is quite encrusted." The fat, by the way, was procured from the sheep's tail, which, being one solid lump of fat of from twelve to fifteen pounds, was quite a feature in the pastoral landscape. The customary drink was wine, which many travellers condemned as poor and harsh, though Lady Anne puts in a word in its favour : "I never saw the force of prejudice more apparent than in the way Englishmen here turn up their foolish noses at the Cape wines *because* they are Cape wines." And she goes on to relate how a certain military big-wig, filling his glass

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by mistake with some Cape steine, said, "Lord bless me, what a fine wine this is!" and when he was told of his error, "in a moment the colonel found fifty faults in it." Certainly the constantia was even then very good, and was soon to gain a great reputation in Europe, which it has since unfortunately lost.

With every meal there was an abundance of all manner of fruits in their season—great piles of peaches, nectarines, grapes and pears, oranges and pomeloes, and musk and water melons, which ought to have made up to the most fastidious for the faults of the cookery. But, as a matter of fact, many of the Dutch housewives were admirable cooks, and to this day make "confeits," syrups, curries, and liqueurs which are not to be surpassed anywhere. There is, moreover, something of the East in their cookery, a rare and spicy flavour in itself suggestive of romance.

The people who lived in those houses were of a piece with their old-world quaintness. They were stately folk with something of a somnolent disposition, especially the men, the women being by all accounts much livelier. They were nearly all merchants or officials, or lawyers by profession, and there was a very clear order of precedence to which they adhered with scrupulous exactitude. The Government being of a paternal description, even the dress of the ladies was regulated by law, and no one was allowed to wear a train or be attended by an umbrella-bearer unless she was of a certain rank in the community. As the slaves did all the manual work of the town, and the business was of the most leisurely description, the men went about but seldom; but sat upon their stoeps dressed in long snuff-coloured coats and plum-coloured breeches, with their hats on above their periwigs, smoking and taking snuff, and sipping coffee and strong liquors. Their powers of smoking were clearly abnormal. Thus Percival says in his ill-natured way:—

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I have already noticed the fondness of the men for smoking tobacco; their whole soul seems indeed entirely given up to that habit. We all know how much it is the custom in Holland; but here it is carried to a still greater excess. The men rise early in the morning, and make their appearance in a loose robe and night cap before their doors; then walk or sit in the porch for an hour or two with a pipe in their mouths and a slave by their side, holding a glass and a small decanter of gin, from which the master every now and then takes his soupkie or glass. Let an Englishman rise ever so early, he will see mynheer sitting in his stoop or porch, or parading the front of his house in the manner I have described. There are many who get up two or three times in the night to enjoy a pipe; and so much are they accustomed to this luxury that they cannot on any account dispense with it. About eight they dress, first smoking their quantum. . . . They then smoke another pipe, and go about their mercantile concerns till about one o'clock, when dinner commences. . . . When they have regaled themselves another hour with their darling pipe, they lie down to their nap, which continues till evening; they then rise and perhaps take a walk or pay formal visits, but are always sure to smoke wherever they go. Coffee and gin succeed, accompanied with their pipe, till about nine, when supper is introduced, and when that is finished, after another hour's fumigating, they retire to bed, gorged with heavy food, and perhaps destined to spend the remainder of the night with all the horrors arising from indigestion. A continual round of this mode of passing their time sums up the existence of the Dutch colonists of Cape Town, exhibiting a most lamentable picture of laziness and indolent stupidity.

All accounts are agreed that the ladies were much livelier than the men. Sir George Keith, who being a sailor was also, it is needless to say, a man of gallantry, describes them as "lively, good-natured, familiar and gay"; and Le Vaillant is so unkind as to suggest that they are too gay, the declension in their morals being set down, with an ill-concealed national pride, to the temporary presence of French troops. He tells us that for the modesty and reserve peculiar to Dutch manners, the ladies had substituted an indifferent copy of French modes, and that feathers were so much in request that Africa could not supply enough, while the theatre set

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up by the French officers set afoot so many scandals that the husbands looked upon its closing with relief. He also says that "the women in general play on the harpsichord; they likewise love singing, and are distractedly fond of dancing, so that a week seldom passes without their having several balls; the officers belonging to the ships in the Road frequently procure them this amusement. At my arrival the Governor had a custom of giving a public ball once a month, and the people of distinction in the town followed his example."

Lichtenstein, on the other hand, has the highest opinion of the Dutch ladies, and champions them against all traducers. But Lady Anne Barnard, being a woman, is not quite so kind.

Lady Anne, herself a great toast, looked down also on the style of the colonial ladies. Describing one of the Governor's dances she says:—

The ball-room was very long but somewhat narrow; perhaps it seemed narrow because it was lined with rows of Dutch ladies, all tolerably well dressed, much white muslin about and a good deal of colour. I had been told that the Dutch ladies were handsome as to their faces, but I saw no real beauty though they were fresh and wholesome-looking, while as for manner they had none, and graces and charms were sadly lacking, though they had a sort of vulgar smartness, which I suppose passed for wit. They danced without halting at all, a sort of pit-a-pat little step, which they had probably learned from some beauty on her way to Bengal.

As these quotations are all somewhat ill-humoured, let me add the remark of that admirable observer, Burchell, who had a good opportunity of judging the Cape Town ladies: "They were dressed extremely well, and quite in the English fashion; and it would be thought by many that, for personal beauty, they ought not easily to yield the prize, even to our own fair countrywomen."

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But I like to think of Cape Town at a somewhat earlier date, before French gallantry and English manners had touched the place, when it was still a colonial Amsterdam, and the Dutch people preserved the solemn graces and stately behaviour of their forebears. The gentlemen sat on their stoeps and smoked with a dignity that nothing could disturb; the ladies would walk forth with equal dignity to pay a call, attended by one slave carrying a brazen footwarmer full of charcoal and by another bearing a large red umbrella. Or, if it were night, they would go in their Sedan chairs from house to house with lanterns flitting here and there, greeting their friends as they met with a "Wel te rusten!" (May you rest well!)—rest being in their estimation the supreme felicity. Starched and rustling ladies, "well-fed, rosy-cheeked men, with powdered hair and dressed in black"—staid and worthy citizens they were.

Then a word should be said of the street scenes—tarry pig-tailed sailors wearing several pairs of breeches, one above another, rolling from the tavern; Malay slaves in their bright robes and turbans, Mozambique slaves in white cotton, Hottentot girls with sun-bonnets veiling their dusky faces. Boers come in from the country with their wagons, loaded with wine and garden produce, sixteen oxen to a wagon and a great cracking of enormous whips. The country Boers of those days were dressed in "blue cloth jackets and trousers and very high flat hats, while the Hottentot slave trotted behind him bearing his master's umbrella and dressed only in a piece of leather round his waist and a sheepskin round his shoulders." On their way they would pass a fearsome array of gallows trees and instruments of torture. To be impaled on a spike, which ran along the backbone in such a manner that the victim lingered for days, was no uncommon punishment, and to be broken on the wheel, "without the *coup-de-grâce*," is a

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death sentence frequently mentioned in the records. "We stopped a little," says Sparrman, describing the gallows, "to contemplate the uncertainty of human life. Above half-a-score wheels placed round it, presented us with the most horrid subjects for this purpose. . . . The gallows itself, the largest I ever saw, was indeed of itself a sufficiently wide door to eternity; but was by no means too large for the purpose of a tyrannical government, that in so small a town as the Cape could find seven victims to be hanged in chains."¹

This indeed is the dark side of the old colonial life; on the one side there were tyranny and occasional panic with the accompaniment of hideously cruel punishments, on the other a brooding resentment and murderous revenge when opportunity offered. Sparrman describes how in a country house the doors were bolted, and the two white men slept "with five loaded pieces hung above our bed."

Travel in the old days, when roads there were few and those of the worst, was a slow and laborious business. But the dangers and hardships were made up in some measure by the hospitality of the country people, who in their lonely situations were usually overjoyed to see a stranger. Sparrman describes a typical Boer standing in the doorway of his house:—

Without seeming to take the least notice, he stood stock-still in the house passage waiting for my coming up, and then did not stir a single step to meet me, but taking me by the hand greeted me with "Good-day! Welcome! How are you? Who are you? A glass of wine? A pipe of tobacco? Will you eat anything?" I answered his questions in the same order as he put them, and at the same time accepted the offer he made at the close of them. His daughter, a clever, well-behaved girl

¹ For the horrors of slavery, see Andrew Sparrman's *Voyage* (London, 1785), pp. 337-44.

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about twelve or fourteen years of age, set on the table a fine breast of lamb, with stewed carrots for sauce, and after dinner offered me tea with so good a grace that I hardly knew which to prefer, my entertainment or my fair attendant. Discretion and goodness of heart might be plainly read in the countenance and demeanour of both father and child.

Lady Anne Barnard gives an equally pleasant account of the country life at the Cape. Her description of Stellenbosch, in particular, might have served Washington Irving for his picture of Sleepy Hollow :—

The perfection of this place consists in its extreme coolness in the midst of the most sultry weather; it is built in long streets, perfectly regular, each street having on each side a row of large oaks, which shadow the tops of the houses, keeping them cool and forming a shady avenue between, through which the sun cannot pierce. Whatever way one walks one finds an avenue, right or left, and each house has a good garden. Stellenbosch, therefore, though there may not be above a hundred families in it, covers a good deal of ground, and is so perfectly clean and well-built that it appears to be inhabited only by people of small fortune. . . . It seems rather an asylum for old age than anything else, and I am told people live longer in it than in any other part of the colony.

I should like to quote a great deal more from these old books, especially from the pages of Burchell and Lichtenstein, whom I find I have neglected. They mirror the old colonial life, leisurely and sedate, when the slaves were building those great stately mansions, white-washed, green-shuttered, and many-gabled, with their huge doors of teak or stinkwood, their broad stoeps and pleasant pergolas, which still may be seen nestling amid their oaks and vineyards and orchards of peach and apricot trees. They show us the fat old vrouw in her starched linen and wealth of petticoats sitting in her great chair with her feet on her warming-pan and her coffee simmering upon the charcoal brazier; the farmer

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tall and lean with his long roer, galloping after buck on his diminutive pony or smoking upon his stoep and gazing over his rows of mellowing vines. It is a pleasant picture, which indeed may still be seen in the sequestered mountain valleys of the colony, between the scarred and rocky mountain precipices that reach far up to the clear blue cloudless South African sky.

CHAPTER XVIII

SLACHTER'S NEK

ALL those who know anything of the history of South Africa have heard of Slachter's Nek. The very name has something of evil omen about it, and it is the gallows-tree on which the ravens of discord have sat and croaked ever since the five rebels were hanged in the memorable year of Waterloo.

To this day a great many people believe that the rebellion, which goes by the name of Slachter's Nek, was a righteous rising against the tyranny of a harsh Governor, who had goaded the Dutch colonists into revolt by unjust laws, that the victims were martyrs and patriots in the cause of freedom against English usurpers, and that their execution was an act of monstrous brutality. The official papers which give the true story have all been published by Mr. Liebbrandt ; but very few people like to read a thousand pages of old letters and legal evidence, and, unfortunately, the writer who should have made the truth clear, Dr. Theal, has only been one more raven croaking on the tree.

To say that the rebellion was the result of English tyranny on the one side and Dutch patriotism on the other, is the most preposterous fable that ever was invented. The truth is that the crime for which the rebels were hanged was as detestable to the Dutch as to the English. It was a plot to murder a great many innocent

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people of both nationalities. The rebels tried to persuade the savages to slaughter all who would not join them in a raid upon the colony. After this, is it necessary to say that all right-minded Dutch people were indignant? As a matter of fact, the Dutch were as much concerned in hanging the rebels as the English. Dutchmen were in command of the forces that attacked them; Dutch burghers helped to capture them; a Dutch official prosecuted them; a Dutch judge sentenced them; a Dutch magistrate hanged them; and all that the English Governor did was to pardon one of them.

But it is always better to tell a story than to argue; so let me tell once more the sad, strange story of Slachter's Nek.

You will remember that in the time of the van der Stels, there was in the colony a class of settler which lived by robbing and murdering the natives. In the great struggle of those days this class won, and from that day to the coming of the English these people continued their bad old customs. Of course there were faults on both sides. The Kafirs and the Hottentots were by no means the innocent people that some good folks suppose them to be. If they were raided they raided back; but the fact remains that, instead of the justice of the white man, which it has always been the British aim to give them, they were shot and their land and cattle taken from them at the will of the settlers.

The British Governors tried to stop these bad practices, and very soon we have the same old quarrels as we have seen between van der Stel and Huysing a hundred years before. But the scene was changed. Stellenbosch and the Drakenstein were now quiet and settled districts. The turbulent frontiersmen had gone north and east. The Hottentots as a nation were now a thing of the past. Those who remained were slaves on the farms of the Dutchmen. The farmers had eaten

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them up, as the natives say, and were now fighting with the Kafirs for the rich valleys and pastures of the Eastern Province. The older war of extermination against the bushmen was carried on as fiercely as ever. The nature of these wars will be shown by two incidents.

One was an expedition against the bushmen, under a frontier burgher called van Jaarsveld. Van Jaarsveld reports to his magistrate that his party shot some hippopotamuses and left them lying as a bait for the bushmen. They then surrounded the place at night and fired into the crowd in the morning. "On searching," says van Jaarsveld, "we found one hundred and twenty-two dead; five escaped by swimming across the river. After counting the slain, we examined their goods, to see whether anything could be found whereby it might be ascertained that they were the plunderers: when ox-hides and horns were found which they were carrying with them for daily use."

Again the Boers, on another occasion, invited a tribe of Kafirs to discuss mutual grievances. The wily Boers laid presents of tobacco and beads on the ground and shot the Kafirs down as the savages were scrambling for these fatal gifts.

Both these massacres occurred before the British came on the scene, and I need hardly say that no British Governor would tolerate this kind of thing.

And so the trouble began. The British tried to stop the raiding, and put the charge of native affairs into the hands of good magistrates with the authority of the law behind them. If Boers were caught ill-treating or murdering their slaves, or making private raids, they were punished; and, on the other hand, the British spent thousands of pounds in keeping soldiers and police on the frontier to protect the burghers and recover their cattle when they were stolen.

But the Boers of the frontier did not like interference. Under the old Dutch rule they did as they

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pleased, and compelled whom they had a mind to, and they were soon busy rebelling against the English. At first the English were firm but lenient, and the little rebellions were put down without much trouble, though we can see from the despatches that the Government realised that with their small force, a great wild country, and countless savages just over the border, they were sitting on a barrel of gunpowder. Still they went on in the dogged old British way, settling the land question, fixing boundaries, pacifying the Kafirs, protecting the Hottentots, though not by any means spoiling them, and doing all that they could for the good of the country.

There was on the frontier a farmer, called Frederick Bezuidenhout. He did what seemed good in his own eyes, and was known as a dangerous and turbulent character. On one occasion he kept a Hottentot servant against his will, or so the Hottentot alleged. The servant complained to the magistrate—or rather, the deputy Landdrost, a good Dutchman called Andries Stockenstrom. The farmer was summoned to appear before the court. He refused. He was summoned again. He refused again, and so the judges ordered him to be arrested. Opperman, the field-cornet of the district, was afraid to tackle the job, so he was provided with a small body of Hottentot soldiers. These Hottentot soldiers were usually half-breeds, or bastards, as they are called at the Cape. Dr. Theal would like us to believe that the real grievance with the farmers was the employment of these brown-skinned men to arrest a white man, and that this was regarded as the blackest disgrace by the high-spirited Dutchmen. He also tells us that the object of the subsequent rebellion was to drive these Hottentots out of the country. Now, to begin with, the authorities were not so foolish as to ask a white man to surrender to a black. The Hottentot corps had to be used on the frontier for the simple reason

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that there were not enough white troops for the work, and also because they were cheaper, and, for some purposes, better soldiers. In this case, the warrant was presented by a white man, the Hottentots were only there as a guard, in case the high-spirited farmer should attempt to shoot the white man. As a matter of fact, through the whole course of the proceedings in the rebellion trial, there is not one word of complaint on what Dr. Theal suggests was the real cause of the trouble.

But to get back to our story. Johannes Londt, the under-bailiff, was accompanied by Lieutenant Rousseau, a Dutchman, Lieutenant Mackay, a Scotchman, a sergeant, and fourteen men. They marched all night, and when they arrived they saw Bezuidenhout, with two others, all loaded with guns, getting behind a kind of natural rampart formed by some large rocks. The embattled farmer told the minions of the law to get out or he would shoot them. For answer, Lieutenant Rousseau ordered his men to fix bayonets, spread out, and rush forward, adding the words, "Don't fire!"

Bezuidenhout and his men, however, fired ten or twelve shots, so that at last the lieutenant was forced to give the command. When the soldiers got up to the rocks, they found that the defenders had beaten a retreat. The soldiers searched the river beyond, and as they were doing so, were fired on from above. Looking up, they saw that the farmer had taken refuge in a cave on the face of a rocky precipice some ten feet above them. It was a strong place, for it could be entered by only one man at a time. The two lieutenants climbed up to the top of the precipice, where they were quite safe from being shot, and from there, time after time, called upon Bezuidenhout to surrender, promising that no violence should be used, and that he might go to the court with his own wagon and horses. This the farmer refused to do, "execrating them with

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the most cruel oaths," so that at last Rousseau ordered his men to rush the place. The sergeant, a man called Joseph, very bravely went first. As he clambered up the face of the rock his men below watched him anxiously. Now he had reached the hole, and had pulled himself up till his chest was on a level with the floor of the cave. The men below saw the point of a rifle protrude from the hole. "Sergeant," they cried out, "he will shoot you." But the sergeant was too quick. Like a flash he fired, and the bullet passed through Bezuidenhout's left arm and chest, going out at his back.

There was a cry from within. . It was a half-breed servant begging for mercy. He came out, bringing with him arms and ammunition. In another hole they discovered a young Dutchman, who also came out, and three more guns were taken, with a large quantity of bullets. They left the body covered, and were going home with their prisoners, when they were met by six men on horseback, five of whom had guns. This was Gerrit Bezuidenhout with four of his sons and a servant, and they demanded what the shooting had been about. Lieutenant Rousseau gave no answer, and the party marched on. This was the beginning of the Slachter's Nek rebellion.

Frederick Bezuidenhout's funeral was a great affair. Friends gathered from all the country round, and Johannes Bezuidenhout, Frederick's brother, made a speech, in which he swore to be revenged. Then the friends of the Bezuidenhouts began to preach revolt among the farmers—not by any means a new gospel, to be sure—and to plan a rising. Fortunately, the Government officials were wide awake, and a Dutchman, called van der Graaff, the deputy Landdrost of the district of Cradock, intercepted a letter from one rebel to another and sent it on to Major Frazer, the deputy Landdrost of Albany, who, in his turn, transmitted it to Colonel

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Cuyler, who was the Landdrost of Uitenhage. The letter, which was signed H. F. Prinsloo, one of the principal ringleaders, was addressed to Jacobus Kruger reminding them of an oath which, he said, they had taken, "to remove the God-forgotten tyrants and villains." At the same time van der Graaff reported that the vagabonds of his district were busy collecting people to attack the magistrates, and that they were at the same time trying to get a large body of Kafirs to assist them. Prinsloo was immediately arrested by Major Frazer, and the fat was in the fire.

Now Dr. Theal is naturally a little ashamed of his friends the rebels for asking the Kafirs to come and fight white people. In one of his books, indeed, he leaves out this fact altogether, or only says that the Boers asked "others" to join them, while in another book he says that they justified themselves on the ground that the English were employing Hottentots against them. But before we go farther let us look at what the plans of the rebels really were, as they themselves confessed afterwards.

Shortly before, the Government had taken a large tract of land called the Zuurveld from the Kafirs with the intention of settling farms upon it. The rebels sent messengers to Gaika, the Kafir chief, asking him to help, the plan being to attack all the military posts in a single night. Lieutenant Rousseau was to be murdered, and so was van der Graaff; the troops were to be driven from the country; the Kafirs were to be allowed to take the cattle belonging to the troops, and also such cattle as belonged to those burghers who should remain loyal to the Government. The Kafirs were to be given back the Zuurveld, while the rebels were to be given a piece of Kafir-land. Thus the rebels designed to bring a vast horde of murdering savages into a peaceful colony, to burn the farms of the settlers, and to slay their fellow-colonists.

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Bezuidenhout and his friends threatened that all those who did not join would be murdered by the Kafirs, with their wives and children. The tortures which the Kafirs inflicted were described in lurid language. "The one punishment is that they split a tree and put you in the middle of it, and the other is to make your hands and feet fast, then having made a large fire, to put you before the same, and after the flame is burnt out they will lay you on the coals." At the same time these simple farmers told Gaika that Colonel Cuyler intended to visit him at his kraal and shoot him treacherously. I need hardly say how dangerous the plot was. Major Frazer says there were at one time two hundred burghers in arms against the Government (though here he exaggerates), and the Kafirs could muster ten thousand spears. Fortunately, the arrest of Prinsloo came at the nick of time. At the very moment the rebels were endeavouring to persuade Gaika, that chief got news of the arrest; while the rebels were forced to come out into the open before their plans were ripe in order to rescue their leader.

By this time Opperman, the field-cornet of the Baviaans River, whom I have already mentioned, had fled under a threat of murder, appointing in his stead an old farmer called Kruger, who was acting as field-cornet. This William Kruger seems to have been a man without much backbone, who joined the conspiracy more through fear than bad intention. However, the ringleaders were wily enough to make him their commander, and he may be said to have commanded with a pistol at his head. Prinsloo's remark about him at the beginning that he "would draw his blood with as much pleasure as a spigot out of a cask," serves to show how he was regarded by the chief conspirators.

Prinsloo was a prisoner at a military post commanded by Captain Andrews, and thither a large body

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of rebels repaired with arms in their hands to demand his release. They had already been civilly warned of the trouble they were bringing upon themselves, and when they made their demand, Major Frazer replied that he could not listen to a request from armed men. Field-commandant Nel, a Dutchman who was thought to have influence with the farmers, rode up to the band and begged of them to disperse, telling them that if Prinsloo were innocent he would not be punished. In reply, they seized Nel's bridle, asked him to join them, and when he refused, called him a traitor and threatened to shoot him. They then formed a ring, and, before dispersing, took a solemn oath to stand by one another. They sent more messengers throughout the borders threatening the settlers with murder by the Kafirs if they did not join in the rebellion. But the authorities were by this time thoroughly on the alert. The burghers were called to arms; troops were concentrated, and Colonel Cuyler sent the rebels an address, in which he begged of them to return to their duty. "Spare your blood," he said, "it depends on yourselves. It is now my friendly request that you all immediately return to your families and properties; the Landdrost Frazer has shown every indulgence, and has endeavoured by mildness to pacify you, but your deluded thoughts have prevented you from accepting his offer. . . . Judge of yourselves, burghers, whether any injury or injustice has been done you; let two of your most sensible men come to me, and I shall do you justice whenever you bring a just case before me. The two persons who may come to me shall be sent back without any hindrance."

In the meantime Gaika was behaving like the guileful Kafir he was, blowing hot and cold; first he would, and then he wouldn't, and the more timorous of the rebels were beginning to slink away home. But this and several other attempts at pacification failing, Cuyler

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marched against them, accompanied by Major Frazer, with thirty burghers and forty dragoons. The forces were not far from equal; the rebels were encamped on a strong hill, and Colonel Cuyler owned afterwards that he doubted, if it had come to a fight, whether his burghers would have fired upon the rebels.

Cuyler, however, was a brave man. He showed no sign of hesitating, summoned the rebels to surrender, and advanced upon the hill.

The rebels knelt down and presented their guns, while they shouted to the burghers to move to one side so that they might have a clear shot at the dragoons. The burghers wavered; it was a hazardous moment; but just at this time the rebels received a staggering blow which took all the fight out of them.

A group of horsemen were seen riding up the hill. They were the envoys that had been sent to Gaika, and at this dramatic moment they returned with the polite but disheartening message from the great chief on whose help they had set so much store, that if the rebels "wanted to fight, they might do so."

Then came a panic. Poor old Kruger was the first to give in. With a number of others he had been weeping copiously, and now he called out, "Let me go down, in God's name, and receive my punishment." He was joined by nearly twenty others, who ran down the hill, threw away their arms, and, falling on their knees, besought forgiveness. The rest fled, and so ended the bloodless battle of Slachter's Nek.

Major Frazer, with a hundred men of the Cape Regiment, and Commandant Nel, with twenty-two armed burghers, set out in pursuit of the fugitives. They got on the tracks of the Bezuidenhout gang, and, marching day and night, got to a kloof or pass in the wild Winterbergs, through which the rebels had to pass with their wagons. Unfortunately, Major Frazer fell from his horse and broke his arm, so that his command

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was given over to Lieutenant M'Innes, who, with Ensign Mackay, took up their positions so as to command the road. Nel and another party went farther up the river, where they waited in ambush until the rebels should pass.

Presently—it is easy to imagine the scene—the fugitives came along the rough track. Wagon followed wagon, with great straining of oxen, shouting, and cracking of whips, we may be sure. There were the three ringleaders, Bezuidenhout, Bothma, and Faber, with their wives and families, their cattle, sheep, and horses. Unsuspectingly they walked into the trap and outspanned within the ring of enemies.

Then Bothma and Faber, the one unarmed and on foot, the other armed and on horseback, went down the river, examining the spoor of the soldiers. When they had got within thirty paces of the hiding-place, the word of command rang out, and the rebels faced a line of soldiers with muskets ready.

They were told to stand; but Faber turned his horse and went off at a gallop, while Bothma took to his heels. Mackay fired a shot over Faber's head; but as he would not stop, the soldiers fired upon him. He dismounted and was just in the act of lifting his gun, when he was bowled over with a ball in his shoulder. Bothma crept into a hole and was there caught by the soldiers.

While this was going on, Bezuidenhout, with his gun across his saddle, rode towards a little kloof, but seeing soldiers there, turned back to the wagons and dismounted. M'Innes, with his hat on his gun, beckoned him to surrender, and Nel and another burgher also shouted their advice that he should give himself up. But Bezuidenhout refused and began to fire, his wife keeping him supplied with loaded muskets. Dr. Theal draws a heroic picture of this last stand. "His code of honour," says that historian. "was in some respects

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different from that of modern Englishmen, but it contained at least one principle common to the noblest minds in all sections of the race to which he belonged; to die rather than to do that which is degrading. And for him it would have been unutterable degradation to have surrendered to the Pandours." Now, as a matter of cold, hard fact, Bezuidenhout was asked to surrender, not to the Hottentots, but to Commandant Nel and two British officers. By resisting, he was placing the women and children in the wagon in a position of great danger. His wife and his young son were both wounded. This is not the sort of courage that the truly chivalrous will much admire. However, Bezuidenhout paid for his rashness with his life, for after killing a soldier, he himself was mortally wounded.

We need not delay long over the end of this miserable story. The prisoners, thirty-nine in number, got a fair trial. Six of them were condemned to death, and five were actually hanged, the sixth being pardoned by Lord Charles Somerset. Most of the others were let off with very light punishments—a small fine, or a month in prison—and among those who received a free pardon was poor old William Kruger, the unwilling leader of the conspiracy.

The Governor seems to have left the whole business in the hands of Colonel Cuyler, a brave and loyal Dutchman, who had proved himself, time and again, a good friend of the Boers, but who had certainly never been any friend of the Hottentots. He saw the danger of the position. Though he says that only sixty-five had been in arms, those that remained in their homes were in a wavering state. "Fancy to yourself," he writes, in one of his despatches, "a people of the description of the Boers, all marksmen, well-mounted, and the knowledge of the country they possess! Foreign troops cannot act against them. We now see when one brother is brought against another.

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how he acts. Whom, then, are we to depend on? The Hottentots are the only people." Again he points to the fact that all the families who were engaged in the former disturbances were implicated in the rebellion. "This calls for example, as in the first affair they were all pardoned. . . . Something severe must be done and that without much delay to ensure the tranquillity of the borders."

Thus, so far from the Slachter's Nek business being a brutal piece of tyranny on the part of an English Governor, it was the result of the savagery of a pack of border ruffians, who were determined, in their own words, "to extirpate the villains of Englishmen out of our country"; who refused to listen to friendly warning, and who were punished very leniently for one of the most dastardly plots ever hatched by white men against their fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER XIX

KAFIR WARS

WE have seen how the Dutch settlers spread out like a fan from the mother colony of Cape Town. To the north they went from mountain valley to mountain valley, until at last, breaking through the great rocky gorges, they swept up on to the Karoo itself. But the chief movement was eastwards, along the valleys that run east and west and down the rivers that flow towards the Indian Ocean. As they went the country became ever wilder and more picturesque. The climate grew milder, as they came within the range of the warm eastern sea, the rainfall grew heavier, and the vegetation more luxuriant. The valleys and ravines were forest-clad. Great timber-trees, hitherto unknown to man, climbed up out of a tangle of underwood. The Kafir-boom showered its purple blossoms in light and airy sprays, the geranium flooded the underwood with scarlet flowers, the tree crassula and the scarlet cotyledon mingled their blossoms; the spiky aloes raised high crowns of blood-red flowers; the giant euphorbia stretched their weird, green, leafless branches towards the sky, and from the higher trees fell wreaths of wild vine and tangled monkey-rope. The deep courses of rivers were marked by the light-green foliage of willows, and here and there thickets opened out into meadows of sweet grass covered with gorgeous flowers. Suddenly

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out of the forests rose huge masses of cliff, of deep-red and other glowing colours, rising high up into the blue sky in precipice upon precipice. Such were the valleys of the great Fish River and the Kei, with their neighbours and tributaries, and they rose among great mountain-ranges like the Winterberg, whose peaks were white with snow, and through whose narrow valleys came the rains that fell at long intervals upon the desolate plains of the great Karoo.

These valleys and wildernesses were peopled with vast herds of elephants and antelopes, gnus and quaggas and zebras; the rocks were alive with baboons; snakes glided among the bushes; the rocky kloofs sheltered the lion and the leopard, the wild buffalo and the rhinoceros fed on the river banks; and in the rivers themselves the hippopotamus floundered in the pools. 'On the Karoo flocks of ostriches lived in friendly intercourse with zebras and antelopes that passed over the wilderness in such herds that they sometimes covered the whole landscape as far as the eye could see.

Into this wonderful country the Boer farmers were pressing towards the end of the eighteenth century, and by the beginning of the nineteenth they had come face to face with its human inhabitants, very different people from the Hottentots and Bushmen whom they had enslaved or exterminated. The Kafirs were big men, tall and straight, and nearly black, with splendidly developed limbs and bodies, and features sometimes as straight and well-formed as those of Europeans. They lived in large villages of round, well-built huts; they used utensils of earthenware and basket-work; they had great herds of cattle and sheep and goats; they cultivated fields of maize with their iron hoes; they had chiefs and councillors and law-givers; they were in every way far in advance of the Bushmen and Hottentots. They wore karosses or cloaks of beautifully-dressed hide adorned with beads and the tails of wild animals;

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their arms were covered with copper and ivory rings. They had little aprons or fringes of leather and beads about their waists, and below the knees usually hung the end of a cow's tail. Their warriors carried a bundle of iron-tipped assegais and a heavy knobkerry—a stick with a round head; they had large oblong shields of bullock-hide; and their heads were ornamented with the long curved tail-feathers of the crane. These people were not scattered in small bands like the Hottentots, but consisted of great tribes numbering thousands of warriors. Against these people the white settler was destined to carry on intermittent warfare for more than fifty years before peace was finally settled, and black man and white agreed to divide the pleasant land between them.

It would be a wearisome business to tell the whole story of these wars. There were massacres on both sides. Sometimes the white man drove the black far eastwards and occupied his land, and sometimes a wave of savagery swept westward and drove the new settler back again into the older territories. The Dutch farmer by himself would not have held his own had he not been supported by the British Government.

The origins of the quarrel, indeed, go back to times before the British occupation. Some of the old stories resemble nothing so much as the pitiless, treacherous feuds between the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland in olden time. Thus in 1780 the famous van Jaarsveld invited the Kafirs to discuss their grievances, and shot them down as they were scrambling for his presents of beads and tobacco. The Kafirs, as I shall presently show, were just as treacherous. Then, some years later, Tjaart van der Walt, a veteran leader of the frontier Boers, fell in a disastrous conflict near the Konga River. The debatable land chiefly consisted of the Zuurveld, an undulating tract of light soil, with here and there a patch of rich land, between the Bushmen and the Fish

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Rivers. This country the British Government at last resolved to give to the frontier Boers, and in 1811 Sir John Cradock organised an expedition under Colonel Graham to drive the Kafir tribes—twenty thousand strong—across the Fish River.

Twelve hundred soldiers and eight hundred burghers took part in this war, and it was at this time that Slachter's Nek, the mountain pass of which I have already spoken in the previous chapter, got its ill-omened name.

It happened thus. Mr. Stockenstrom, the Landdrost of Graaff Reinet, had a camp of armed burghers on the north side of the Zuurberg. After going to Gaika, the great chief, and persuading him to take no part in the war, he left his camp again to cross over the great mountain range in order to confer with Colonel Graham. The camp he left in charge of his son, then Ensign Stockenstrom, who was afterwards to take part in quelling the Slachter's Nek rebellion. The father took with him only forty burghers, for the war had not then begun, and he did not expect any fighting, though some of the troops were at this very moment entering the Zuurveld. Major Cuyler was on the right, Colonel Graham and Captain Frazer were with the centre, and Stockenstrom himself had command of the left wing of the expedition.

On their way over the mountains Stockenstrom and his party had to pass along a narrow ridge since called Slachter's Nek, which connects two arms of the great mountain-chain. It is a wild and savage place. Above rise the stupendous cliffs of the mountain peaks broken into all manner of fantastic shapes; below are no less tremendous abysses, of which the bottom, jagged with rocks and shaggy with jungle, can only be faintly distinguished. The wild ravine, lined with tall trees and thick brushwood, holds a tributary of the Fish River, while another no less sombre and picturesque stretches

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down into the valley of the Koornay, while far below on either side rolls the waste of hill and valley, jungle and grassy plain.

Along this narrow pass, where sometimes a false step on either side might throw horse and rider into the gulfs below, Stockenstrom was passing when he observed bands of Kafirs coming out of the thickets and massing themselves so as to close the road. The Boers advised an immediate attack, on the good military principle that it is wise to strike first ; but the Landdrost thought he saw a fine chance of persuading the Kafirs not to make war, and against the advice of his two field-cornets, Potgieter and Gryling, rode straight up to the armed warriors and saluted them in a friendly way. The field-cornets and some of the Boers followed, doubtful, but determined to share the fate of their leader. Stockenstrom sat down, smoked a pipe with the chiefs, and began to discuss terms of peace. His words seemed to have effect ; but a dark mass of Kafirs were gathering near and gradually grew more threatening in their words and gestures. It is said that at this moment word had come to them that fighting had already commenced to the south and blood had been shed ; but whatever the cause the murder of the party was determined upon.

One of the Landdrost's followers was whispering his suspicions, and Stockenstrom was in the act of replying that there was no danger, when the Kafir war-cry echoed among the rocks and the savages rushed upon the white men. Stockenstrom and fourteen of his men fell pierced by a hundred assegais, while the rest of the little force galloped along the ridge amid a shower of spears.

A little bush-boy brought the news to young Stockenstrom, who hurried towards the spot with twenty men. On the way he met the Kafirs triumphantly returning with the guns and horses of the murdered men. But now they were in open ground, and in the fight that followed they received a terrible punishment

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from the muskets of the mounted Boers. Next day Captain Frazer, with a party of cavalry, met the Ensign after himself defeating a desperate attack of the enemy, and together they found the bodies of their comrades and buried them in a nameless grave somewhere near the crest of that wild pass.

But in spite of this disaster, the war was successful: the Kafirs were driven over the boundary of the Fish River; a line of military posts was established and garrisoned by regular troops, burghers and Hottentots, and the frontier was thus secured. But it was secured only upon a doubtful and dangerous tenure. The Kafirs never ceased to make raids upon the settlers' cattle, and many were the fights and murders in this wild borderland.

The Colonial Government made the great chief Gaika their ally; but 'Slambie, Hintza and other chiefs continued their depredations, and jealous of his friendship with the white man, attacked and defeated him at the battle of Debe Nek, taking from him 9,000 of his cattle. A fugitive, he appealed to the Government for help, and Colonel Brereton (of Bristol Riots fame) marched into Kafir-land, attacked the kraals of the hostile chiefs, captured 20,000 cattle, of which he gave half to Gaika and divided the rest among the settlers who had been robbed.

Now at this time there was in Kafirland a young native called Makana and sometimes "Lynx." He was very different from the ordinary type of Kafir, and it was even said that he was descended from some unhappy European woman who had been thrown on the shores of Kafirland by shipwreck. However that may be, Makana was a clever man. He made friends with the missionaries, learned a good deal about their doctrines, and, mingling them with native superstitions, formed a new religion of his own, calling himself "the brother of Christ." He practised all the arts of Mahomed, assuming "a reserved, solemn, and abstracted air," and by such

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means gradually collected a great following. Though he was of lowly birth even the chiefs acknowledged his power, and he was consulted on all matters of importance. When Brereton carried punishment into the heart of Kafirland, Makana preached a holy war. The Great Spirit, Uhlanga, he said, had sent him to avenge the wrongs of his people; he had power to call up the spirits of their ancestors from the grave to assist them in battle, and he could render the guns of the white men of no effect. They were to drive the colonists into the ocean, and having done so they could then sit down and eat honey.

Such was Makana's eloquence that he had soon gathered a great army of some nine thousand warriors in the thickets of the Great Bush River opposite Grahamstown. His plans were cunningly laid. Colonel Wilshire, the commandant of Grahamstown, had an interpreter, Klaas Nuka, who was really in the service of Makana. This wretch told Wilshire that he "heard a noise towards Kafir Drift," meaning that the enemy was crossing at that point, a long way from the true place of crossing. Thus the colonel was induced to detach a hundred of his small force of 450 men to reconnoitre in that direction, and this part of the force was not present when the attack took place.

Early on the morning of the 22nd of April 1819, Colonel Wilshire was inspecting a detachment of his troops, when a Hottentot buffalo-hunter, Captain Boezac by name, told him that Makana was advancing along a line of country known as the Queen's Road. The colonel, with an escort of only ten men, galloped off to see for himself, and at a turn of the road he suddenly came upon part of Makana's army lying in a ravine which skirts the open plain subsequently turned into a racecourse. The colonel turned his good horse "Blucher," and not a moment too soon, for the enemy were after him like lightning. But he escaped, and

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reaching his troops, with "Blucher" in a lather of foam, they awaited the rush of the enemy.

The troops were arranged in a hollow square on the slopes of some high land outside the town. They consisted of four companies of the 38th Regiment, and there was besides a well-secured company of artillery.

At the break of dawn Makana had formed his warriors in order of battle and made them a speech, in which he promised them the aid of the spirits of earth and air. Inspired by his words they had followed Wilshire at a run and charged up the hill only a few moments after he arrived at the square, which fortunately had been drawn up in his absence. As Wilshire galloped up he called out the order to fire. The guns opened with shrapnel and the muskets of the 38th rang out in a volley. The Kafirs were mowed down in swathes, while their showers of assegais fell short or had lost their force before they reached the troops. Not since Francisco Barreto fought his great battle in East Africa in the middle of the sixteenth century had there been such a slaughter.

But just as in that fight the witch had promised invulnerability, so now Makana told his men that the guns of the soldiers were only loaded with hot water, and the great mass of warriors surged forward, breaking their last assegais by Makana's order to use them as stabbing weapons in a hand-to-hand fight. If they had reached the troops it might have gone ill with the 38th, for the Kafirs were twenty to one. But just at this moment when, as Wilshire afterwards said, "He would not have given a feather for the safety of the town," Captain Boezac with a hundred and thirty of his buffalo hunters rushed forward upon the enemy's flank along the river-banks from the old Cape Corps barracks. They got close up to the Kafirs, and singling out the chiefs, whom they knew well, they bowled them over as fast

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as they could fire and reload their long elephant guns. At the same time Lieutenant Aitcheson of the artillery loaded with grape and opened anew more destructively than ever. Some of the Kafirs rushed forward almost to the guns before they fell. But it was their last effort. Makana, urging them to the last, was borne away in the headlong flight, and the broken enemy sought refuge among the ravines to the east of the town. Two thousand Kafirs were left upon the field, and many more must have crawled into the bush to die; some of them were found afterwards with grass plugs stuffed into their gunshot wounds in a vain attempt to stop the bleeding. Among the slain was Nuka, the interpreter, who was well punished for the false part he had played. When we remember that there were only two six-pounders and 350 soldiers against an army of between eight and ten thousand splendid fighting men, we see that this defence of Grahamstown was one of the great battles of South Africa. And we must not forget the brave Hottentot, Captain Boezac, and his followers, without whom the town could hardly have been saved.

Makana had been so sure of victory that he sent a message to Wilshire promising to breakfast with him that morning, and some thousands of Kafir women and children were found on the hills above the town with their mats and pots and cooking jars, calmly waiting to take possession.

Lord Charles Somerset lost no time in dealing a heavy counter-blow. The burghers of the whole colony, east and west, were called out. Andries Stockenstrom, now Landdrost in place of his father, commanded a thousand of them; Commandant Linde led the Cape burghers for the first time into Kafirland, and a force of 12,000 colonials and troops crossed the Keiskamma, being joined by six hundred of Gaika's warriors. But only women and children were found. The men had driven their cattle over the Kei. At last, after two

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months of marching and counter-marching, the troops beheld the warrior chief and prophet walking into their camp, followed only by two of his wives.

“If I have made the war,” he said, “let me see if delivering myself to the conquerors will restore peace to my people.”

The officers were struck by his lofty demeanour. They made him prisoner, and he was placed on Robben Island, where van Riebeck had imprisoned Herry nearly two hundred years before. A year or two afterwards, with some of his fellow prisoners, he attempted to escape in a boat, but it was capsized, and poor Makana was drowned among the surf and thick seaweed somewhere near the spot where Baird lost thirty-six of his men in landing to attack Janssens. Thus miserably perished the Mahomed of the Kafirs, but for long years his people would not believe that he was dead. They waited for his second coming with the pathetic confidence of the early Christians, and it was only after nearly thirty years of waiting that they abandoned all hope and sorrowfully buried his ornaments and spears. He had done what he could to atone for the destruction he had brought upon his people, for with his surrender the war ended, and there was a short spell of peace on the eastern frontier.¹

¹ This sketch of Makana's attack on Grahamstown is taken in the main from the account by the late Mr. C. L. Stretch of Somerset East, one of Colonel Wilshire's officers who took part in the defence. His description was published in that delightful old periodical, the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1876).

CHAPTER XX

THE 1820 SETTLERS

THE wars had left the Zuurveld an empty wilderness devoid of habitation, which the Boers did not dare to enter for fear of the Kafirs nor the Kafirs for fear of the Boers. Now at this time many people in England were in a state of dire distress. The terrible strain of the wars which ended in Waterloo was having its after-effect; soldiers and sailors were disbanded by the thousand; shipping ceased to be a British monopoly; and the high price of bread and the bad state of trade combined to make the poor somewhat more miserable than usual and the rich less able to help them. The hungry began to clamour, and the Government, at its wits' end, conceived the brilliant idea of sending some of their surplus population to a land where there was soil to till and no one to till it. Mr. Vansittart in the House of Commons, and Lord Sidmouth in the House of Lords, described the Cape as a sort of earthly Paradise, and the scheme caught the public mind. Nearly a hundred thousand people offered to go, and of these close on five thousand were selected. Parliament voted fifty thousand pounds to defray the expense of conveyance, and on the 10th of December 1819 the first of the transports sailed from the Downs, about twenty others following as fast as they could get the people and stores on board.

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They were a mixed assemblage—shrewd Scottish farmers, burly Somerset yeomen, loutish field labourers whose ancestors had chewed bacon from the days of Hengist and Horsa, fine ladies and gentlemen, exquisites who were tired of gaming and thirsted for the simple life, weather-beaten watermen and sailors from the Thames and the English seaports, old soldiers who had fought in every country in Europe, and pale-visaged artisans and mill-hands from the great cities. There were Anglicans and Presbyterians, Methodists and Dissenters, for the emigration was unlike both that of the Huguenots and the Puritans in the happy circumstance that religious persecution had nothing to do with it. But religious zealots there were, and on one of the ships, the *Brilliant*, the peace of the voyage was wrecked by two such fanatics as had given so much trouble to van der Stel more than a century before. One, as Pringle tells us, was “a tall, grave Wesleyan coachmaker,” and the other “a little dogmatic Anabaptist surgeon,” and these two soon split the emigrants into two discordant factions of Arminians and High Calvinists. “Heated by incessant controversy for three months, many of them, who had been wont formerly to associate on friendly terms, ceased to regard each other with sentiments of Christian forbearance; and the two rival leaders, after many obstinate disputations, which became more intricate and intemperate every time they were renewed, had at length finally parted in flaming wrath, and for several weeks past had paced the quarterdeck together without speaking or exchanging salutations.” There was a sad end to the quarrel. The Wesleyan died on board and was carried ashore to make his long home in the new land in which he had hoped to live. The little Anabaptist wept bitterly over his grave, and then he too, only a few days after, was seized with an illness of which he died. He was buried beside his old enemy, and there they still lie together, “their mouths

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stopt with dust," in eternal amity, somewhere beneath the busy streets of Port Elizabeth.

As for their followers, the lesson was felt to be from God. There was an end of strife, and the two parties settled down amicably together in the village of Salem.

In the meantime the work of landing went busily on. Party after party was brought through the surf by the cheerful sailors, to be placed in the brawny arms of the Highland soldiers, who worked like heroes on the beach, often up to their necks in water. A busy camp was soon formed on the shore, where the settlers, surrounded by their belongings, ranging from Scotch ploughs to fashionable carriages, waited for their turn to march into the interior.

While they were waiting, Sir Rufane Donkin appeared on the scene. He was a brilliant soldier who had served his country all over the world. His latest service had been with the Marquis of Hastings in the Mahratta War in Western India, where by his skilful movements he had cut off the enemy's line of retreat. But his triumph was marred by a terrible sorrow, for his young wife, whom he had married only three years before, died at Meerut. Broken in mind and body, he was invalided to the Cape, and there, during the absence of Lord Charles Somerset, he acted as Governor. He threw himself with his whole heart into the work of settlement, and after making arrangements for the reception of the settlers in the interior, went down to Algoa Bay to superintend the last stage of their journey. Here he laid the foundation-stone of the first house of the new town, which he called Port Elizabeth, in memory of his dead wife, Elizabeth Markham, eldest daughter of Dr. Markham, Dean of York, and he also built an obelisk to her memory on one of the adjoining heights. Sir Rufane lived to be an old man, honoured for his work in war and in scholarship, but he never forgot his first love, and when he was buried in Old St.

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Pancras Churchyard, the urn which held his wife's heart was buried with him. But the real memorial of this sad love story is the great town of Port Elizabeth.

Sir Rufane had brought together a large number of Boers with their wagons. These wagons were stronger and heavier than any vehicle the new settlers had ever seen. They were built of well-seasoned colonial wood by the wagon-makers of the Paarl. They were covered with canvas tilts to protect the travellers from sun and rain, and were drawn by teams of from ten to sixteen oxen over all sorts of country—rock and bush and river drift. In front sat the driver wielding an enormous whip which made the oxen strain on the long rope of twisted thong, while a young Hottentot, running before, led the first pair of oxen by a thong attached to their horns. In this way the settlers jogged along through a country stranger and wilder than anything they could have conceived. At night they pitched their tents or spread their blankets on the ground, and Pringle has given us a vivid sketch of these encampments. The Boers of those days, as we may see from the coloured plates of Daniell, wore huge broad-brimmed hats with high crowns, short coats of blue cloth of the cut known as spencers, and country-made trousers usually cut and sewn by their wives or Hottentots out of the skins of antelopes. Round their waist was a broad leathern belt, from which hung a pouch of home-made bullets and a large ox horn full of powder. They wore neither boots nor stockings, but what was much more suitable, veldschoens or mocassins made of dressed hide. Pringle describes how fires were lighted to scare away the wild beasts, and the horns of the oxen fastened to the wagon wheels :—

The Boers unslung their huge guns (or roers, as they called them) from the tilts of the wagons, and placed them against a magnificent evergreen bush, in whose shelter, with a fire at their feet, they had fixed their place of repose. Here, untying each his

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leathern scrip, they produced their provisions for supper, consisting chiefly of dried bullock's flesh, which they seasoned with a moderate *xoopje*, or dram, of colonial *brandewyn*, from a huge horn slung by each man in his wagon beside his powder flask. The slave men and Hottentots, congregated apart round one of the watch-fires, made their frugal meal, without the brandy, but with much more merriment than their phlegmatic masters. In the meanwhile our frying-pans and tea-kettles were actively employed; and by a seasonable liberality in the beverage "which cheers but not inebriates," we ingratiated ourselves not a little with both classes of our escort, especially with the coloured caste, who prized "tea-water" as a rare and precious luxury. . . . The Dutch-African Boors, most of them men of almost gigantic size, sat apart in their bushy *bield*, in aristocratic exclusiveness, smoking their huge pipes with self-satisfied complacency. . . . These groups, with all their variety of mien and attitude, character and complexion—now dimly discovered, now distinctly lighted up by the fitful blaze of the watch-fires; the exotic aspect of the clumps of aloes and euphorbias peeping out amidst the surrounding jungle, in the wan light of the rising moon, seeming to the excited fancy like bands of Caffir warriors crested with plumes and bristling with assegais; together with the uncouth clucking gibberish of the Hottentots and Bushmen (for there were two or three of the latter tribe among our wagon leaders), and their loud bursts of wild and *eldritch* laughter, had altogether a very strange and striking effect, and made some of us feel far more impressively than we had yet felt, that we were now indeed pilgrims in the wilds of savage Africa.

Let us follow Pringle's party to its destination. Including Thomas Pringle the leader, his father, and other relations and their friends and servants, this little band of Scots was composed of twelve men, three of them farm hands, six women, and six children. With their Boer convoy, they crossed the Great Fish River, and arrived at its tributary the Baviaans, which five or six years before had seen the hatching of the Slachter's Nek rebellion. Up this river they went, meeting on their way our old friend Groot Willem Prinsloo, pardoned for his share in the rebellion, and now living peacefully on his farm at the mouth of the glen. He treated the visitors kindly, and they went on, fortified

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by his brandy and fruit and vegetables, up the wild bed of the river. Sometimes the mountains drew back from the river, leaving space for pleasant meadows sprinkled with mimosa trees. At other times they came close, so that only a narrow defile was left just broad enough for the stream to find a passage, while precipices of naked rock rose like ramparts to the height of many hundred feet, and seemed to overhang the stream upon whose huge boulders the oxen slipped and stumbled. Sometimes the party had to hew their way through tangled jungle, sometimes they had to remove rocks with crowbar and pick; but at last, when the oxen were nearly worn out and two wagons had broken down, they got through the last poort, and from a high ridge looked down on the end of the valley.

“And now, mynheer,” said the Dutch-African field-cornet who commanded our escort, “*daar leg neve veld*”—“there lies your country.” Looking in the direction where he pointed, we beheld extending to the northward a beautiful vale, about six or seven miles in length, and varying from one to two in breadth. It appeared like a verdant basin, or *cul de sac*, surrounded on all sides by an amphitheatre of steep and sterile mountains, rising in the background into sharp cuneiform ridges of very considerable elevation; their summits being at this season covered with snow, and estimated to be about 5000 feet above the level of the sea. The lower declivities were sprinkled over, though somewhat scantily, with grass and bushes. But the bottom of the valley through which the infant river meandered, presented a warm, pleasant, and secluded aspect; spreading itself into verdant meadows, sheltered and embellished, without being encumbered, with groves of mimosa trees, among which we observed in the distance herds of wild animals—antelopes and quaggas—pasturing in undisturbed quietude.

This pleasant spot the party called Glen Lynden, and here they pitched their tents, and sang that old Scottish Paraphrase :

O God of Bethel! by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led.

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Here too they kept the Sabbath, with two services, the first of which "concluded with an excellent discourse from a volume of sermons presented to me on parting by my honoured relative the Rev. Dr. Pringle of Perth." An antelope, we are told, came and listened, "gazing at us in an innocent amazement." What an odd conjunction of circumstances when one comes to think of it—an African oribi listening to a Scottish Paraphrase or a sermon by the reverend minister of Perth.

Here too the party built huts "which were constructed after the fashion of the country, simply of a slight wooden frame, thatched with reeds down to the ground." They ploughed the ground with their Scotch ploughs to the wonder of their neighbours; they raised stock; they made butter and cheese, soap and candles; they tanned sheepskins with mimosa bark, and cut them into jackets and trousers; they had face to face encounters with lions; they killed snakes when they came in through the doors; they built an oven out of an old ant-hill; they "planted an orchard of apple, pear, peach, apricot, almond, walnut, plum, and lemon trees, and a small vineyard, the whole encircled by hedges of quince and pomegranate." They "succeeded in raising abundance of pumpkins, melons, beetroot, parsnips, carrots, lettuce, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, etc." In short, they did everything that van Riebeck had done when he came to Table Valley nearly two hundred years before.

And so it was with the other settlers. Some of them thrive and some of them foundered. Some went into the towns and took to trade, others traded with the natives, others became hunters; but many stuck to their farming through good and evil fortune. They generally chose some fertile bottom or narrow ravine of the Zuurveld, an immense plain of undulating park-like country. Here they built their wattled cabins and raised their cattle and sheep-folds and garden fences.

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At first they had very hard times. They sowed wheat, and the wheat was blighted for three successive years; their vineyards and orchards were eaten up with locusts; Kafirs stole their cattle; great floods swept away about half of the houses of the whole settlement. Jackals and hyænas killed their young stock, lions went off with their horses. Elephants, "too big to wrestle with," as one old lady said, trampled down their gardens; baboons stole their pumpkins. Worse still, their friend Sir Rufane Donkin had a quarrel with Lord Charles Somerset, an obstinate and cross-grained old gentleman, who upset the former's wise administration and bullied or neglected the settlers.¹

All this weeded out the weaklings; but the others held on obstinately, and, at last, in the darkest hour, help came. An association was formed in Cape Town for the relief of the settlers, and the good Pringle used his eloquent pen to draw the attention of the British public to the position of affairs. Money poured in to the extent altogether of £10,000; Lord Charles Somerset visited the eastern districts and himself set right his own mistakes; loans and title-deeds were issued, credit was re-established, and the position was saved. Thenceforward, though they had many calamities, the Eastern Province settlers steadily rose in prosperity, and now they are a grand race of farmers and townsmen, good colonists and brave sons of the Empire, who have turned their country into one of the finest parts of South Africa.

¹ The most terrible calamity of all, however, occurred on the way out. This was the destruction of the emigrant ship *Abona* by fire near the Equator. Of the 140 Scottish emigrants, who sailed from the Clyde in this ship, only sixteen escaped.

CHAPTER XXI

MORE KAFIR WARS

THE desert blossomed as the rose. In the kloofs and valleys of the Zuurveld, where for years only wandering tribes of Bushmen and Kafirs and trekking Boers had pastured their cattle, the colonist's home appeared, its walls of whitewashed clay or brick, its garden hedged with quince and pomegranate, its kraals fortified with branches of mimosa to keep out the jackals. Little white-haired Saxon children began to tumble about in the dust and sunshine; the lions and elephants, "too big to wrestle with," sought more sequestered haunts beyond the frontier or in the forests of Knysna. Man's voice was on the mountains, and the lowing of his herds in the cattle-folds.

But the bitterest trial of all was yet to come. The Kafirs, as we have seen, were very different people from the Hottentots and Bushmen. They loved fighting for fighting's sake just as much as the Red Indian or Rob Roy's Highlanders, and when they wanted cattle for a wedding dowry they made a raid upon the settlers. Many good people—missionaries and others—spoke of them as an innocent and down-trodden race who turned upon the white man in just exasperation. But the truth was very different. Of course they suffered wrongs, as was inevitable when the white settler met the black savage. But they also inflicted them.

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And we must remember that the country of the Zuurveld, and the district of Albany, over which so much fighting took place, was, to begin with, no more the Kafir's than the European's. Old travellers of the eighteenth century tell us that the westernmost outposts of the tribes were then not much beyond the Kei. They were, in fact, invaders from the north and east, just as the settlers were invaders from the north and west. The two waves in their opposing courses met upon the Zuurveld, and a tremendous conflict was the result. But if natural ownership has anything to do with the case, the natural owner was the Bushman or the Hottentot, and he, to be sure, had a bad time between the invading armies.

At their best the Kafirs were pleasant, laughing barbarians, without much sense of right or wrong or mine and thine; at their worst they were cruel, blood-thirsty, treacherous savages. When superstition swayed their minds they practised fiendish cruelties. They would pin a man down to the ground and cover him with black ants which ate him to death, or they would cover him with hot stones which burnt their way into his vitals. They had made the Fingos their slaves and treated them cruelly, and when they wanted cattle they raided the colony and took what they could lift, often murdering the herdsman who tried to protect his property.

The farmer, on his side, had the power to call a patrol of the military, ride on the spoor after the thieves, and take the cattle or their equivalent from the village which harboured them. This was called the Reprisal System. It was a rude form of justice, and perhaps the only possible one at the time; but it led to occasional bad practices which exasperated the Kafirs beyond measure. Captain Andries Stockenstrom, the son of the Landdrost who was killed at Slachter's Nek, was now Commissioner-General of the Frontier. Certain

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of the chiefs were suspected of making raids upon the colonists' cattle, and Stockenstrom rode in with a commando to recover the stolen animals. His field-commandant Erasmus reported to Stockenstrom that the chief Zeko had attacked him in a thick bush, that he had defeated and killed Zeko and several of his people, and had taken that chief's cattle. Stockenstrom at first believed the story, but afterwards discovered that Erasmus and his men had gone to Zeko's kraal, had seized his cattle, and had shot Zeko and his men while the Kafirs were unarmed and without provocation.¹

Thus on both sides there were raids and murders, and it was into this simmering pot that the 1820 settlers were thrown. At first all was quiet. The destruction of Makana had given the land peace and the new settlers time to establish themselves.

They had fourteen years of truce and then the storm broke. The Kafir chiefs had gathered their power secretly, and then with a sudden rush they burst over the Bushman's River and into the colony. On the night of 21st December 1834 they entered the settlement, nearly ten thousand naked crane-plumed warriors, advancing along a line of thirty miles, murdering, robbing, and burning as they went. Most of the settlers, however, were warned in time, and galloped away, leaving their flaming homesteads behind them. One good lady was in the act of making the Advent pudding when her husband rushed in, caught her up, threw her on a horse and rode off with her, leaving the yelling savages to wreak their fury upon his cattle and homestead. By the 26th the raiders had reached nearly to Uitenhage; many farmers had been murdered; flam-

¹ This is Stockenstrom's version. Dr. Theal says it is disproved, and was based on "idle tales of some Hottentots," adding the insinuation that Stockenstrom knew it was untrue. As a matter of fact, Stockenstrom's belief was based on the evidence of Dutch, Hottentot, and Kafir eye-witnesses, who all told the same story, a circumstantial story, which they could not possibly have united to concoct.

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ing homesteads dotted the landscape in all directions, and nothing remained of the flourishing district of Albany but the town of Grahamstown crowded with panic-stricken fugitives. In the words of an eye-witness, the Kafirs had come with an irresistible rush, "carrying with them fire, sword, devastation, and cold-blooded murder, and spoiling the fertile estates and farms like a mountain avalanche."

Now at this time, fortunately for the colony, there were two strong men at the head of affairs. One was Sir Benjamin d'Urban, a brilliant soldier, and a good man. Like Donkin, he had fought for his country all over the world, and in the Peninsula alone he had taken part in nine pitched battles and sieges. He was one of the best staff-officers of his day, and a master in all the arts of war. Under him was Colonel Harry Smith, another veteran of the Peninsula, and one of the most dashing soldiers that ever carried a sword. He had been in almost every fight from Corunna to Waterloo, and he enjoyed them all. He had helped to lead the storm of Badajoz, and was very nearly bayoneted by his own men for attempting to throw down the ladders so that the remainder should not get out of the ditch, where nearly all the men lay dead. During the sack two Spanish ladies threw themselves upon the mercy of Smith and his friend Kincaid. Blood trickled down their necks where their earrings had been wrenched through the flesh by the soldiers. One of them was a girl of thirteen: "A being more transcendently lovely I had never before seen—one more amiable I have never yet known," says Kincaid; "to look at her was to love her; and I did love her, but I never told my love, and in the meantime another and a more impudent fellow stepped in and won her." The "more impudent fellow" was Harry Smith, who speaks of her in his characteristic way as "one with a sense of honour no knight ever exceeded in the most romantic days of

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chivalry, an understanding superior to her years, a masculine mind with a force of character no consideration could turn from her own just sense of rectitude, and all encased in a frame of Nature's fairest and most delicate moulding; the figure of an angel, with an eye of light and an expression which then inspired me with a maddening love, which from that period to this (now thirty-three years) has never abated under many and the most trying circumstances." This soldier's wife, like the other less fortunate who gave her name to Port Elizabeth, is immortalised in one of South Africa's towns—Ladysmith.

When d'Urban heard the news of the outbreak he gave Colonel Smith the command of the frontier, offering him a sloop of war to take him to Algoa Bay. But this was much too tame for Smith, who laid posts to ride the six hundred miles from Cape Town to Grahamstown. It was a famous ride. His orders and warrants were sewn in his jacket by his wife. The first day he went 90 miles, "the heat raging like a furnace." He was in Swellendam to breakfast the next day, though he had "two heavy lazy brutes of horses." After breakfast he did 70 miles, 30 of them in two hours and twenty minutes. On the third day he rode a hundred miles into George, and on the fourth day he was off before daylight over mountain and valley. He met the Grahamstown mails on the way, and reading how terrible the position was he resolved to reach the place a day before he had planned, for it was to have been a seven days' ride. On he went; it was the height of summer, and the weather blazing hot. He had crossed mountain upon mountain by villainous roads. One river, so tortuous was its bed, he forded seven times.

Fifty miles from Uitenhage his horse gave out, "and no belabouring would make him move." Half a mile off was a Boer with his family, his herds and his flocks, fleeing from the invasion. Smith went up to

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him, told him who he was, and asked for assistance. "To my astonishment," says Smith (for nothing can exceed the kindness and hospitality of the Dutch Boers on ordinary occasions), "he first started a difficulty, and then positively refused, which soon set my blood boiling. He was holding a nice-looking horse all ready saddled, so I knocked him down, though half again as big as myself, jumped on his horse, and rode off. I then had a large river to cross by ferry, and horses were waiting for me. The Boer came up, and was very civil, making all sorts of apologies, saying, until he spoke to the *guide* who *followed* me, he did not believe that in that lone condition I could be the officer I represented myself." That night he reached Uitenhage, where he had to sit through an official dinner, and afterwards talk over frontier matters with Colonel Cuyler, now an old retired officer.

Then off next day for Grahamstown, suffering untold misery from the "wretched brutes of knocked-up horses laid for me." On his way he found the country in the wildest state of alarm, families, with their herds and flocks, "fleeing like the Israelites." But the last ten miles was luxury. "I found awaiting me a neat clipping little hack of Colonel Somerset's (such as he is celebrated for) and an escort of six Cape Mounted Rifles. I shall never forget the luxury of getting on this little horse—a positive redemption from an abject state of misery and labour. In ten minutes I was perfectly revived, and in forty minutes was close to the barrier of Grahamstown, fresh enough to have fought a general action, after a ride of 600 miles in six days over mountainous and execrable roads, on Dutch horses living in the fields without a grain of corn. I performed each day's work at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, and I had not the slightest scratch even on my skin."

It was a great ride; but the rider had not arrived a