

CHAPTER XV.

Departure from Kliphübel. Instance of persecution. Brutality of a boor. Avantur. Civility of Mr. Zondag and his family. Bush-cats. Night's lodging at Veldcornet Rendsberg's. Eseljagd's Revier. Hartebeest-house at David Frie's farm. Runaway slave. Delay at Great Dorn Revier. Unsuccessful attempt in surgery. Saffran's Revier. Attaqua's Kloof. Caverns. Saffranskraal. German farmer and his baboon, at Grootte Paerdekraal.

WE left Kliphübel about nine o'clock, and found the cows to perform their duty with great alacrity. As we were passing slowly over a hill, we saw a woman making towards us, across the heath. When she reached the waggons, she appeared almost convulsed with weeping, and we could scarcely pacify her, so as to make her speech intelligible. She said, that she was the most miserable of beings, a slave, and sold by the Veldcornet, whom we had just left, to a neighbouring boor, because she went to hear the word of God. The boor himself was a moderate man, but his wife a most inveterate enemy of the gospel, who beat her slaves and dependants, if they showed any disposition that way. That, however, was not the worst, but her son and daughter-in-law, were likewise slaves to the Veldcornet, and to be sold on account of their love of religion, especially as her son spoke to the other slaves. They were to be separated from each other, the husband being disposed of to one, and the wife to another farmer, living at a distance from each other; that the thoughts of it made her distracted, and she spent her time running to and fro among the bushes, crying to God for mercy, but that, if she, or any other slaves, were found kneeling behind a bush in prayer, they were sure to be unmercifully treated. We spoke to her in as consoling a manner as we could, encouraged her to persevere in crying to the Lord for de-

liverance from such distress, and for the conversion of her mistress and other enemies of His word, and meanwhile to be faithful and diligent in her service. As she seemed to lay a great stress upon kneeling, and to think that the only posture of body, in which prayer could be made acceptably, we told her, that our Saviour was everywhere, and at all times present and ready to hear the cry, that proceeded from the heart, whether she was at work, in the house, or field, sitting or standing, or in any other attitude, and that no authority or circumstance could prevent the heart from holding communion with God; but that He had foretold His disciples, that they would be hated and persecuted for His name's sake. It must therefore be expected, and we have to look to Him alone, for that peace, which He promised to them in the midst of the tribulations of this world. The poor woman, seemed to take comfort, and to be truly in earnest, in seeking the salvation of her soul. By this circumstance, we gained some insight into the cause of our treatment last night, when we were shut out, as being engaged with missionary affairs, not to mention the inconvenience and disturbance, which might have been occasioned to the hop, by the intrusion of such grave faces. We reaped, however, a very essential advantage from Mr. F.'s aversion to such company, for he was the more ready to help us off his premises, and his cows carried us, with great speed, to a farm belonging to a Mr. H. The master being absent, we were very civilly treated by his black slave, and soon provided with two spans of oxen, to bring us forward to Mr. Zondag's farm, at Avantur.

During the short time of our stay at Mr. H.'s miserable place, Mr. Melville had the unexpected pleasure of meeting with an officer in the Cape regiment, who had been his school-fellow. Strolling about the premises, I noticed a trap-flur, better built, and larger than any I had yet seen. This is a circular piece of ground, surrounded by a low wall, and made as hard as a threshing floor, into which the corn is put, and the grain trodden out by from ten to twenty or more horses, driven round it in a sharp trot.

Whether this is a mode better calculated to secure the crop than thrashing, or a barbarous, wasteful custom, founded on prejudice, the straw being thus destroyed and lost, I leave better judges to determine.

All the other buildings in this farm were wretched huts, and the premises covered with filth, and the remnants of carcasses, as is too generally the case in this country. Yet the proprietor was possessed of what many English gentlemen cannot boast. He had been at the funeral of a neighbour's child, unfortunately burnt to death, and met us on the road in his state-waggon, drawn by six beautiful horses of equal size and colour, driven by himself. Instead of greeting us, he jumped off the box, and demanded of his black lad, what business he had to give us Vorspann. The poor slave had hardly time to reply, that he had acted conformably to his own commands, to furnish Vorspann in his absence, if ordered by the Veldcornet, when he put himself into a furious rage, attended with hideous grimaces, so as to make himself truly ridiculous, and threatening what he would do to his slave, when he got home, mounted his box, without paying any respect to our party, and drove off. The poor slave was exceedingly terrified, told us, that his master was a cruel tyrant, and would certainly give him a hard flogging on his return, with the achter shambock, the thickest whip cut out of the hippopotamus skin, and used to beat the shaft-oxen with. In passing, we called on the friendly family at Wellgelegen, who treated us with tea-water. Here we found a dark-coloured man, who travels about as a schoolmaster, to teach the farmers' children their letters and a little cyphering, spending a few weeks at a time at one place, then going to another, for the same purpose, there being no schools in the country. Of course, the proficiency made is very small, and hardly sufficient to qualify the scholars for the most common uses of reading, writing, and cyphering. To this want of instruction must be ascribed the general state of ignorance prevailing, with few exceptions, among the inhabitants of the interior. The schoolmaster was a very inquisitive man, and a shrewd politician.

By the specimens we had just seen of the behaviour of certain farmers in the Lange Kloof, we augured but unfavourably of the reception we were likely to meet with at Avantur, and afraid that we should be obliged to spend a cold, windy night, in our tent; but herein we were most agreeably disappointed. Nothing could exceed the cordial welcome we experienced from Mr. Zondag. He stood like an ancient patriarch before his door, and as we walked up to the house, held out his hand, inviting us in the most friendly manner, to enter, and make his house our home. His wife was worthy of him, and in the kindest manner received Sister Schmitt and the whole party. Perhaps their friendliness and hospitality was rendered the more conspicuous and gratifying, in contrast with the savage conduct of those we had left; but the general behaviour of the Zondags towards all persons in the house, proved them to have benevolent dispositions. The children, who were yet young, seemed to partake of the virtues of their parents, and behaved with unaffected good-will and confidence towards us. Two dragoons, entering the room, came up to us, shook hands, and, in lively terms, expressed their joy to see English faces, and hear their own language spoken. They were civil, well-bred young men. After much agreeable conversation, we were entertained by looking over a large Dutch bible, in folio, admirably well printed, and full of good cuts, which was valued as the chief jewel in the family. Little Peter, a favourite boy, was employed to read some portions of its contents, which he did well, but the want of schools in the country was much lamented by the parents. That we might be the better accommodated, Mr. and Mrs. Zondag, unknown to us, gave up their own room, and retired into the dragoons house to sleep. The latter went into the garret.

29th. We seemed in no great hurry to leave so agreeable a mansion, and did not set off till half past nine. Meanwhile all kind of business was carrying on. The slaves, and others wanted Gnadenthal knives, which brother Schmitt furnished. A dragoon gave me the skin of a bush-cat, shot a few days ago. This is a fierce, but

beautiful animal, about three feet and a half long. It has a rougher skin, and a shorter tail than the tyger. Its general colour is a brownish-yellow. From the forehead along the back, three jet-black streaks run towards the tail; the sides are marked with large single spots of the same colour; the tail has five black rings, and each ear two streaks. Broad black bands descend a little way, in curved lines, down the shoulders. It generally climbs trees, watching for some unfortunate antelope or other creature to approach for shade, or near enough to be sprung upon. Perceiving that I was much pleased with the skin, Mr. Zondag's nephew brought me another still more beautiful, and well dressed. I inquired of the other dragoon, how I might reward his comrade for his generosity, for he had declined receiving any remuneration. He replied, that as he was "a great writer," but could get no paper, and was obliged to write on any odd scrap he could find on the premises, some paper would be most acceptable. I gave him half a quire of foolscap, and a few pencils and pens, with which he seemed extremely delighted. Sister Schmitt got here a supply of butter, apples, and other necessaries, and we left this hospitable family with expressions of mutual esteem and affection. We were also supplied with excellent oxen, and Marcus, without much use of the whip, brought them frequently, on even road, into a sharp trot.

Our next stage was Jacomima Barkhuis's farm, on Kierboom's Revier. The family received us kindly, as old acquaintances, and as the old lady pleaded inability to furnish oxen, Mr. Zondag had permitted us, in that case, to proceed with his spans, to the house of the Veldcornet Michael Rendsberg, at Gaensekraal. We again entered the premises with some suspicion, lest we might be left to spend a cold night on the werft, but though the house was full of company, we met with a cordial welcome. The Veldcornet and his wife were remarkably attentive to us. Coffee was served, and the evening spent in lively and agreeable conversation between those who could speak Dutch.

An English dragoon, who had arrived from Kliphübel, told us,

that the manner in which we were received in that place, had given much offence to our brave countrymen, but they durst not show their good-will towards us, without their officer's leave. From hence, we intended to go by the new-made road across the mountains to George, but heard, to our sorrow, that the landdrost, Mr. Van Kervel, had gone to Plettenberg Bay. We therefore resolved to take the nearer road, by Attaqua's kloof, and sent Johannes to George to bring the oxen we had left in that place, to the Gowritz river, where we should join the main road.

30th. After breakfast, Brother Schmitt was requested by Mrs. Rendsberg to deliver a discourse to their slaves and Hottentots, which he did on the words of our Saviour's parable; "*Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.*" He addressed both the Christians and heathen present, in a serious and impressive manner, for which, the ladies in the family more particularly expressed many thanks. The oxen furnished here were small and weak, and brought us forward but very slowly. We found ourselves encompassed with mountains of singular shapes, but, like the country through which we passed, barren in the extreme. Our dinner was cooked on the banks of the Eselsjagd river, or (Zebra-hunting river), which at present consisted only of a few stagnant pools. After quitting this place, we entered a narrow glen, bordered by ledges of rocks, bushes of various kinds, and Wageboom-trees, growing luxuriantly wherever any soil was left to support them. The large fragments of white quartz, covered in some places with vermillion-coloured moss, and the diversified tints, produced by the layers and masses of ferruginous sand-stone, intermixed with the foliage of the trees and bushes, gave to the whole a picturesque appearance. The road was very rough, till we emerged from the kloof and got into the Karroo-field, so called from its resemblance to the great Karroo. We had now the mountains on the north side of the Oliphant's river in view, with other ranges of higher or lower hills.

After a tedious ride through a flat country, covered with rhinoceros-

bushes, and here and there with aloes and Wageboom, we arrived at a farm called Plaisir, where the Veldcornet had advised us to stop, if it were too late to reach Mr. Heyns's farm on Dorn Revier. As it was a light evening, we determined to proceed; and crossing the river, entered a kloof between low, heathy hills. It lightened much, and the road was very uneven; and perceiving, that we could not well reach Dorn Revier, we dispatched old Leonhard to a farm called Klippedrift, to announce our intention of honouring the proprietor, David Frie, with our company. The road to it was dreadfully bad, and in crossing a narrow ravine, with a deep brook at the bottom, we were in some danger of oversetting, but the good people came out with lights, to show us the way to the house. The farmer immediately gave us the only room he could spare, which was at one end of what is called a hartebeest-house, being a roof, put upon a wall about two feet in height. But the building, though very small, was new, and clean, with two bed-steads in it. Of these Brother and Sister Schmitt occupied one, I the other, and Mr. Melville the floor. Brother Stein put up with the only vacant spot remaining, under the bed-steads. But we were thankful to be under good cover. It lightened incessantly; and during the night a storm passed over us, with loud thunder.

May 1st. We rose early, the weather having cleared up, that we might reach Mr. Heyns's on Dorn Revier to breakfast. A runaway slave, chained to a post in the farmer's kitchen, was this morning sent forward to the drosty for punishment. He belonged to a place at some distance. In this manner, deserters are passed, from one farm to the other, till they reach the prison. We expressed to him our pity, and Brother Schmitt gave him some good advice, but he seemed quite stupified. The family behaved with great civility, and presented Sister Schmitt with a fine tortoise, and some eggs.

A pleasant morning's ride brought us to Great Dorn Revier; but no Vorspann having arrived, we were detained here all day. We found here a pleasant family, and spent the day in writing, drawing,

and other useful employments. In the neighbourhood of this place, especially on some rocky hills to the south, many wild horses are yet seen. I obtained the skin of one, in barter for some gunpowder. A Koodoo-skin was likewise purchased for five rix-dollars. They are used for lashes, and sold at a much higher price near the Cape.

Brother Stein had here an opportunity of serving some of the family with medical advice, bled a black female slave, and attempted to extract a tooth, which had long tormented the mistress. But no sooner had he brought his instrument to bear upon it, than she pushed him away, leaving the tooth half-drawn; nor would she suffer him to finish his work, the bleeding of the lacerated gum having brought her some relief. No persuasion from her wiser husband could prevail, to let him make a second attempt.

Though the Vorspann system was sometimes attended with unforeseen delays, we generally contrived to make good use of our time, nor did the people at this place seem to wish to get rid of us. In the evening, the lightning was vivid all round the horizon. Our dormitory was a lumber-room, with a mud-floor, where we enjoyed a quiet night.

2d. After breakfast, we were glad to see two spans of oxen arrive for our use. The country through which we passed, was one continued waste, thickly covered with plants and bushes. Some species of the thorn-bush and speckboom were new to me. In two hours, we arrived at the Veldcornet Wolfran's farm, but made no stay. He came out to us, and gave us a letter to the farmer at Saffran's Revier to furnish us with fresh cattle, as his were too young and weak to take us through Attaqua's Kloof. But when we arrived at that place, the farmer pretended, that he had no oxen at home, though the dragoons informed us, that he had enough for five spans, but had driven them across the river, as soon as he saw our waggons coming down the hill. He seemed to be completely under the controul of his wife, a woman of a most surly temper, who, when her more hospitable daughter set a plate of apples

before us, snatched them angrily away, and would hardly allow us to eat our own bread and butter under her roof. Mr. Barrow must have encountered many of that description, when he drew his picture of the African boors and their ladies. We met with but few, for in general, they treated us with civility.

Near this place, I found some very singular fossils in ironstone, resembling screws, and in several places, the stones were covered with a bituminous crust.

We perceived now, that the best way would be, quietly to move on, and to endeavour to work our way through the kloof, with our weary oxen, as well as we could. Having reached the first steep ascent, we left the waggons, and by a foot-path, joined the road, on the other side of the hill. Here we rested long, before the waggons overtook us. Some curious caverns attracting our attention, we entered them. By some foot-marks in the sand, we perceived, that they afforded retreat to tyger-cats. They also provided shelter for travellers in rainy weather, there being here an outspan-place, and fire-places made under the overhanging rocks. Forgetting the caution I had prescribed to myself, when I touched a tarantula spider, on the Zuurberg, I lifted up a stone to examine it, and saw a young scorpion lying under it. I was thankful that I had escaped putting my hand upon it. Finding it impossible to reach any habitation to-night, the weather being very dark and cloudy, and seeing a fire on the mountain, we made towards it. It had been kindled by Lebrecht Aris, who had brought our purchased oxen thus far, and was preparing to rest here. We put up our tent, and though somewhat annoyed by passing mists, commended ourselves to the protection of God, and spent a very quiet night in this wild place.

3d. Brother Stein, thinking the morning about to dawn, at half past three roused us out of a sound sleep, and announced the day. Though unnecessarily disturbed, we took advantage of it, and prepared for our departure. When it grew light, we saw high peaked mountains to our left, and found ourselves in a ro-

mantic situation. It was six o'clock before we set off. As we proceeded, we were surrounded by rocky eminences of considerable height, and the views became still more interesting, especially when we reached the highest part of the kloof, where the mountains exhibited very singular scenery.

Mr. Melville and I were so long engaged in drawing, that we could not overtake the waggons, and were obliged to walk the whole way to the next farm, a distance of little less than ten English miles, Mr. Rutter, the proprietor of the Groote Paerdekraal, is a German by birth. His house lies about a field's length from the road, and both he and his wife received us most civilly. Indeed our visit seemed to put him into high spirits. Though seventy-five years old, he was remarkably strong and lively, and full of merry jokes. I felt at first much fatigued, but soon recovered. Our host came from the neighbourhood of Gotha in Saxony, and had been present at the building of the settlement of the Brethren in that neighbourhood, called Neudietendorf, of which he gave us an entertaining account, according to the notions he had formed of its institutions, though not quite like those of Madam de Stael. He related also some part of his own history, and the manner in which he had been decoyed at Amsterdam by a Dutch crimp, and brought at last as a soldier to the Cape. Our having noticed a tame baboon on his premises, led him to tell us the following story: Doing duty at the castle at Capetown, he kept one of these comical animals for his amusement. One evening, some boys and girls entered the place where it was confined, and played with it, unknown to him, till it broke its chain. In the night, climbing up into the belfrey, it began to play with and ring the bell. Immediately the whole place was in an uproar: some great danger was apprehended. Many thought, that the castle was on fire, others, that an enemy had entered the bay, and the soldiers began to turn out, when it was discovered, that his baboon had caused the disturbance. On the following morning, a court-martial was held, when Cape justice dictated, that whereas Master Rutter's baboon

had unnecessarily put the castle into a state of alarm, its master should receive fifty lashes: "but," added he, "among these mountains, and under British government, I hope, that my boon and I may make as much noise as we please, without either of us endangering his back."

Brother Schmitt, struck with the general levity of this honest man's manner, began to speak seriously with him about his advanced age, and observed, that though he was blessed with such good health and flow of spirits, it was high time to think of the approach of death. He replied, that as to religion, he understood more about it, than all the people that travelled that way, and would immediately enter the lists with him, to prove, that the Lutheran faith was the right one. Having brought three or four quarto volumes from an adjoining room, he declared, that he had read them all through, and by them could settle any dispute. Brother Schmitt declined all dispute, and wished only to impress upon his mind the necessity of true conversion of heart and assurance of acceptance with God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. But the old man either would, or could not understand him, and turned the conversation to other subjects.

Our cattle were completely fatigued, and Mr. Rutter obliged us much, by sending for two spans, and putting us forward, without an express order from the Veldcornet. The road from the Groote Paerdekraal led through a very rough country, to the Haagekraal. That part of the mountains which will admit of any verdure, is well covered with it. Wageboom is frequent, and in other places, the sugar-bush, being now in full flower, adorned the slopes of the hills, with great splendor. At six we reached Haagekraal, and though the proprietors, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer, were not at home, their son gave us a hearty welcome. The night turned out windy and rainy, and we were again thankful to be under shelter.

Our driver Marcus, who had expressed much joy at our resolution to pass this way, as it would give him an opportunity of once