

with a few sheepskins and goatskins laid upon the ground for sleeping accommodation, may be said to be a fair representation of the average arrangements, external and internal, of such establishments. A violent draught penetrating every cranny kept some tattered curtains—so old, that it was impossible to say what their original texture had been—in continual motion; and so intense was the cold, that I was sorely tempted to drag down the ragged drapery, stop its fluttering, and wrap it round me for a covering.

In such quarters, anything like refreshing sleep was not to be expected, and we were glad enough next morning, after an untempting breakfast, to turn our backs upon the place. In the afternoon we arrived at Jacobsdal, another comfortless-looking place, consisting of about five-and-twenty houses, scattered over a scorched-up plain. A long drive on the following morning was to bring us to the central diamond-fields. The nearer we approached, the more dreary did the landscape become; the bushes dwindled gradually, and finally disappeared, so that a few patches of dry grass were alone left as the representatives of vegetation.

The first day on which I set my eyes upon the diamond-fields, I must confess, will ever be engraven on my memory. As our vehicle, drawn by four horses, made its rapid descent from the heights near Scholze's Farm, and when my companion, pointing me to the bare plains just ahead, told me that there lay my future home, my heart sank within

me. A dull, dense fog was all I could distinguish. A bitter wind rushing from the hills, and howling around us in the exposure of our open waggon, seemed to mock at the protection of our outside coats, and resolved to make us know how ungenial the temperature of winter in South Africa could be; and the grey clouds that obscured the sky shadowed the entire landscape with an aspect of the deepest melancholy.

Yes; here I was approaching the Eldorado of the thousands of all nations, attracted hither by the hope of rich reward; but the nearer I came, the more my spirit failed me, and I was conscious of a sickening depression.

Immediate contact with the fog that had been observed from the distant heights, at once revealed its true origin and character. It proved to be dense clouds of dust, first raised by the west wind from the orange-coloured sand on the plains, and then mingled with the loose particles of calciferous earth piled up in heaps amidst the huts on the diggings. So completely did it fill the atmosphere, that it could require little stretch of imagination to fancy that it was a sandstorm of the Sahara. As we entered the encampment the blinding mist was so thick that we could only see a few yards before us; we were obliged to proceed very cautiously; and before we reached the office of my friend the Fauresmith merchant, another mile or so farther on, our faces and our clothes were literally encrusted. We only shared the fate of all new-comers, in feeling

much distressed and really ill; the very horses snorted and sneezed, and showed that the condition of things was no less painful to them than to their masters.

Both at Bultfontein and Dutoitspan these accumulations of the commingled ferruginous and calciferous sand fill the atmosphere to a height of a hundred feet, and involve everything in dim obscurity. Here and there, on both sides, right and left, wherever the gloom would permit me to see, I noticed round and oblong tents, and huts intended for shops, but now closed, built of corrugated iron. Under the fury of the wind, the tent-poles bent, and the ropes were subject to so great a strain that the erections threatened every moment to collapse. Many and many a sheet of the galvanized iron got loose from the roofs or sides of the huts, and creaking in melancholy discord, contributed, as it were, to the gloominess of the surroundings. In many places, too, the pegs that had fastened the tents to the ground had yielded to the pressure, and sheets of canvas were flapping in the air like flags of distress; whilst the only indication of human life was a few dim figures in the background, which on closer inspection proved to be some natives, resting their half-naked bodies after their toil in the diggings.

Truly it was a dreary scene—and I sighed at my dreary prospect.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE DIAMOND-FIELDS.

Ups-and-downs of medical practice—Mode of working the diggings—The kopjes—Morning markets—My first baboon-hunt—Preparation for first journey.

I HAD a still further cause to be downcast. It was not only that the aspect of the diamond-fields was altogether unattractive, and that the weather was so rough and changeable that I felt it depressing in the extreme, but I was perplexed at what seemed to me the hopeless state of my finances.

Relying upon the promises of the Fauresmith merchant who had befriended me, I had not taken the precaution, before leaving Port Elizabeth, to obtain from Herr Adler the letters of introduction which would have been of service to me on my first arrival at the diamond-fields; and I found myself in the predicament of having only a few shillings of ready money, barely sufficient to pay for a night's lodging and a day's victuals. I had to gain the means of subsistence, and I had to provide for my further journey. One of two courses lay open to me: I must either dig for diamonds, or I must at once secure a practice, or at least earn some fees

among the heterogeneous and often doubtful characters of which the population was composed. My difficulty was increased by the very slight knowledge I had of either Dutch or English; the few words I had acquired barely sufficed to enable me to make myself understood, and were quite inadequate to allow me to carry on a conversation upon the most ordinary matters, far less to offer my services to a patient whose sickness required advice. But on the horns of a dilemma I was not long in coming to a decision. I knew that even to commence the avocation of digging necessitated the possession of at least some capital, which I could not command, whilst, by borrowing a few simple articles of furniture for a week or two, and starting as a doctor, in a tent for a surgery, I might hope to be consulted by clients who would pay me fees enough to ward off starvation.

I had one letter in my pocket which was the means of introducing me to an opening. The person to whom it was addressed was out of health, and was contemplating a visit to Europe for the medical advice which he could not obtain in the diamond-fields. By good fortune he understood German, and having ascertained from the letter which I forwarded to him that I was a doctor, and being of a practical and frugal turn of mind, he came to the conclusion that, before incurring the delay and expense of the long journey, he would try whether I could do him any good. In the course of a week he found my treatment of his

disorder so successful that he professed himself quite satisfied as to my capability, and definitely abandoned his projected return to Europe. I, for my part, had not quite the same practical qualities as my patient; and not having made any precise terms as to remuneration, was obliged to submit to whatever payment he chose to make. Under the circumstances I was only too thankful to accept an old half-rotten tent-hut and a few items of common furniture; although I should not omit to mention that, at the solicitation of my friend of Fauresmith, he subsequently consented to advance me the sum of 5*l.* by way of loan.

The hut of which I had thus become the proprietor was about eleven feet wide by ten feet long and seven feet high. It consisted simply of deal laths covered with canvas so decayed by damp that it kept out neither wind nor dust. The laths creaked and rattled with unintermitted vibration; and had it not been for the shelter afforded by a substantial warehouse erected by its side, I am certain it would not have survived the gusts that beat upon it; as it was, it seemed to be warped and twisted out of shape as often as the wind blew with any violence from the south. It was situated in the direct road leading to Kimberley, which is the chief settlement of the district, but it was separated from the highway by a broad gutter, over which it was necessary to jump in order to reach the door; and this was nothing more than a light framework covered with canvas, which I endeavoured by night

to make somewhat secure by supplementing its fastening with an iron bar that I happened to find on the bare earth which formed the floor of my apartments. A piece of old sheeting that flapped backwards and forwards with every breeze did duty as a window.

The interior was partitioned into two chambers by a dilapidated green curtain. The larger compartment was my work-room and surgery, the furniture consisting of an unpainted table, two old chairs, and a couple of chests, one of which held my drugs and the other my books. If patients happened to flock in unusual numbers, as they would when a farmer brought his whole family of children, these chests were the best substitutes I could provide for the comfortable arm-chairs and lounges with which my European colleagues are accustomed to furnish their consulting-rooms. The second apartment, considerably smaller than the other, was my kitchen, dining-room, and bedroom all in one, and necessarily the place where, until I could afford to keep a servant, I was obliged to perform the most menial offices in my own behalf. The bed, in which during the cold weather I spent many a sleepless night, corresponded only too well with the rest of the furniture, the only article with the least pretension to respectability being a little case which I had brought with me from Europe.

My desire to get away into the interior grew stronger and stronger. However, before I could gain the means to start, I had first to pay off my

liabilities, which included 300 florins owing to the Holitzer Savings Bank, and 16*l.* due to Herr Michaelis. I resolved accordingly to limit myself to the barest necessities of life, and for some months, in spite of being absolutely compelled to incur the expense of changing my abode, I practised the most rigid economy, and lived in the completest seclusion. The high price of provisions, and the low value of money considerably alarmed me, and I made a point of transacting all my housekeeping myself. My rule was to wait until it was dark, and the streets were empty, and then to go out, and after making my few purchases to get in a sufficient supply of water for the next day; of this I always required plenty, not only because it was necessary for the preparation of my drugs, and the general demands of my profession, but because I was my own laundress and my own cook. It is almost superfluous to add, that I was likewise my own tailor.

But I have no wish to dwell upon any further details of my household difficulties at that time, beyond making the remark that all my proceedings had to be carried on with the utmost secrecy. Any revelation of the true state of my private affairs would have seriously affected my position as a medical man. It was with no little satisfaction that I found myself working my way, little by little, into a very fair practice. Between the 26th of August, the date of my arrival, and the beginning of October, I had accumulated enough to discharge my liabilities.



By degrees I was able to launch out a little in my expenditure, and to emerge in some measure from my seclusion; and although I was obliged still to reside in a tent-hut, which was a source of personal inconvenience to myself, I never found it any detriment to my public position. It was a very great relief to me that a considerable number of Germans, on hearing of the arrival of a new doctor who could speak their language, were glad to make their way to my quarters. Their visits were a mutual advantage to both parties, for while they had the benefit of my German, I managed, from my intercourse with them, to make a wonderful progress in my knowledge of Dutch.

The diamond-fields of South Africa lie chiefly in the English province of Griqualand West, a district that simultaneously with the discovery of its subterranean treasure became an apple of discord among the native princes. The Griqua king Waterboer, and the Batlapin chiefs Yantje and Gassibone, all strove for an absolute possession, though it was very certain that none of them had any definite or just claim to assert. Waterboer possessed the principal part of the land on each side of the lower course of the Vaal and Modder Rivers; Yantje held the territory north of the mouth of the Harts River; while Gassibone made good his sway over the district that lay between the Vaal and the Harts on the north-east. The Korannas occupied the Vaal valley from Fourteen Streams to the mouth of the Harts.

Although the first diamonds that were found were by the Boers somewhat contemptuously called "pebbles," the discovery stirred up amongst them a keen desire for the acquisition of territory; and when the annexation of the diamond-fields was subsequently effected by the English, the controversy that was waged between the Boers and the Government of the Orange Free State was very bitter, both sides claiming to be the rightful possessors by virtue of concessions that had been made to them by one or other of the native chieftains, Waterboer, Yantje, and Gassibone.

As the weakest must always go to the wall, so the Orange Free State, after a brief effort to assert the rights of ownership, was obliged to yield; nevertheless it did not cease to insist upon the justice of its original claim. All attempts of England to arbitrate between the new province and the Republic, all efforts to gain recognition for laws that should compass on equal terms the mutual benefit of the conflicting States, were altogether unavailing, until at last England herself, either prompted by her own magnanimity, or impelled by some sense of justice, finally purchased the claims of the Free State by a compensation of 90,000*l.*, besides giving a pledge to contribute 15,000*l.* towards the extension of a railroad which should connect the Free State with one of the lines in the eastern portion of Cape Colony.

The whole region of the diamond-fields may be subdivided into three districts. The oldest fields are on the Vaal River, and extend from the town of

Bloemhof, in the Transvaal, to the river-diggings, at the confluence of the Vaal and the Harts; next to them are the dry-diggings, so called because the "pebbles" were originally obtained by sifting the earth and not by washing it—these lie around the town of Kimberley; and thirdly, there are the fields at Sagersfontein and Coffeefontein, in the Orange Free State, beyond the English dependency in Griqualand.

The settlement at the river-diggings sprang up with a rapidity as marvellous as those of California. At first, Klipdrift, opposite Pniel, a mission station, was regarded as its capital and centre; but within the last nine years, Kimberley (formerly known as New Rush) has become so important, that it necessarily holds first rank.

Within a year after the discovery of the first "crystal stone" in the valley of the Vaal, where the indolent Korannas alone had dragged on a dreamy existence, long rows of tenements had started up, although for the most part they were merely unsubstantial huts; but very soon South Africa, from end to end, became infected with the diamond-fever. Young and old, sick and healthy, servants and masters, country-folk and townsmen, sailors and soldiers deserting their calling; and Dutch Boers, with their whole families, yielded to the impulse to migrate to the alluring scene that had suddenly become so famous. The encampments that they made were transformed with incredible speed into regular towns of 4000 or 5000 inhabitants; and

when the intelligence was circulated that the "Star of Africa," a diamond of eighty-three carats and a half, had been picked up, every European steamer brought over hundreds of adventurers, all eager to take their chance of securing similar good fortune for themselves.

Thus in addition to Klipdrift grew up the town of Hebron, River Town, Gong Gong, Blue Jacket, New Kierk's Rush, Delportshope, Waldeck's Plant and others, the glory of many of them, however, being destined to be very transient, some of them passing away as suddenly as they had risen. The report was no sooner spread that on the plain of the Dutoitspan Farm, below the river-diggings on the Vaal, diamonds had been found in abundance on the surface of the earth, than the old stations were forthwith abandoned, every one hurrying off in hot haste to the dry-diggings, which were supposed to be much more prolific.

Out of the large number of those who succeeded in quickly realizing large fortunes, a large proportion squandered their wealth as rapidly as they had acquired it; and as the new settlements soon developed themselves into dens of vice and demoralization, the majority of the population, being mere adventurers, came utterly to grief.

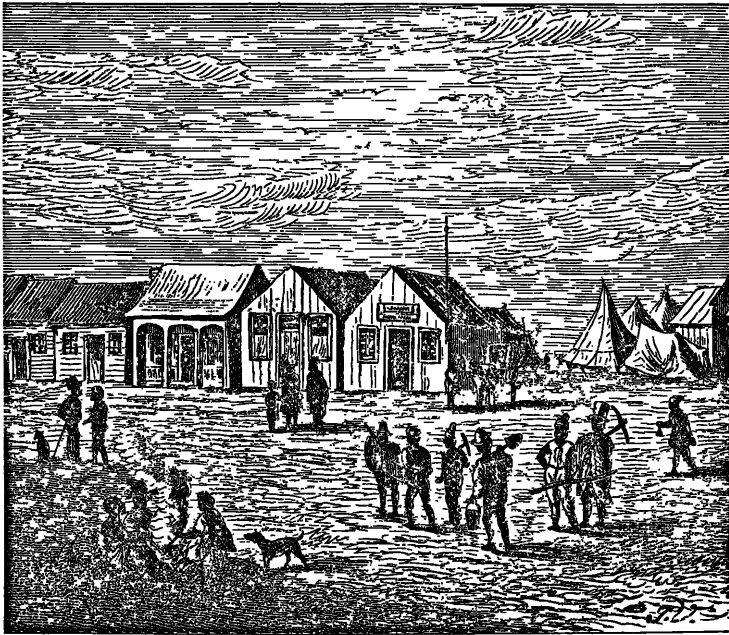
On the Vaal itself the diamonds are collected from the alluvial rubble. This rubble consists of blocks of greenstone, containing fine, almond-shaped chalcidones and agates, some as large as a man's fist and like milk quartz, others smaller and of a pink

or carmine tint, and occasionally blue or yellow ; it covers the district between Bloemhof and Hebron, and is known distinctively as Vaal-stone. But besides greenstone, the rubble includes a number of other elements ; it consists partially of fragments of the trap-dyke that is characteristic of the district between Hebron and the mouth of the Harts, as well as of nearly all the hills in the east of Cape Colony, in the Orange Free State, and in Griqualand ; it contains likewise a certain proportion of milk-quartz, clay-slate, sand yielding magnetic iron, and numerous pyropes ; these vary in size from that of a grain of millet to that of a grain of maize, and were awhile mistaken for garnets and rubies ; moreover, it contains portions of the limestone that extends both ways from the Vaal, though not forming the actual valley of the river ; it is a stone in which I never discovered any fossils.

The diggers, after obtaining their portion of diamond rubble from the "claims," as the parcels of ground allotted them by the authorities were called, had first to convey it down to the river ; they had next to sift it from the heavier lumps of stone, and then to wash it in "cradles," three or four feet long and about one and a half wide, until they had entirely got rid of the clay. In the residuum they had finally to search carefully for the treasure. The stones found in this locality were, as a general rule, very small, but their colour was good and their quality fine ; they were called "glass-stones," whilst the larger and more valuable brilliants obtained in

the two other districts were distinguished as “true river-stones.”

The second, and hitherto the most important diamond-field, is that which I have called the central-diggings; they are what formerly were understood by the dry-diggings. They include the four mines



SQUARE IN DUTOITSPAN.

in the Kimberley district, and form two separate groups, the north-western containing Kimberley, and Old de Beers adjoining it on the east, and the eastern group containing Dutoitspan, with Bultfontein closing it in on the south and west. This eastern group lies about two miles from Kimberley,

and about one mile from Old de Beers. Kimberley itself is about twenty-two miles to the south-east of Klipdrift, and is the most important of the four mines I have mentioned, being that where the greatest numbers of diamonds of all qualities are found. The stones found at Dutoitspan are valued very much on account of their very bright yellow colour, those obtained at Bultfontein being generally smaller, but equal in purity to the "river-stones."

Diamond-mines vary in depth from forty-five to 200 feet, and may be from 200 to 700 yards in diameter. The diggings are locally called "kopjes," being divided into "claims," which are either thirty feet square, or thirty feet long by ten feet wide; of these a digger may hold any number from one to twenty, but he is required to work them all. For the ordinary "claim" the monthly payment generally amounts to about twenty florins for ground-rent and for water-rate, made to the Government and to a Mining Board, which consists of a committee of diggers appointed to overlook the working of the whole. In Dutoitspan and Bultfontein there is an additional tax paid to the proprietors, i.e. the owners of the farms; but in the Kimberley and Old de Beers group the Government has purchased all rights of possession from the firm of Ebden and Co.

I have little doubt in my own mind that these pits are the openings of mud craters, but I am not of opinion that the four diggings are branches of the same crater; it is only a certain resemblance

between the stones found in Old de Beers and those found in Kimberley that affords the least ground for considering that there is any subterranean communication between the two diggings. At the river-diggings I believe that one or more crater-mouths existed in the vicinity of the river bed above Bloemhof.

The palmy days of the diamond-diggings were in 1870 and 1871, when, if report be true, a swaggering digger would occasionally light his short pipe with a 5*l.* note, and when a doctor's assistant was able to clear 1100*l.* in seven months. But since 1871 the value of the diamonds has been constantly on the decline; and although the yield has been so largely increased that the aggregate profits have not diminished, yet the actual expenses of working have become tenfold greater. Notwithstanding the fall in the value of the stones, the price of the land has risen immensely. At the first opening of the Kimberley kopje, the ordinary claim of 900 square feet could be had for 10*l.* It is true that the purchase only extended to the surface of the soil; but now that the excavations are made to the depth of about 200 feet, some of the richer pits fetch from 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.*, a proof that the real prosperity of the diamond-fields has not deteriorated, because (just as in the gold diggings) the rush of adventurers eager for sudden wealth has been replaced by the application of diligent and systematic industry.

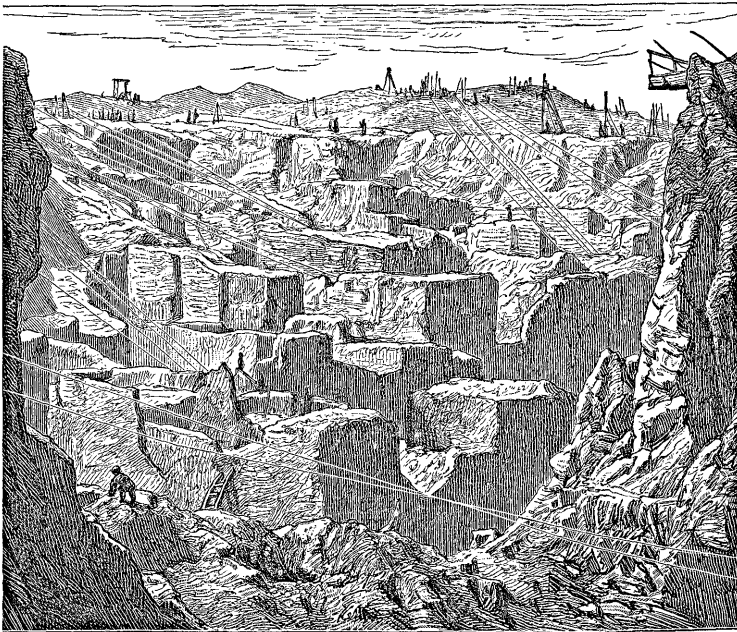
As time has progressed, the mode of obtaining the



diamonds has gradually become more skilled and scientific. As the diggers at first worked in their allotments with the assistance of what hired labourers they could get, Hottentots, Kaffirs, and Bechuanas, their apparatus was of the rudest character. It consisted only of a stake, driven into the ground at the upper edge of the pit, with an iron or wooden pulley attached, enabling them to draw up the buckets of diamond-earth by hand. This acted very well as long as the walls of the mine were perpendicular; but when they were at all on the incline, or when, as would sometimes happen, the earth had to be carried a hundred yards or more over the heads of other workers, one stake was driven in at the bottom of the pit and three at the top, and between two of these a cylinder, two or three feet in diameter, or a great wheel, was kept in motion, by natives turning handles at both ends; by this means the full buckets were lifted, and the empty lowered simultaneously; a rope of stout iron-wire connected the third upright stake with the one at the bottom of the pit, and along this there ran two grooved iron rods, that supported a framework, provided with a hook to which the bucket could be attached. As the excavations grew deeper, and the diggers became the owners of more than one claim apiece, the expense of raising the larger quantities of earth, and the waste of time, began to be seriously felt, and led to the introduction of wooden whims—great capstans worked by horse-power. Many of these cumbrous machines are still in use; but the

more wealthy diggers, as well as the companies that have recently been formed, now generally employ steam engines.

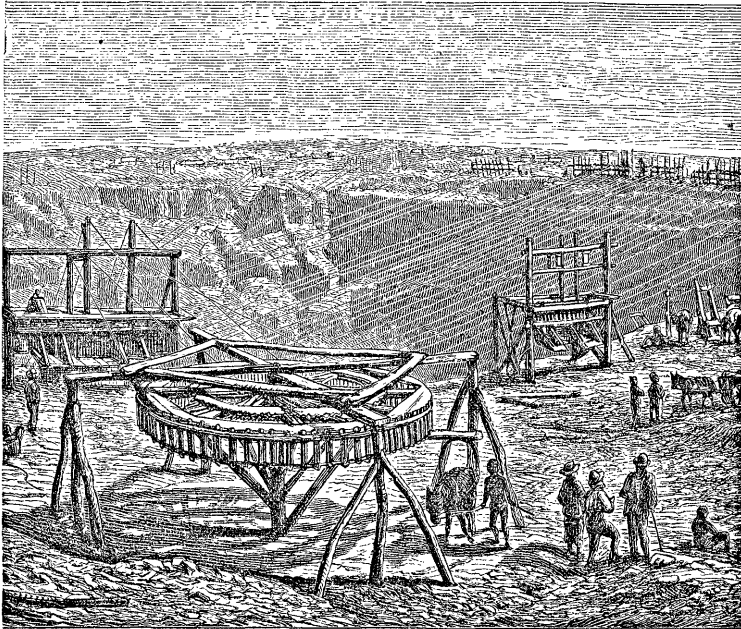
This is specially the case at the Kimberley kopje. Although these are the smallest of the diamond-mines, they are the richest, and consequently attract



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1871.

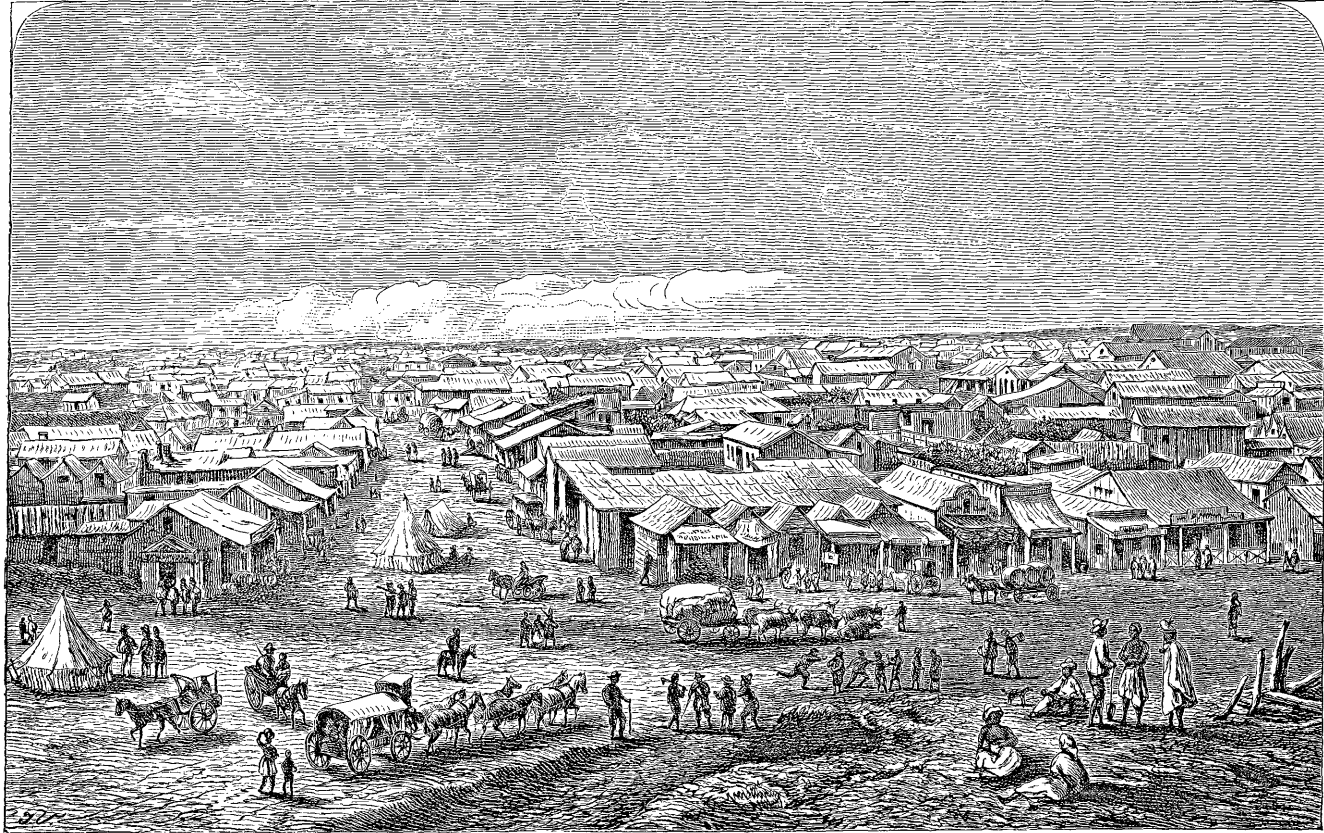
the largest proportion of diggers. It soon became impossible to find space for the separate hand-pulleys to stand side by side, and huge deal scaffolds were erected, three stories high, so that three distinct lifting-apparatus could be worked one above another, without requiring a basement area of much

more than six square feet. At present, however, the edge of the embankment is almost entirely covered with horse-whims and steam-engines that have been brought from England.



HORSE-WHIMS IN THE DIAMOND QUARRIES.

It is no longer allowable for the diamond-earth to be sorted near the place where it is brought up, a practice that was found to lead to much annoyance and disagreement; but the owners are obliged to subject their earth to scrutiny, either within the limits of their own allotments, or to have it conveyed to a piece of ground hired outside the town for the



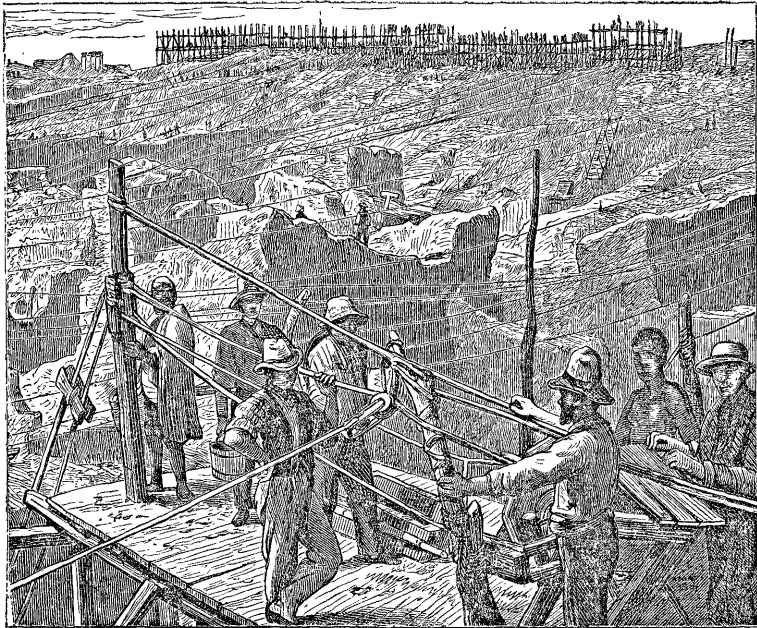
KIMBERLEY.

The process of sorting is also more complicated than it used to be. Formerly the earth containing the diamonds was cleared of its coarser parts by means of sieves ; it was then turned over and shaken out on to a flat table, where it was merely examined by the help of a stick, or a little piece of iron. It necessarily resulted from this rough-and-ready method that many diamonds were overlooked, and the earth thus examined was afterwards sold as being very likely to yield a number of small stones, and often proved very remunerative to the buyer.

Now, however, washing-machines, some of them very elaborate, worked by steam-power, horse-power, or hand-labour, according to the means of the claim-owners, are almost universally employed. The earth is gradually cleared of clay, until only the stony particles remain ; and these are rinsed repeatedly in water until they are thoroughly clean ; then they are placed, generally every evening, in sieves for the moisture to drain off, and after a slight shaking, they are turned on to a table before the claim-owner or overseer. Whatever diamonds there may be, are generally detected at first sight ; being heavier than other stones, they gravitate to the bottom of the fine-wire sieve, and consequently come uppermost when the contents are turned out for the final inspection.

In proportion, as the machinery has become more elaborate, and the modes of working more perfect, so have expenses increased, and diamond-digging now requires a considerable capital. This of course

has tended to clear the work of a large crowd of mere adventurers, and made it a much calmer and more business-like pursuit than it was originally. The authorized rules and regulations for the protection of the diggers and of the merchants have likewise materially improved the condition of both.



KIMBERLEY KOPJE IN 1872.

As viewed from the edge of the surrounding clay walls, the appearance of one of the great diamond-fields is so peculiar as almost to defy any verbal description. It can only be compared to a huge crater, which, previously to the excavations, was filled to the very brink on which we stand with

volcanic eruptions, composed of crumbling diamond-bearing earth, consisting mainly of decomposed tufa. That crater now stands full of the rectangular "claims," dug out to every variety of depth. Before us are masses of earth, piled up like pillars, clustered like towers, or spread out in plateaus; sometimes they seem standing erect as walls, sometimes they descend in steps; here they seem to range themselves in terraces, and there they gape asunder as pits; altogether they combine to form a picture of such wild confusion, that at dusk, or in the pale glimmer of moonshine, it would require no great stretch of imagination to believe them the ruins of some city of the past, that after the lapse of centuries was being brought afresh to light.

But any illusion of this sort is all dispelled, as one watches the restless activity of the throngs that people the bottom of the deep dim hollow. The vision of the city of the dead dissolves into the scene of a teeming ant-hill; all is life and eagerness and bustle. The very eye grows confused at the labyrinth of wires stretching out like a giant cobweb over the space below, while the movements of the countless buckets making their transit backwards and forwards only add to the bewilderment. Meanwhile to the ear everything is equally trying; there is the hoarse creaking of the windlasses; there is the perpetual hum of the wires; there is the constant thud of the falling masses of earth; there is the unceasing splash of water from the pumps; and

these, combined with the shouts and singing of the labourers, so affect the nerves of the spectator, that, deafened and giddy, he is glad to retire from the strange and striking scene.

To this brief and general description of the diamond-fields, I would be allowed to add one or two characteristics of the street-life in the settlements.

The morning-markets, or public auctions, which are held every day, except Sunday, in the open places in Kimberley and Dutoitspan, are very interesting. They are presided over by a market-master or auctioneer, appointed by the Government, with permission, however, to hold private sales for his own benefit. The office may be somewhat trying to the lungs, but it has the reputation of being very lucrative. From six to eight a.m., the whole of the unpaved market-place, which lies in the heart of the iron and canvas dwellings, is covered with ox-waggons, laden not only with flour, fruit, vegetables, potatoes, maize, butcher's meat, poultry, and other items of consumption, but with firewood, forage, wood for thatching, and all the other necessaries of domestic economy. The sales are exclusively by auction. Five per cent. of the proceeds goes to the Government, and two per cent. to the market-master. The prices of the commodities are very fluctuating, demand and supply being continually out of proportion. I have known the cost of a sack of potatoes vary from 15s. to nearly 4*l.*

Besides the ordinary morning-markets, public



auctions are held on all days except holidays in halls erected for the purpose; and in the evenings, sales of articles not included in the usual routine of business are carried on in the canteens, to which purchasers are invited by announcements on large placards, notifying that drink will be distributed gratis during the proceedings.

In former years, the majority of the canteens were shocking dens of vice, forming the worst feature of the district; latterly, however, there has been a considerable diminution in their number. The wells that have been made in various parts of the streets, and in the outskirts of the settlements, have been an inestimable boon, and the throngs that ever surround them show how highly they are appreciated. The water is drawn up in buckets by Kaffirs, or by horses; it is sold, not given away, and many hundreds of pounds are readily expended for the supply of that which is as indispensable for the diamond-washing as for the common offices of life.

A residence in the diamond-fields undoubtedly has various inconveniences, but nothing is so trying as the atmosphere. Every day during the dry winter season, lungs, eyes, and ears are painfully distressed by the storms of dust that impregnate the air with every conceivable kind of filth, which, penetrating the houses, defiles (if it does not destroy) everything on which it rests. The workers in the diggings, the drivers of waggons, and all whose occupations keep them long in the open air, are especially sufferers from this cause.

Nor is the summer much less unpleasant. During the rainy season the country is flooded by the violent downpour; the rain often fills up the shallow brack-pan (one of the salt lakes that dry up every year, lying in a depression about half a mile long at the south end of Dutoitspan, in a single day; and as the immediate consequence, the streets of Kimberley become so deluged that the traffic is impeded, and foot passengers can only with difficulty proceed at all. The new corporation has endeavoured to remedy this difficulty by laying down gutters, and taking other measures for draining the thoroughfares.

For a few days' recreation at Christmas, 1872, I agreed to go on an excursion, baboon hunting, on the neighbouring hills in the west of the Orange Free State—the party consisting, besides myself, of a young German merchant, who found more opportunity for such diversion here than at home; a young Pole from Posen, whose mere love of adventure had brought him to the diamond-fields; and a Fingo, engaged to carry our baggage, and whose burden kept him in a perpetual vapour-bath. The Pole and myself were both duly equipped in proper hunting-costume.

I was very anxious to make myself acquainted with the animal-world on the hills that bounded the eastern horizon; and, having visited my patients, and ascertained that they could dispense with my services for a short time, I started off from Dutoitspan early in the afternoon of Christmas Eve.

Involuntarily the memories of former Christmas Eves rose up within my mind, and I could not help comparing the past with the present, contrasting the festivities of the cheerful room, well warmed to defy the wintry rigour, with the tropical glow of an African sun, where not a single external circumstance recalled an association with the season.

Our way led at first across a plain covered with dwarf bushes, few of them exceeding eighteen inches high. Here and there, in depressions of the soil, were patches of soft green turf, long grass only growing upon higher and more rocky places.

All over the wide flats were innumerable swarms of insects, of which several species of locusts especially attracted our notice. Some of these were very beautiful in colour, and were armed with a kind of projecting shield. Varying from two to three inches in length, their cylindrical bodies were either of light or dark green, the wing-sheaths being bordered with red. In quite a sluggish condition thousands of them had settled on the milk-bushes (*Euphorbiaceæ*), and the least touch made them fall to the ground, apparently lifeless. On my journey from Port Elizabeth I had wondered how it was that the locusts, subject to the attacks of almost countless enemies of the feathered tribe, from the eagle to the wild duck, should venture so constantly to settle in the most exposed parts of the bushes; and I now solved the mystery by discovering through my sense of smell that they eject a most offensive fluid, the disgusting odour of which we had the

greatest difficulty in removing from our hands even after a thorough scrubbing with sand.

Besides the locusts, we found several kinds of beetles—some sand-beetles, two large ground-beetles, and a leaf-beetle that gleamed amidst the foliage with a metallic sheen. The small variety of the vegetation, and its scorched-up condition, was quite enough to explain the entire absence of butterflies, although moths of many kinds were present to supply their place.

We saw hardly any quadrupeds. Excepting some great shrew-mice, we came across nothing but a bright red rodent (*Rhizæna*) and a ground-squirrel. These were sitting up on their hind quarters, close to the aperture of their underground retreats; only waiting a moment, as if to scrutinize the new comers, they made off with all speed, the *Rhizæna* grunting softly, the squirrel giving a shrill, sharp whistle.

The bird of which we saw the greatest numbers was the small dark South African starling, which ever hovers over the numerous ant-hills or perches on the top of solitary thorns. It is a lively little creature, careful to survey a stranger only from a prudent distance, and given to frequent the deserted holes of rodents and ground-squirrels, especially betaking itself thither when chased or wounded.

After we had proceeded about an hour and a half we reached the border of one of the rectangular "pans" which are the miniature representatives of the large shallow salt-lakes that are so characteristic of South Africa. The salt-pan itself was dry, but

close beside it was a small rain-pool full of greenish water, a little of which, mixed with a spoonful of brandy, we found palatable enough. Hereabouts we fell in with a Kaffir tending some sheep; and



KAFFIR SHEPHERD.

having purchased his goodwill by a little present of tobacco, we induced him to give us what information he could about the various farms lying further eastward. We had fixed upon a farm known both as Kriko Farm and as Kuudu Place for our headquarters, from which we could make excursions to the hills.

Towards evening we reached the first spur of the heights in the Free State, running due north and south. The vegetation was already becoming more luxuriant. A large number of shrubs that from the diamond-fields had looked mere specks turned out to be camel-thorn acacias, their broad-spreading crowns and great flat seed-pods declaring them akin to the mimosas. Since that date most of them have fallen under the axe, and they have been reduced to ashes as fuel at the diggings. Their trunks are often two feet thick, covered with a rough dark-grey bark, full of knots, and yielding a sound hard wood. Two things particularly arrested our attention; first, the great thorns growing in pairs three inches long, with their points far asunder, and at the base as thick as a man's finger; and, secondly, the collections of strange birds' nests hanging down from the branches. These nests belonged to a colony of the sociable weaver-birds (*Philetærus socius*), and their construction was very singular. When the birds have found a suitable branch, the whole flock sets to work with the industry of bees to make a common erection that may shelter them all. Each pair of birds really builds its own nest of dry grass and covers it in; but so closely are the nests fitted together, that when finished the entire fabric has the appearance of one huge nest covered in by a single conical roof, the whole being often not less than three feet high and from two to five feet in diameter. The boughs which project beyond the structure are not unfrequently known to break under

the accumulated load. The entrances to all the separate nests are from below, an arrangement by which they might be presumed to be sheltered, not merely from the rain, but from attacks of any kind; this, however, is by no means the case, and they are liable to be invaded by the larger kinds of snakes, such as the cobra. I myself, some years later, was successful in killing a great snake just as it had crept into one of these weaver-birds' nests. I was at Oliphantfontein Farm, and happened to catch sight of its tail just as the huge reptile was beginning its work of depredation. It had killed and thrown out several birds, and was commencing to devour the eggs and fledglings inside; it snapped viciously at every parent bird that was not scared away by its hissing. I was afraid, if I fired, that I might only kill the birds that I was desirous to save; accordingly, I took up a stone, and flung it with so good an aim that I brought the creature down to the ground, where a couple of shots soon despatched it before it could make good a retreat.

As evening drew on we arrived at a grassy plain that extended to the hills, three miles away. Here, beneath a jutting eminence, were two small huts, forming a canteen kept by a native; but its existence was a proof to us that we were in the road between the diamond-fields and the Free State. We declined an invitation from the host to sleep here; and although we had to make our way through deep sand-drifts, we resolved to go on further.

It was quite late when we reached the Kriko Farm.

I had made up my mind to spend the night in the open air; and as we were all very thirsty, we followed out the glimmer of some water until we reached a half-dry pool, at the edge of which was a level spot that we selected as our camping-place for the night.

Supper was soon ready. A few red-legged plovers and some small bustards (of the kind that the Boers call "patluperks"), which we had shot in the course of the day, afforded us a meal that we thoroughly enjoyed; nor had we a less hearty relish for a cup of tea, although it was made from the water of the pond which, when we came to see it by daylight, we were compelled to confess that nothing but the most agonizing pangs of thirst could have induced us to taste. Even in the fire-light it flickered with all the colours of the rainbow, but by the light of day it revealed putrescence itself, and even the cattle refused to drink it.

While we were sitting round our fire, talking over the incidents of the afternoon, we were favoured by a visit from three Korannas. They had seen our light from the farmhouse, about a hundred yards away, and had supposed that we were a body of Basutos, from the west of the Free State, travelling in search of work, and were not a little surprised to come upon a party of white men enjoying themselves in an encampment. They did not stay long with us; and as soon as they were gone, and the barking of the dogs at the farm had ceased, a dead silence ensued, broken only by the chirping of a little grass-



hopper. After the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, the pure, fresh air was most delightful to us all, and we soon resigned ourselves to sleep.

Early in the morning we explored the immediate neighbourhood of the farm. It lies in a wide valley, into which open several cross-valleys formed by outlying chains of hills. The hill-sides are steep, often almost perpendicular, exhibiting huge blocks of trap. It was a refreshing thing for our eyes to look upon such a rich expanse of vegetation, even the flat summits of the hills being clothed with arborescent mimosas. Except some striped mice, we saw no mammalia at all, but birds of many sorts—turtle-doves, plovers, long-tailed black and white shrikes, and a whole flock of common brown carrion hawks—were perching upon the rocks, which were so white with the guano that they could be seen fifteen miles away. Besides these, we came across some small red falcons and several handsome fork-tailed kites. Altogether it was a favourable opportunity, of which we did not fail to take advantage, of filling our bags betimes with some dainty morsels for dinner. Meanwhile we were able to make some additions to our entomological spirit-flasks, in the way of curious frogs, spiders, lizards, and chameleons.

On our way back from our morning ramble we met the farmer. In answer to my inquiry how we ought to proceed to get at the baboons on the hills, he was extremely communicative. He said that there were two herds in the neighbourhood, the

smaller and wilder of which generally went in the morning to drink in an adjoining glen, but the other was not so shy, and ventured every day to the second pool beyond where we were standing. He complained of them as a great and perpetual nuisance. They were always on the look-out, and no sooner was a field or a garden left unguarded, than they would be down at once, break through the hedges, and devour the crops. They were likewise very destructive amongst the sheep. If a shepherd happened to leave his post for ever so short a time, or even to fall asleep, the baboons, who had been watching their chance from the heights, would be down upon the flock in the valley, and seizing the lambs, and ripping up their stomachs with their teeth, would feast upon the milk they contained; then leaving the poor mangled victim writhing on the ground, would lose no time in repeating the terrible operation upon another. This was a statement that I have since often had confirmed.

So pitiable was the farmer's account of the losses he had in various ways sustained through the baboons, that we could quite understand the grin of satisfaction with which he learnt our object. He became more and more loquacious in his desire to render information; and when I further explained to him that we were anxious to get some of their skins to stuff, and to carry off some of their skulls, he was quite astounded; he had never heard of such a thing, and exclaiming, "Allmachttag, wat will ye dun?" he walked off, shaking his head, to tell his

wife of the doctor's "wonderlijke" proposal to shoot a "babuin," and to send its skin and its skull all the way to "Duitsland."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Free State farmers are simple and thoroughly good-hearted people, requiring only a little more culture to make them most agreeable companions. Among all my patients I never found any more grateful.

About the middle of the morning we left Kudu Place and started eastwards, in the hope that we might be in time to catch the smaller herd at their drinking-place. We passed several huts occupied by Basutos and Korannas employed as labourers on the farm. The Basutos come from their homes in the east, with their wives, to hire themselves to the farmers; in return for which they receive their food, and an annual payment of a stipulated number of sheep, or occasionally one or two oxen, or a mare and foal, being moreover allotted a certain portion of land, where they may grow sorghum, maize, gourds, or tobacco.

During my subsequent travels, I learnt that many of the better class of farmers are really owners of small Basuto villages, from which they hire the population in this way. Mynheer Wessels, the proprietor of the canteen we had passed the day

<sup>1</sup> The Dutch spoken by most of the South African farmers is not pure, as in Europe; it is a mixture of English, Low-German, French, &c. That, however, which is spoken by the more educated Dutchmen in Cape Town, Bloemfontein, and other towns, is for the most part very good.

before, was a type of this class; his farm had a circumference of many miles, although he did not cultivate a thirty-sixth part of it. To provide himself with labourers, he had obtained the ownership of a district where the harvest had been lost through drought, and had found the residents only too glad to leave their homes on the Caledon River, and to migrate to more favourable quarters.

One very marked ethnographical distinction exists between the tribes of the Basutos and the Korannas in the way they build their huts; those of the Basutos being made of boughs in a cylindrical form, about three feet in diameter, and protected by conical roofs of reeds and dry grass, while the Korannas usually adopt the form of a hemisphere, and construct them of dead branches loosely covered with mats.

We had the honour of being surveyed by one of the black ladies; she wore nothing but a short petticoat of grey calico, and her forehead, cheeks, and breasts were tattooed in dark-blue ochre with a complication of wavy lines. She only looked at us from the boundary of her own domain.

Outside one of the Koranna huts my attention was caught by a man shabbily dressed in European costume, towards whom an old woman, also in dirty European dress, was hastening, brandishing a huge firebrand, from which a volume of smoke was pouring into the air. I was curious to know what the enormous firebrand could be wanted for, and could hardly believe that it was merely to light the man's short pipe; he did not move a muscle of his counte-

nance, but lowering it steadily with his hand, brought it into its due position and completed his object. I advanced towards the phlegmatic smoker, and found him courteous enough to answer a few inquiries as to what was the best route we could take to the hills.

It took little more than half an hour to reach the top of the hill, which proved to be an undulating plain, covered with bushes and blocks of stone. When we had advanced some distance along it, we found ourselves approaching the pool of which the farmer told us, and could distinctly hear the hoarse barking of the baboons. Looking across to the opposite side, about 300 yards away, we caught sight of a herd of seven, only four of them full grown, that seemed to pause and scan us carefully before they decamped to a glen on the right. With all speed we followed them for a little way, observing how the wet footprints showed that they were just returning from their drinking-place.

We did not, however, go very far in pursuit, being more desirous of falling in with the other and larger herd. Having knocked over another brace or two of doves, as a further contribution to our larder, we sat down to enjoy a mid-day repast, keeping up a careful scrutiny of the slopes all around us. We seemed to be watching all in vain, when suddenly, in the direction of the farm, there was to be heard an outcry, which as suddenly again died away. Some tall mimosas prevented us seeing to any great distance one way towards the farmhouse, and a stone

wall, some twelve feet high, hindered us the other way from getting a view of the bottom of the hills, so that we really had not the chance of ascertaining the cause of the commotion. By way of a joke, I said that perhaps the baboons had taken advantage of our dinner-hour to go and pay the farmer a visit. Scarcely had I said the words when a big baboon came springing up, not much more than 200 yards away, to the left; then another, then another and another, until there was a whole herd of them, going leisurely enough, and squatting down ever and again upon the stones. The farmer, with a bevy of servants, was in full chase; they were armed with sticks and stones, and kept shouting vehemently. Here we thought was a good chance for us; we would mount the hill across the line of the retreat, without diverting the attention of the baboons from the noisy crowd that was following them; and thus I hoped we might be able to get within gunshot unobserved.

As one of our party had only small shot, and the other nothing but a stick, I insisted upon their remaining close at my side, knowing that a full-grown baboon, when infuriated, is as dangerous a foe as a leopard.

We were more than half-way up the hill before there was a chance at all; and when a baboon did appear at last above us, it managed so adroitly to be always either beneath a bush or behind a stone, that to take a fair aim was simply impossible.

When the brute had gained the top of the hill, of

course it was hidden from view ; but we persevered, in hopes that on reaching the summit, if we did not catch sight of the same one again, we might see another. So far we were not disappointed. We had hardly finished our ascent when we spied a full-grown female, scarcely fifty yards in front of us. By ill-luck, however, I failed to secure a shot at it ; first, one of the black farm-servants came between me and my mark just at the very instant when I was about to fire ; and when I next managed to get within fair range, one of my friends raised such a prodigious shout that the creature bounded far away ; so that I had to go on in a prolonged pursuit, only at last to find that the chase must be abandoned as fruitless.

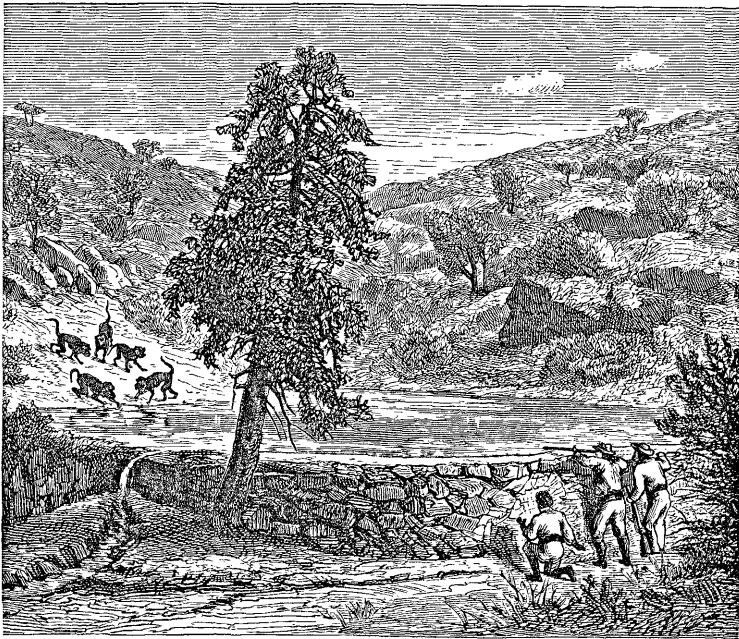
It may well be supposed that it was not quite in the best humour that we retraced our steps. It was not only that the last chance for that day had been missed, but it was most unlikely that so favourable an opportunity for getting near that herd would occur again.

On our return the Korannas informed us that what I had spoken of only in jest, had really transpired in fact ; the baboons, at the very hour when we were taking our refreshment, had been attracted by the bleating of some lambs, and began to make an attack upon the sheep-kraal. Detected in time, they were driven off ; and in order to prevent them from repeating their visit, a pursuit had been set on foot.

The men told us, however, that so far from being

effectually scared away, the baboons would be sure to come and drink at the other pond. Upon hearing this all our disappointment and fatigue were forgotten at once, and we were off without delay to the spot that was pointed out.

The pond, full of rain-water, lay in the valley; on



BABOON-HUNT.

the left, not a quarter of a mile off, were the hills we had just quitted; and opposite, on the right, was another ridge of hills, perhaps a mile away. Three sides of the pond were embanked, the embankment facing the house being of stone; the soil was sandy; the muddy water in one place was running in a



little creek ; some shrubs were growing between the clefts of the stones, and behind one of these, high enough to conceal our heads, we took up our position.

Only a few minutes had elapsed when one of the farm-boys drew our attention to what seemed little more than a couple of dark specks on the slope of the hills to the right ; but we could soon see that they were moving, and when they came within half a mile of us, we could distinctly recognize them as a herd of baboons. The boy said he was quite sure that they were on their way to the water ; but to our surprise they did not make any further advance. A quarter of an hour elapsed ; half an hour ; still no symptom of their approach. All at once, as if they had started from the earth by magic, at the open end of the pond, not sixty yards from our place of ambush, stood two huge males. When or how they had got there no one could tell ; probably they had come by a circuitous way through the valley, or it might be that they had crept straight down through the grass ; they had certainly eluded our observation.

Being anxious to watch the movements of the animals, and to ascertain whether they belonged to the herd playing under the mimosas, I refrained from firing, and determined to see what would follow next. Both baboons sprang towards the water, and leaning down, drank till they were satisfied ; then, having gravely stretched themselves, they stalked away solemnly on all fours in the direction of the herd. There was little doubt, therefore, that they

belonged to them, and had been sent forward to reconnoitre; for as soon as they got back, the entire herd put itself in motion, and made its way towards the pond. There were mothers taking care of their little ones; there were the half-grown animals, the boys and girls of the company; but there did not seem to be more than three or four full-grown males. At first only one baboon at a time came to the water's edge, and having taken its draught retired to the rest; but when about ten of them had thus ventured separately, they began to come in small groups, leaving the others rolling and jumping on the sand.

Our amusing study was very nearly being interrupted by the approach of two Koranna women, who came from the farm with their pitchers, to fetch water; but we were able to make signs to them not to come on, and thus continued to abide our time till we could get a shot. It was not long before two males—the same, I had no doubt, which we had noticed before—came and squatted themselves one on each side of the little creek, which certainly was not more than two feet across. When they stooped to drink, their heads could not have been four inches apart. Here was my chance. Crack went my rifle. But instead of either of them dropping, the two baboons started up; by a mutual instinct they both clutched their noses, gave a ringing bark, and scampered off. The whole herd took the alarm, and joining in the shrieking clamour, were soon lost to sight. One or two, however, of the larger animals

seemed to lag behind, and to look inquiringly, as if to ascertain the true condition of affairs.

We went down and examined the spot where the baboons had been drinking, and could come to no other conclusion than that the bullet had passed exactly through the narrow interval that had parted their heads; it had lodged just about three feet behind them.

Until the evening we waited and watched, coming to the conclusion that we would make our night encampment upon the spot; but nothing more was seen of the herd, although their noise could be heard all night long. Again next morning we kept a steady look-out, but they did not allow themselves to be seen. Likely enough they could spy us out from their position on the heights, and they were not inclined to venture from a retreat where their instinct told them they were masters of the situation.

After the exertions and disappointments of the day, all my companions seemed only too glad of their repose, and were soon fast asleep. I could not sleep at all; the perpetual barking of the baboons disturbed me; but beyond that there was not a sound to be heard; the breeze even was hushed. It was one of those nights which, under South African skies, never fail to leave a lasting impression upon the traveller's mind. Although the sky was dark the atmosphere was clear, and countless little clouds, varying in tint from milk-white to a brownish grey, hovering everywhere overhead,

formed a canopy so exquisite in its beauty that it could never fade from the memory.

Our Christmas excursion thus came to an end.

My medical practice continued to increase so rapidly, that I was able to lay by considerable sums towards the undertaking on which I was resolved. During the month of January, 1873, I purchased a waggon and a good many of the requisites for travelling; and early in February I considered my resources such as to justify my setting out on my first long journey, which, however, was to a certain extent to be only one of reconnaissance.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM DUTOITSPAN TO LIKATLONG.

My travelling companions—Departure from the diamond-fields—  
 The Vaal River and valley—Visit to Koranna village—  
 Structure of Koranna huts—Social condition of the Korannas  
 —Klipdrift—Distinction between Bechuanas and Korannas  
 —Interior of a Koranna hut—Fauna of the Vaal valley—A  
 bad road—A charming glen—Cobras and their venom—  
 Ring-neck snakes—The mud in the Harts River.

HAVING completed my equipment, and made all necessary preparations, I had next to make a decision, most important in expeditions of this kind, as to the individuals who should accompany me. My first idea had been to take with me only a few black servants; but on due consideration, I found it advisable to abandon this, and to travel with a party of white men. Without any hesitation my choice fell upon the same two young men who had been my companions in the baboon-hunt at Christmas; and, as a third associate, I invited Friedrich Eberwald, a native of Thuringia, to join us. He was an excellent fellow, who subsequently proved one of my most faithful friends, and in my second journey afforded me very valuable assistance; he had always had an irresistible love of seeing foreign

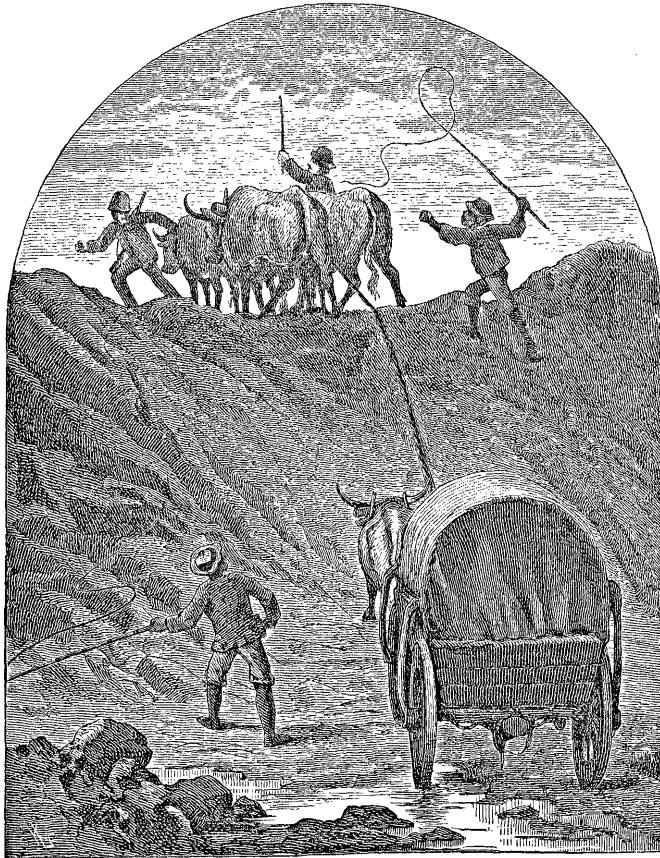
lands, and after having visited nearly all Europe and Asia Minor, and many parts of North and South America, he had come to try his luck in the diamond-fields, where, however, he had been very moderately successful.

The real object that I contemplated in my first journey was to accustom myself to the climate by spending a few weeks in the open air, as well as to ascertain by actual experience what amount of provisions and other necessaries would be required for a more prolonged expedition into the interior. My scheme was to go direct to Klipdrift, then down the valley of the Vaal River as far as the mouth of the Harts River, and after making our way north-east up the Harts valley, so as to get some acquaintance, if we could, with the Batlapin tribes, to return and reside again for a time in my old quarters at the diamond-fields.

In a party consisting of four men, five horses, and five dogs, we quitted the dusty atmosphere of Dutoitspan, and after several *contretemps* not worth recording, we reached the heights that border the banks of the Vaal River beyond Hebron, and with much satisfaction gazed upon the refreshing green of the valley, being very shortly afterwards gratified by the view of the river itself, then moderately full of water. On the southern bank we could discern the scattered huts of Pniel, a small Koranna village and a German missionary station.

This village had a most melancholy aspect, and a visit there convinced me that amongst no other

native race, with the exception, perhaps, of the Matabele, have missionary labours been so ineffectual as among the Korannas. Their circumstances, their

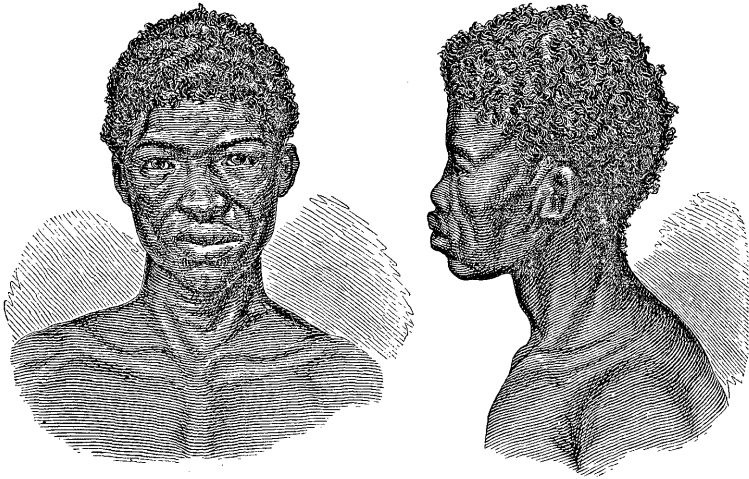


“FORE-SPANNING.”

social condition, and their culture are all of the very lowest grade; and without accepting any of the benefits of civilization, they seem only to have adopted its vices; and drunkenness, entailing disease

and its other terrible consequences, prevails most lamentably amongst them.

Of all South African races, the Korannas bestow the least labour upon the structure, and the least care upon the internal arrangements of their dwellings. Their indolence may be attributed to, or aggravated by, the climate; but in want of energy the two Hottentot tribes, the Korannas and



KORANNAS.

the Griquas, surpass even the calumniated Bushmen, who, at any rate, contrived to decorate the walls of the natural caves they inhabited with drawings in ochre, and to adorn their stone roofs with figures, however roughly chiselled, of men and animals, and other objects of nature. It is only when he is utterly without the means of procuring the brandy which is his sole and engrossing desire,





KORANNA HUTS IN THE VALLEY OF THE HARTS RIVER.

that a Koranna is ever known to rouse himself from his habitual sloth, and inaptitude for endurance, to make an effort to hire himself out to an employer.

The huts may be seen either singly or in small groups, sometimes on the bare hillside, sometimes on the river-bank, or at the edge of a saltpan, or more rarely in the rocky glen of the river; they scarcely ever exceed twelve feet in diameter, and five feet in height; their shape, as far as its general want of symmetry allows it to be defined, may be said to be hemispherical; and they are all quite unenclosed. Their construction, as their appearance suggests, is of the most primitive order; the women build them by simply taking a number of branches, about six feet in length, arranging them in a circle, tying their upper ends all together in a bundle, and throwing some rush mats over the framework thus hastily put up. The external fabric is then complete. An aperture is left large enough to admit a man on all-fours; but this, which is the only communication with the open air, is often closed by another mat hung over it from the inside, where everything is as squalid and comfortless as can be conceived. A hollow dug out in the centre is the only fireplace; a pole, supported by two forked uprights, supports the entire wardrobe of the household, which rarely consists of more than a few tattered rags of European attire, and some sheepskins and goatskins; half a dozen pots and pans complete the inventory of the furniture. Although, as I have said, the huts ordinarily have no enclosure,

yet where the cows and goats are exposed to the nocturnal attacks of hyænas or leopards, a sort of shelter is occasionally made of dry mimosa branches, but as a general rule they have only a dunghill for their accommodation. In these dreariest of abodes a dull, dumb silence usually prevails; and it is only when brandy has been brought in from the neighbouring town, or procured from some itinerant dealer, that there is any animation or excitement. Morning and evening, as the naked children drive the cattle to their pasturage, or bring them back, there is some transient exhibition of vitality in the community; otherwise all is stillness and stagnation.

As an exceptional case, when a Koranna of somewhat superior means can afford himself the luxury of a few Makalahari and Masarwa as servants and slaves, a little agriculture is carried on, but it is well-nigh always on a very limited scale. No doubt many parts of the country offer great natural advantages for farming operations; and if a little labour were spent in forming embankments, and in judiciously diverting the streams of the Harts and Vaal rivers, the produce in all likelihood would be very abundant.

As a distinct race, the Korannas are dying out. In this respect, they are sharing the lot of the Hottentots proper who dwell in Cape Colony and Griqualand West, and of the Griquas whose home is in New or East Griqualand, or what is called Noman's-land round Rockstadt. So continual has been the diminution of their number, that they are not half what they formerly were, and their

possessions have diminished in a still greater proportion. Lazy and dirty, crafty, and generally untruthful, living without a thought beyond the immediate present, capable of well-nigh any crime for the sake of fire-water—to my mind they offer an example of humanity as degraded and loathsome as can be imagined. Employ them in the far wilderness, where no European is at hand to supply them with spirits, and it is possible that they might be found more desirable than Kaffirs for cattle-drivers or horsebreakers; but after making several trials of them myself, and using every effort to keep them sober, I was always compelled to give up in despair.

We stayed in Pniel nearly three hours, our road, after we quitted it, lying across some high bushy plains covered with drifts of loose sand, which tried our horses sorely. Nothing could be much more comfortless than our encampment at night; and we were glad to start off at early dawn next morning on our way to Klipdrift.

The road, which had hitherto been somewhat monotonous, was now varied by little valleys alternating with bushy plains. Steinbocks and duykerbocks also enlivened the scene, and numbers of small bustards gambolled in the thickets that in some places rose from six to twelve feet in height. The gazelles conceal themselves throughout the day beneath the low bushwood, the steinbock (*Tragulus rupestris*) especially very rarely leaving its retreat, except at night or at the approach of danger; it is consequently unaccustomed to exposure to broad