hitherto frequented, assistants were invariably kept who conversed with the customers in the native dialects. In Boerland it was far otherwise. The stores were in many places thronged with coloured customers, but they invariably spoke Dutch, and were vastly more civil and agreeable than the types I had hitherto met amongst the English. I have since learned, with very great pleasure, that this is also a marked feature in the Cape Colony. In the Dutch parts of that country the coloured people are tame, submissive, industrious, and well-behaved, speaking the language of their instructors and natural masters; whilst in the essentially English borders of British Kaffraria the colonist has to use the tongue of the inferior race. By inferior, I here mean nothing more than lower in the ranks of civilisation. As I proceeded further on my journey through the Transvaal, I saw in various directions gardens, fruitful orchards, and small square houses in the possession of blacks, who were living in a condition of ordinary propriety, having abandoned polygamy, and other horrid customs resulting from it. So great an improvement I had not noticed during any part of my previous residence in Natal. When I had time I inquired of the Landdrost of Lydenberg who were these people, and what was their condition? He explained to me that they were the so-called slaves of the Dutch, and that, as a rule, in earlier days they had come voluntarily amongst them, or had been placed in their care by their parents when suffering from war or famine,—that a few of them had been snatched from the danger of death and suffering during the various border feuds of the past,—but that all of them, in their own words, had been “made big” (groot gemaakt), or brought up from childhood amongst the families whom they now willingly served. I have seldom seen a farmer’s house where there were not coloured female assistants of some kind or another. The husbands and fathers had bits of land and locations of their own on the farms, and put in their off-time as waggon-drivers, ploughmen, and herds. I have gone into the huts of hundreds of these “tame” people, and have rarely seen one where there was not a gun and ammunition ready to be used, willingly and faithfully, for the defence of the flocks and herds of the much-maligned Boer. These
folk, or "maacht volk," as they were usually called, were perfectly free to come and go; yet I have never known an instance in which an Englishman, with all his virtues, or an English lady, with all her goodness and kindness, could keep his or her house full of servants in the same way as the Boer could. I have myself repeatedly offered large wages to this class of people to live with me and others. They would never do so,—the Boers "had brought them up and they would remain with the Boers."

Almost as forcible an instance of native attachment to their Transvaal masters as I have ever heard of, occurred within the last eighteen months. Mr George Roth succeeded as Landdrost to Mr Cooper. Roth had previously lived in the village of Lydenberg, but had been away for twelve long years. About six weeks after his return, a little mob of men, women, and children (Kafirs) came to see him, squatting deliberately around his kitchen. They told him that he had been a long time away, that when he was there before they had lived under him, had worked for him, and, when he went away, had sorrowed for his absence. They now came to work for him again, and would take no denial, "for he was a good man." Mr Roth had to do, as many another Dutchman has done before him, and will do again. He bought a piece of land and installed the poor natives on it, assisted them with their ploughing, and acted as a father to them. Consequently in his house there are female servants; while English mothers must intrust their children to Kafir boys. Such is slavery in the Transvaal.

The Boers are constantly spoken of as treating their servants with great harshness. This charge I cannot endorse. In the few pages which I have devoted to the condition of these domestics, I have shown them to be a contented class, faithful and attached to their masters. This certainly would not be the case if they suffered much ill-treatment at their hands. Nothing marks more distinctly how far behind the Dutch other Europeans are in their management of natives, than the superior respect shown even to the youngest child in a Dutch house by blacks who would be savagely insolent to Englishmen and others. The native, whether servant or visitor, who crosses the threshold of a Dutchman's dwelling,
does so always with smiling civility and uncovered head. He salutes with different degrees of politeness every member of the family, from the grey-haired patriarch to the smallest infant; he inquires, not seemingly in a servile spirit, after the health and welfare of those with whom he is acquainted, and in turn is gratified by the exhibition of a kindly interest in his own hut and its little belongings.

There are many little matters which form topics of discussion between him and his masters, both young and old; and when travelling with the waggon, hunting with them in the veld, or seated with them at some bivouac fire, they keep up a continual chatter about their journeys,—the fate of this horse and the conduct of that bullock, the trouble nephew John had, and the good shot uncle Peter fired, forming subjects of never-failing interest. If his wife or his children want medicine, the good Boer woman supplies it; and it is rare indeed for a family of farmers to visit the townships without buying some little present or another to gladden the hearts of their "volk."

Far different, indeed, are the relations between an Englishman and his Kafir. As the native is seldom respectful, the master is often angry and vengeful. A missionary with whom I rode from Bushman's River, in Natal, to Mooi River—the next station—illustrated his attachment for Kafirs and theirs for him one morning in my presence in a manner which I hope is at all events exceptional. We were three together—Gert Pretorius, the parson, and myself—when a Zulu passed by in the open road and saluted the teacher as "Umlunga." My companion was instantly off his horse, and being a powerful, active man, nearly six feet six inches high, made no difficulty in catching the nigger, whom he held easily with his left hand. He said a few words in Kafir, and then set vigorously to work thrashing his captive, who, grovelling on his knees, yelled out incessantly, "Inkosai! Umfundisi! Umfundisi! Inkosi!" When the flogging was over, I asked my clerical friend what was the matter, and what was the meaning of the scene. He said, with much triumphant delight, evidently thinking he had done a most virtuous action, "The black villain saluted me as 'Umlunga' (white man), although he could plainly see
by my dress I was an Inkosi and a teacher. I have, however, taught him to respect my robes.” You could hear him yelling “Umfundisi” (teacher) for miles along the road. A native will speak to a European, or even a European lady, with a pipe in his mouth, who would not dream of doing so in a Dutch house.

This reverence for the Dutch seems to me to be rapidly becoming innate in the character of the South African blacks. Their misconduct under English training and English masters is the theme of saddening complaint everywhere. Mr Froude says on this subject: “It would be better to make the natives into serfs under an organised system, with security for life and property, than to give them the rights of freemen and leave them to be eaten up, as it is called, when public policy pretends that an example is wanted.” All real colonists must agree with him.
CHAPTER XI.

OUR SUPERSTITIONS.

The Little Tugela ghost—An exorcism in Irish—A spiritual victory—The spirit of the storm—A midnight apparition—The demon-dog—The snake at Spion Kop—Tutelary spirits.

Persons desirous of information about Africa and its inhabitants will very reasonably expect that I should say something of the superstitions of the people. This in any case I should feel inclined to do, because superstition is a characteristic of national life—has often, in fact, partly moulded national habits—and is quite as much a ruling influence in a community as religion itself. Where there is paganism there will of course be superstition, partaking of the character of the peculiar paganism of the place—cruel and blood spilling, or gentle, dreamy, and imaginative, according as the worshippers have been under the influences of the light and pleasant fancies of a half-poetic priesthood, or the gloom of some harsh and murderous creed. Africa is subject to four principal classes of what might properly be designated as unreasonable belief. There are remnants of Hottentot mythology, full of talking beasts, animated trees, and moving, living, loving flowers, whispering fishes, and clever song-birds, pretty well everywhere amongst the Dutch "volk," whether they be Hottentot or slave descendants. There is the Kafir belief in witchcraft—a terrible irreligion, their faith in which is marked by blood and fire on every page of tribal history. Then there are the superstitions of the descendants of the Dutch and German settlers, amongst which a belief that the earth is often visited by ghosts, for
comparatively harmless and utterly unreasonable purposes, is the most striking feature. Last of all, there is in the Cape Colony itself, a widespread and mischievous belief in modern magic—the spiritualism of Home and his fellows. The last-named folly has never yet advanced, and I hope never will, to the lands north of the Orange River. The other three are to be found in every part of South Africa, where Bushmen, Hottentot, Bastaard, Bechuana, Kafir, or Dutch are to be met with.

The Dutch believe in ghosts—and yet, in the whole of my long intercourse with them, I have never met but four positive evidences of this belief. These I shall narrate in their order of occurrence, as they will tend to illustrate in a wonderful manner the habits of thought, and the simplicity of my heroes, as the South African Boers undoubtedly are. In 1869, a rumour spread over the county Weenen that the house of a farmer named Van ——, on the banks of the Little Tugela, was the scene of nightly devilries of a harmless but extremely annoying description. The family complained that, when the doors were shut and the windows secured, stones of large size, maize-cobs, and other ponderous matters, began to be pelted about by unseen hands, inside the boundaries of their narrow and well-lighted sitting-room. Everybody knows what the appearance of a South African waggon-team must be. There is a long double row of oxen, carrying yokes to which is attached a mighty chain or rope, a still weightier disselboom (waggon-pole), and the weighty African waggon. The “spooke” at Van ——’s used to vary its stone-throwing entertainment by arranging oranges and pumpkins in something like the appearance of the African ox-team—the oranges yoked two and two with thorns, and a pumpkin, or, in some cases, a very large head of Indian corn, attached to them by a chain of straw. This was evidently a hint to the family to go. The manifestations, which at first were only of occasional occurrence, became after a while a cause of nightly dismay and consternation to the poor Boers; and by the beginning of the winter of 1869, the extraordinary occurrences were the theme of every tongue in the wide uplands of Natal. Various propositions were of course made by neighbours for the
suppression of the ghost, who was alleged to be a woman three years deceased. This dead woman was said to have got up the seance in revenge on her husband for his having married a second time, and permitted the step-mother to ill-use the first wife's children.

One evening towards the end of May, a large party, consisting of some of the more intelligent farmers of Weenen and the neighbouring district of Klip River, accompanied by two Britons—McCormack (an old soldier), and a friend of the present writer—assembled with guns and horses to exorcise the Evil Presence. The house was situated on a level plain, had no trees within forty paces of it, and had no cellars, the ground underneath never having been disturbed for drainage or any other purposes. It was forty feet long and fourteen feet wide, the walls springing from foundations of solid stone. The roof was well and solidly thatched, was perfect in every respect, being almost new; and it came down fairly and fully over the wall-plates, leaving no possibility of any space being found through which the stone-throwing and annoyance could be conducted from the outside. This whole building was divided inside into but three rooms, of which the centre was nineteen feet, and the others respectively ten and nine feet long. The party-walls dividing these rooms were only eight feet high, pierced with openings from top to bottom. Instead of doors, these openings from the central into the two side rooms were commonly closed with curtains. For the whole house there were two doors of exit and entry, directly opposite to each other, and opening from the central room into the veld. These were a front and a back door alternatively, whichever you choose, both fitted into good frames solidly set into the wall, and were, in the proper and protective sense of the word, doors. In this little mansion there were four windows—two in the central room, and one to each of the side rooms. The latter would be better described as holes in the walls than windows. They were very small, and the window-frames or casings were filled with small sheets of muslin instead of glass. These openings, however, when I saw them, were firmly secured on the inside by heavy wooden shutters bolted to the walls. The inside of the house was sparsely
and poorly furnished. The main room had a small table in
a corner, and a bigger one in the centre; a home-made sofa,
a barren-looking structure of hard wood and strips of hide;
three hard wooden chairs; a waggon-box painted green;
over in the corner, by the little table, a soft chair, with a
footstool in front of it; and on the table a Brobdingnagian
coffee-kettle, with a small fireplace under it always full of
glowing charcoal. The two side rooms contained beds,
comfortable, but of primitive construction. There were no
pictures to obscure the walls, which were, of course, white-
washed. The bare rafters and the solid roof were, as usual,
everywhere open to and visible from the inside of the house,
there being no ceilings. The floor was of hardened ant-heap,
level and well beaten, and was smeared out every day with
a paste or soap of bois-de-vache. On this floor, so washed
or smeared out, were everywhere visible the circling traces
left by the laborious hands that did this work without any
assistance from brush, besom, or other artificial scrubber.

When once inside the house, and the doors and windows
properly fastened, it would seem as if the inhabitants were
perfectly free from any molestation from the outside, and
could readily see and detect, without difficulty, any attempt
that might be made to play tricks upon them by persons
within. There was no fireplace or kitchen-range, all the
cooking being carried on at an outside kitchen. On the
arrival of the party of investigators and exorcists, an armed
watch was placed around the house outside. This consisted
of men quick of eye, and rapid to detect the approach of
even the smallest animal, and to whom every quiver of a
leaf or wave of the grass had an intelligible significance.
The guard being posted, seven men entered the house and
carefully fastened up all the doors and windows. There
were two servants in the house, who were taken charge of
and placed, sitting, between the knees of two powerful and
watchful men. The family were requested to sit under the
centre table, which they did. The candles were lighted, and,
in deep silence, the watch was commenced. I have omitted
to mention that the moon was almost at the full; there were
no clouds, and the outside guards could see plainly every
mark and flaw, every knot and nail-hole, in the whitewashed
walls of the exterior of the haunted cottage. Ten minutes after the arrival of the guests, the séance commenced by the fall of half-a-dozen pomegranates on to the table. This was succeeded by a shower of gravel, the small stones of which I had the curiosity to inspect. No pebbles of a similar nature were to be found within ten miles of the place. One of the guards got up to examine the pomegranates. He had no sooner left his chair than it was flung with great violence after him; then lumps of ironstone, the smallest of which weighed ten pounds, began dropping from unexpected places, and a mass of clay appeared to tumble through the roof, breaking and scattering about the floor as if it had come from a considerable height. The remarkable feature about the whole affair was, that not one missile struck or injured any of the large party now assembled in the small room. Their excitement was increased by hearing a violent banging at one of the shuttered openings, but which, as we afterwards learned, attracted no attention from the outside guard.

M'Cormack, who is still a living witness to the facts of this entertainment, being, after his own fashion, a pious man, determined to show the power of his faith and the strength of the exorcisms at his command. He stood up with uncovered head, and boldly addressed the ghost in Irish, ordering it in the most solemn manner, and by the most sacred influences known to Christians, to retire to where the wicked ought to cease from troubling, and the weary are presumed—by all but spiritualists—to take their rest. Whether, led on by his subject, he went too far or not, I cannot say: he was stopped in the midst of a torrent of eloquence by what he afterwards described as "a lick from a three-year-old;" in fact, a "young paving-stone" brought him to his senses and his seat at the same time. This violent counter-attack was too much for the visitors; already in a state of high alarm, they hastily released their prisoners, flung open the doors, and dashed out into the moonlight, followed by showers of stones, mealy cobs, potatoes, pomegranates, oranges, and all the handy weapons of South African spiritual warfare that the deceased had accumulated—where? In the still moonlight they saw their watchful
comrades keeping their posts in undisturbed silence. Waiting for no explanations, the signal for flight was given,—every man caught his horse and galloped home as rapidly as possible.

Now it is not my intention to go into the vexed question of spirit or no spirit. People can just believe what they like. The wise and good will doubtless arrive at sound and just judgments, whilst the foolish and vain are not likely to be disturbed in their convictions by anything urged by reason or common-sense. It is enough for my purpose to say that the "spooke" of the "Little Tugela" became a far-famed and very troublesome ghost. The manifestations were continued for two months, during which the persecuted head of the house was struck by a stone that nearly blinded him. They then ceased for three years, being resumed in March 1872, but whether they continue to the present day deponent knoweth not, as he has not since been to the vicinity of the haunted mansion.

A similar series of equally absurd manifestations took place, about the same period, at a lone house on the Harts River, which had formerly been the scene of a murder. These were witnessed by traders, robbers, gun-smugglers, and other persons who may be supposed to have been strong-minded and reckless characters. They were described to me by Edward Wilson, a notorious freebooter, who had lived, loved, prigged, and plundered for years to the north of what is now called Griqualand West; and his simple tale of what to him seemed to be supernatural occurrences, was often corroborated by independent witnesses, who, without any suggestions from me or others, detailed their own experiences of the haunted Harts River House. Harts River is 400 miles from the Tugela. I have heard of other stone-throwing and house-disturbing ghosts; one description, however, must do for them all.

There is another class of ghost or spooke with which the Dutch are equally familiar, and with which I can vouch for almost a personal acquaintance. A gentleman who is most intimate with me, was riding one day on a road skirted on the left by high embankments, while the right sloped away into grassy meadows, when a thunderstorm coming up from
behind caused him to look back that he might calculate whether he could reach the town, two miles in front of him, without being caught in the rain. The horse, as horses will, looked around and backward at the same time. In a moment the brute was madly plunging, striving to bolt up the high bank, and endeavouring, with evident terror, to get away from some fearful thing. The rider, of course, restrained this impulse with his powerful bit, forcing the animal back into the road and keeping his head in the original direction. The horse was still restive and nervous, glancing occasionally to his right rear, and endeavouring to burst away anywhere off the road to the left. It was 4 P.M. on an ordinary summer afternoon, when short thunderstorms from the Drakensberg, transitory but violent, are of almost daily occurrence. Strongly interested by the fear so palpably exhibited by his horse, and expecting to see, at the worst, a wolf, the rider again turned his eyes towards the rapidly approaching rain, which was sweeping towards him like a wall, bending under its weight the tall grass, and not now distant more than 300 yards from his position. He was not a superstitious man, he was not drunk, or suffering from low spirits or “want of spirits,” and yet he saw in the broad daylight coming floating towards him, with outstretched arms, in front of the moving mass of rain, but several feet raised from the earth, a young, fair, ethereal, golden-haired female, whose robes of glittering white trailed just over the highest points of the grass. She spoke not, but came steadily down on him in advance of the storm. His horse now kicked and plunged more madly than ever, and at length, wild with terror, snapped the strong bridle-reins into pieces, and tore away in headlong flight straight down the roadway to the distant village. The rider, after the manner of the country, sat him throughout his headlong course with unmoved resolution. As he had never been used to what jockeys call “riding the reins,” he felt no inconvenience from their loss, and no fear from the accident, knowing that his well-trained beast would stop at the river below. Twice, however, during the headlong gallop, he turned his head to watch the swiftly following rain, which was still preceded
by the fair girl with her outstretched arms. In less time
than I have taken to write this story, his frightened horse
bore him down the hill and to the bank of the Little
Bushmen's River. Here, however, he did not stop, but plunged
recklessly through to the farther side; then, shaking all
over, but neighing with satisfaction and triumph, just as the
rain-drops caught him, he halted and permitted his master
to descend and put together the remnants of his broken
bridle.

The pursuing "spooke" vanished as the storm reached
the river; and though it swept on, overtaking and drench-
ing man and beast, accompanied by whizzing and crackling
streams of lightning and hoarse stunning roars of genuine
South African thunder, the horse showed no more dread,
but permitted himself to be handled, remounted, and cantered
to his stable. On that evening this strange circumstance
having been mentioned at the table of the Public Prosecutor,
that gentleman—a man of undoubted probity and veracity—
spoke that, months before, coming in from "Oliver's Hoek"
at night-time, and accompanied by another European, he
had seen the same apparition, which was then also the
cause of much terror to his horses, whose plungings first
drew his attention to it. Not only he and his companion,
but their four horses—for each of them rode with one in
hand—seemed to have seen the "spooke," or whatever it
was, at the same time. What he saw, at all events, was
the luminous figure of a young, fair creature standing close
to the roadside, above the level of the grass, on the top of
which her feet seemed to rest. She, however, began to
vanish before they attempted to pass, disappearing slowly
from the feet upwards, the head being the last part of the
apparition visible. The official who saw this is now magis-
trate of a large and disturbed district—a man of undoubted
firmness and oft-tried nerve. I do not seek to account for
any of those things. I state the facts as I know them, and
am prepared to prove them by ample references to living
witnesses should any person interested in such things desire
further information.

I have heard amongst the Dutch of many still more pecu-
liar appearances. It was even gravely asserted on one occa-
sion that a farmer named Boshoff was driven from his place by the apparitions of some Kafirs he had shot years before, who enjoyed their most unspiritual existence, galloping round his house on wild dogs and wolves, which they had got into what might be called diabolically good training. Once, however, I became acquainted with a "spooke story," in an up-country village, which fatally lowered my belief in the supernatural.

When the people on the Diamond Fields were discontented with their government, a small party of them resolved to seize on the offending officials, carry them out of the country, and finally deport them in safety within the Cape Colony, to which their enforced return must prove sufficient evidence that they were no longer wanted in Griqualand West. It was necessary to obtain possession of a house in the neighbouring Dutch state suitable for the temporary detention of the intended prisoners. A member of "Ling's Cavalry" sought for a suitable farmhouse, but with little success, till he heard of a nice two-storeyed cottage, situated in a peach-garden of considerable size, the property of an old and very wealthy Boer. This house and garden were in the outskirts of a pretty village. The Boer would not let his house on any terms. It was empty, and should remain empty till he wanted it himself. The Dutchman said "that the house ate nothing, and therefore need not earn anything." Mr W—— felt himself compelled to introduce ghost-stories into the village and a ghost into the house. He managed matters so well that at length the old Boer determined, gun in hand, to look after the intrusive spirit himself. For this purpose he was accompanied, when the night came, by the cunning contriver of the play, the slim diamond-digger. They started for the scene of operations at half-past eleven on a dark, damp summer's night; about ten minutes before, however, there had been smuggled into the lonely dwelling an immense dog, which had been first carefully rubbed all over with phosphorus. As the Boer and his companion crept towards the house they heard the noise of the dog leaping up to the windows, hurling himself against the doors, and doing all he could to get out. Once they saw something like a flash of light——no doubt the dog's phosphorus-covered
body appearing at one of the windows. The Dutchman, however, pressed valiantly on, took the outer padlock off the door, and, after some little delay, pushed it boldly open. Instantly the dog, which had heard them at the door, seized his opportunity, dashed between their legs, upsetting them both, and tore off, glowing and gleaming all over, through the rain and the darkness down the garden. The old man's gun had gone off in the shock; neighbours and niggers came to ascertain the cause of the disturbance; they found him a firm believer in ghosts, smelling horribly, and his nether limbs glowing with some luminous marks of his contact with the departed devil. The rebellious young man obtained the haunted house without difficulty at an easy rent; but circumstances, and the good sense of Sir Arthur Cunynynghame and Judge Barry, rendered unnecessary the purpose for which it had been taken.

The sailors' idea that Friday is an unfortunate day has been, in the minds of the volunteers and border inhabitants, most singularly borne out by the almost inexplicable occurrences of quite a number of calamities on that particular day. There was hardly a Kafir attack throughout the whole of the late and the present wars, nor was there a white expedition, taken on a Friday, that did not result in disaster to our side. Robus and Knapp were killed on a Friday; Schlieckmann's unfortunate attack was a Friday job; Wainwright's, Parker's, Pettigrew's losses, the evacuation of Fort Burgers, the murder of Venter,—in fact, nearly every calamity that happened us, oddly enough occurred on a Friday.

Popular superstitions, native traditions, and border prejudices, are all worthy of remark, and must be noted by whoever pretends to be a commandant; because each and every one of them have their influence more or less upon the feelings and actions of his opponents; and a neglect of the most insignificant of such circumstances often proves very embarrassing.

Kafir superstitions are not at all like those of the Dutch. The only one with which I ever came in actual contact was their idea that the spirits of the great departed pass into the forms of snakes. Under this guise, therefore, they indulge
OUR SUPERSTITIONS.

in the worship of their forefathers, but in a dangerous and unpleasant way. I was once shooting—now many years ago—when I was a raw emigrant, and still what Natalians call a "Jimmy," and vulgar Americans a "Mick." I noticed the high grass, which was everywhere above my head, laid in one direction in a narrow trail, evidently left by the passage of somebody or something; and believing that by following this I would arrive at an easy opportunity for distinguishing myself as a sportsman, I turned on to and pursued the "spoor." After a few minutes I came suddenly out upon a small open glade of short grass on the margin of a deep spruit. But my first step from the tambookie grass was arrested by the formidable appearance of an enormous snake, the forepart of whose body was entirely raised from the ground, and whose expanded crest and glaring eyes were within two feet of my own. My gun was loaded with but a single bullet. I was too close to the brute to bring it to the shoulder; so I stood with it in the capping position, watching for an opportunity to make effectual use of what I at once conceived to be my only chance of safety—my one shot. There are people who deny the existence of snake-mesmerism. All I can say is this, that my eyes became fixed on his almost involuntarily, and accompanied every movement of his graceful head and neck, which were continually and without apparent effort, and without my being able to connect the movements one with the other, changing their place—appearing each instant at different points right or left, but always close to me, and higher than my breast. The feeling of astonishment and disgust with which I had at first regarded the reptile utterly left me. His eyes seemed to my bewildered senses to grow larger and larger. Gleaming in every tint of opal and carbuncle, they appeared to spread from the size of a shilling to that of a saucer, and then suddenly seemed to pervade all space, while I could still feel my head swaying from side to side as the snake's did. Suddenly something—I know not what—broke the spell. The eyes disappeared, sight returned to me, and I saw the brute's body vanishing over a rock into the stream-bed. I rushed forward to hurl stones at him; but judge of my astonishment when I found he had no tail. His body
terminated in a stump, like an amputated leg. He was about eleven feet long, and as thick as my own calf.

After this I fired at a buck which ran down to, and was killed at, the house of one Jury Potgieter. I then turned homewards, when, being pressed for an account of my doings, I told of the snake I had seen. Mr Alfred Wright, at whose place I was visiting, knew this remarkable snake well. The Kafirs would not allow any one to kill it. It was stated that the reptile years before had appeared in one of the Zulu kraals when they were burying a chief. An impulsive young barbarian struck at it with a battle-axe, amputating its tail. The elder Kafirs interfered, saying it was the "dead warrior come to see them." The snake recovered from its injuries, and was thenceforth sacred to the tribe—a branch of the Hlubi recently extinguished by the Natal Government. This monster has not, so far as I have heard, been since killed. He is particularly fond of honey, and is to be seen in the neighbourhood of Spion Kop, in the county of Weenen, a mountain where there are many nests of wild bees.

The Kafirs also believe in the existence of river and water spirits, to whose agency they attribute all deaths by drowning; and in witchcraft, to which they attribute all diseases to them otherwise inexplicable. They have plenty of folk-lore which is well worth collecting and preserving.

The superstition of the Bushmen and Hottentots is chiefly evinced by their dread of ghosts and their habit of listening with pleasure to pretty child-like fables of the loves and stratagems, the amusements, wanderings, and even political intrigues of the lower animals, amongst whom the jackal seems to be given the first place for cunning and intelligence. These tales have all something in common with those in use amongst the Irish and the Icelanders, and reminded me of that pretty conceit by which the wren is made out to be the king of birds, because, on one occasion of a competition for the sovereignty, he perched himself on the eagle's head, thereby getting higher up in the world than any of his companions. Some statesmen are said to rise in a somewhat similar way.
CHAPTER XII.

OUR SPORTS AND TRAVELS.

When not to hunt—Horse-sickness—"Salted" horses—How to start properly—Whipping a lion—Bushcraft—A hunter killed—Dumination in game—Game or wild beasts—South African sportsmen—Snakes and swords—Wolves and dogs—How to choose horses—Viz Delagoa Bay—The mocking-bird—Stampeding.

I have alluded elsewhere to the days when I was a raw, fresh immigrant, and liable to be sneered at by older colonists as a "Jimmy." I am even now so impressed with the magnitude of the follies which men similarly situated and equally ignorant of the facts of South African life are guilty of, that I will endeavour to save some at least of our visitors from errors which prove not only annoying, but sometimes even most expensive to hundreds of persons yearly.

Even lately I met three gentlemen who came out from England, travelling by sea and land to the Transvaal, a distance of over 9000 miles, for the sake of sport, and who had only succeeded in arriving at just that particular season of the year when their object was utterly unobtainable, except at the risk of not only very large sums of money, but of their own lives.

There is in Africa, and especially in the Transvaal, a close season, when the penalty for descending into the Bushveld in search of large game, or of penetrating to the north into the remoter grounds of the elephant-hunter, is not a fine of five or ten pounds, but the almost certain exposure of the traveller to fever and death. This season may generally be said to include the latter half of the spring, the whole of the summer, and not only the whole of the autumn, but also
a few of the first days of winter. This sickly and dangerous season includes from the 1st of September to the 25th of May in nearly every year. It is, in the Bushveld and low country, not only a period of general unhealthiness and danger to man, but is also that during which the constant prevalence of horse-sickness adds to the danger, expense, and difficulty of the hunter. During, on the other hand, the whole of the actual winter, but little fear of either fever or horse-sickness need be entertained anywhere, save in the distant and less-shot-over districts north of the Limpopo, of which I know nothing but from hearsay.

Birds are to be got at all times everywhere in the Transvaal; but of these I do not intend to speak at any great length, as partridges and the like can be got cheaper and in greater profusion much nearer home. My remarks refer almost entirely to sea-cows and elephants, which are becoming year by year scarcer and more difficult to get at, and to buffaloes, koodooos, blue weldebeest (gnu), elands, blesbuck (several varieties of antelope), wild boars, and four-footed animals generally. No doubt, upon the Highveld good shooting is to be obtained, even during the rainy season, amongst the weldebeests, blesbucks, and springbucks; and an occasional shot may be got at a wolf or a jackal; but for all purposes of real sport, the low country and Bushveld must be the aim of the hunter. This being so, it is of course absolutely necessary that he should know when to visit and when to avoid the game country. Even the hardiest Boer will not venture the lives of himself, his cattle, and horses, in the low country during the sickly season.

The gentlemen to whom I have above referred arrived, after long travel and great expense, in Pretoria in December 1877. Thence, with a waggon and bullocks, they proceeded eastwards, shooting a fair amount of game (but not of the nobler and more dangerous sorts) on the Highveld, not very far from the village of Nazareth. The following rules had been given them for their guidance, to their adherence to which during the subsequent part of their journey, they have good reason to attribute their escape from low fever.

1. Never sit fishing or remain loitering by the banks of a stream after sunset.
2. Never sleep in low bottoms; always pitch your camp at least forty feet above the level of neighbouring waters.
3. Take necessary medicine regularly.
4. Begin the day with some refreshment, no matter how light.

They were told at the same time, that unless they purchased what are called "salted" horses—that is, animals which had recovered from the disease known by the very vague and general term of "horse-sickness," but which is really a fever, whose principal symptom seems to be violent pleuritis—they might find themselves at any time deprived, from this cause, of their animals. To guard against this sickness—as they did not buy salted cattle—they were recommended never to permit their horses to bite grass or drink water until the morning mists, haze, or miasma, with which the low grounds are frequently covered, should have been first entirely dissipated, leaving the veld dry. The horses consequently should be fed at night, and only allowed to graze at will during the later and warmer parts of each day. This will be best effected by the English sportsman bringing proper nose-bags and head-stalls with him, by the use of which, with great care and attention, I have seen delicate and valuable animals preserved, where there were no stables, during very bad seasons. It is the general opinion that the poison causing the fever is to be found in the dew. It is certain that horses eating dew-wet grasses during the sickly season almost invariably die. This is so firmly believed that I have known both Dutchmen and Englishmen to wash carefully every blade of grass or sheaf of oats coming from the damp air before it was admitted into their stables; and I must certainly say that this safeguard has been followed by good results.

That there is something in the dew and miasma theory can be readily gathered from this fact: "imported horses," when properly stabled, and not allowed out except during the later and warmer hours of the day, seem very frequently to escape the disease altogether; but to an imported animal so kept, one single night's absence from shelter during the unhealthy time will always prove fatal. So much for unsalted horses. With regard to the "salted" ones, or those
presumed to have passed through the sickness, I can speak with considerable certainty, as I have had in my charge at various times large troops of these animals, amongst which were some of great value. Of those bought by myself I shall first speak. They were five in number, and are all still alive, having, under circumstances of most aggravated toil and exposure, passed through the two worst seasons for horses ever known in the Transvaal; and, to aggravate the case, in the worst and most unhealthy districts inhabited by Europeans. They were "Peter," "Beaufort," two "Charles," and a mare, who was called "Mrs Y." for political reasons. The first-named animal cost 78 guineas, was a pony gelding, barely 14 hands high, and was bought from Mr Crane of Lydenberg, with a character. He had been foaled in Natal, in his third year got the sickness, and was left for dead by the Umsindusi, near Maritzburg. To his owner's astonishment, he afterwards turned up alive but in wretched condition, having lost all the hair off his back, neck, face, and ears, and being the most unearthly-looking and forlorn wretch imaginable. In this condition Mr James of Reedspruit bought him for £8, and put enough meat on him to enable him to work up easily in a trap to the Gold Fields. He then fell into Crane's hands for £15, had the sickness again, in the Transvaal form, and on recovering, was again put in condition, and sold in October 1876 to Captain von Schleichmann for service at Fort Burgers, where there were no stables—the most unhealthy and poisonous spot for animals in all Africa. There, and in the surrounding country, he was worked day and night without food, except what he picked up, until he was returned, early in December, a mere bag of bones to Mr Crane. The unfortunate animal was again fattened up and sold to me. I used him constantly in the Lower Origstadt valley, in Secocoeni's country, and in every unhealthy place that duty led to, all through the sickly season, during which period no less than eighty-six of his companions died. In the next bad season, after various night journeys, I left him in Pretoria, where the sickness nearly dismounted the Carrington Horse. He again travelled—of course day and night—to Lydenberg, where the sickness lasted till he was sold, on the 8th June.
last, for £50. He is still alive and well, and valued at 100 guineas, after having travelled during my ownership of him, in peace and war, nearly 3000 miles, sometimes being as much as nineteen hours without having the saddle for one moment off his back.

The second horse, "Beaufort," was bought with a guarantee from Matcham Coetze of Nazareth for £65, had a relapse of the worst form of horse-sickness in the Bushveld in December 1876; but being salted, recovered with simple treatment, consisting mainly of bleeding in the dividing membrane of the nostrils. He served through both campaigns, and is still a Government troop-horse, having seen the death of every horse bought with him that was not guaranteed as over the sickness. Charlie No. 1 was obtained from Commandant Coetze of the Crocodile valley, has done similar duties through two seasons, and is still on service. The other Charlie was bought at Henwood's store for £40 in February 1877, and has never been in a stable since, except as a casual visitor. His master has ridden him enormous distances, day and night, through the worst parts of the same districts, and ties him up to a tree in his garden at night in all weathers. The mare was a "Coetze," a purchase from the Dutch. She is alive and well, after somewhat similar experiences; but, singular to say, her foal, which she got to a salted stallion, died of horse-sickness when running with the mother at six months old.

Amongst the troop-horses supplied to me by Government, all those which had not been "guaranteed as salted" by some respectable and responsible man, whether Dutch or English, died as soon as they were brought into contact with the fever. Those only that bore unmistakable marks of having had the sickness, survived to be given over to the new authorities. I need add nothing in the way of opinion to this illustration. Those who go to South Africa may do as they like; but for my part I should prefer giving 100 guineas for a "salted" hunter, to accepting, even as a present, for use in the Bushveld, three equally good "unsalted" horses. Good animals guaranteed but slow, used to being shot over, can always be obtained at from £35 to £50; but fast, lively, and spirited, trained "salted shooting horses"
A HUNTING-PARTY.

are worth from £70 to £150; and no price can be too high for some of the good, clever, and faithful creatures I have known. The best horses are those with black points—even a long dark stripe running from the mane to the tail in a beast of any colour, is a sure sign of endurance. Animals so marked have a mulish appearance, but make up for it by being possessed of mulish hardihood.

I shall now return to the three gentlemen who came out at the wrong season. Having shot, as I said, some antelopes in the Highveld, they reached, late in January, the Crocodile River valley; but they could find no one to accompany them into the proper hunting-voeld, because it was now the middle of the unhealthy season. After some delay they got on to Kruger's Post, where Mr Henry Glynn was induced, by hospitable considerations and his own love of sport, to try to get down into the bush-country with them. Some buffaloes and other large game had been seen in the vicinity of Seelas Hoek, below Origstadt; but in consequence of the thick summer growth of the forest, with the rainy season, the party failed to do any good shooting,—killing, I believe, only a few koodoos, but losing £120 worth of horse-flesh. It was useless and dangerous to attempt prosecuting their purpose, and the strangers had to return to Pretoria, there to await, during long and weary months, the arrival of winter. They were a compact, well-provided, and nicely-arranged party; and the severe disappointment they suffered is only to be attributed to their not knowing enough about the seasons.

The South African hunter should, of course, be provided with a waggon, drawn by good bullocks, which also must be bought "guaranteed" free from red-water, and "salted" as regards lung-sickness and bush-sickness.

It would be better for a stranger to lose fourteen days than to proceed with one unsalted bullock. Guarantees may always be depended upon if obtained from men of any property or standing. A good sound tented waggon, with twelve salted oxen, and a full supply of chains, yokes, straps, skews, and everything necessary to the completion of the turn-out, cannot be obtained under £230 in Pretoria; but against this apparently heavy expense comes the fact,
that unless shattered by careless driving, or injured through neglect, both waggon and oxen will be saleable at a moderate discount when done with. The hunter requires tea, coffee, biscuits, sugar, pepper, and salt, with any spices, drinks, or luxuries he may fancy. All these are obtainable in South Africa at reasonable rates. His guns ought to be of the best possible construction, and his supply of cartridges at the rate of 4000 per barrel. By bringing this apparently excessive supply, he will be enabled, when his sport is over, to sell his rifles with the surplus ammunition, and most probably at a profit.

I should advise men never to bring dogs of value to South Africa. Foreign-bred dogs invariably die of a hideous, and, so far as I know, an incurable form of distemper. In the Lionveld, and where dangerous game is likely to be met with, useless curs, which can be picked up about any African town or farmhouse, will be found more useful than the best-bred hounds. The curs are more watchful at night, I presume, because they are more cowardly; yet a pack of them never fail to attack even a full-grown lion, or the most ferocious wounded tiger, and by their worryings and jumpings distract the brute's attention—ofttimes to the salvation of the hunter. *Apropos* of dogs, a man of fancy could make an immense fortune in South Africa by establishing a breeding and rearing house, where pups could be watched through and over the sickness, when they would become of considerable value. This applies to pointers, setters, kangaroo-hounds, greyhounds, and stag-hounds of every variety, as well as to mastiffs and fancy and watch dogs of all sorts. We have been offered by the Kafirs four large bullocks, valued at £32, for a good-looking but well-grown cur; but as he was a reliable watch-dog, he was not sold even for that.

Amongst the other things that the hunter should bring with him are waterproof sheets, which will secure him from damp, a portable India-rubber bath, and a couple of air-pillows. His small-bore rifle must throw a good heavy bullet, certainly never lighter than the service pattern—that served out for the Martini-Henry. He will require the assistance of a Hottentot or Dutch waggon-driver, a leader who may be a Kafir boy, and if possible a Dutch-speaking
coloured man as cook. Dutch-speaking servants are a little inclined to drink when in towns; but those who speak English well are almost invariably thieves as well as drunkards.

I will now add a few words for the benefit of visitors who may descend towards the fly-country. It has been asserted by many writers that the tsetse-fly is not fatal to donkeys and mules. I know the contrary to be the fact. The fly-country may be penetrated with comparative safety, and trekked across during long and cold winter nights with animals of any kind; but those that get stung invariably die when next they are exposed to a rainy season. Oxen drop off almost immediately after the first rains, as do horses. Mules and donkeys, on the contrary, wither away slowly, their muscles drying up through the effects of the poison until they become mere skeletons, when they fail from exhaustion.

When I left the Transvaal, lions were running in troops below the mountains close to the Gold Fields, and two had been seen in the previous year—one in Secocoeni's land, and one in the Kaap, a barren mountainous district to the right of the Lydenberg main road. These animals, however, are seldom dangerous, but they may frighten one's horses, forcing them to break loose, when, being no longer under intelligent guidance, they fall an easy prey to the carnivora. A Mr William Leathern had a lion adventure a few years ago, which illustrates not only his own fearless and reckless character, but the amount of danger to be expected from the lion by careless persons. He was in the upper Lionveld, off-saddled, sitting by his fire at night, when he heard some disturbance among his quadrupeds. With a whip in his hand he walked down to quiet them, when, noticing a strange form and seemingly not caring what it was, he proceeded to drive it away, lashing it across the face in a most vigorous manner. He was instantly taught his mistake. The lion—for it was one—drew with his paw the poor man's hand and arm into his mouth, and began crunching it. Leathern was unarmèd, save with a paltry revolver, which he discharged several times into his opponent, who, for some miraculous reason, had not finished him in the meantime. I have heard that Leathern killed the lion. I
know as a matter of fact that he escaped, and after a tedious journey of thirty miles reached a station, his arm mangled and distorted in the most frightful manner, the bones of the arm and hand being literally chewed into splinters. The man is, however, at present alive, and enjoying all the excitement of a lawsuit at Pretoria. I believe he will find the law more dangerous to deal with than the lion.

While on the lion subject, I may mention that unobservant persons not used to the veld may pass by game, and especially carnivorous animals, without seeing them, even when hunting, and when they ought to be supremely vigilant. Mr Landsberg, living near Nazareth, in a well-peopled part of the country, was not long ago engaged in a discussion with a bumptious fellow, who denied that lions were still to be found in the Transvaal. Mr L. offered to bet that he would ride with the disputant on the next morning through the veld, and that within three hours he would show him as many lions, which would nevertheless be invisible to him until pointed out. The bet was accepted, and on his celebrated horse "Welmouth," Landsberg, accompanied by the stranger, also mounted, started for an unoccupied farm about ten miles off. After a couple of hours the Africander asked "if the stranger could see anything." He looked in every direction, but failed to make out game of any kind. The veld was dotted with large ant-heaps, and past one of these Mr L. directed his friend to proceed, keeping, however, 400 or 500 yards from it. He did so, and to his astonishment saw curled up on the dun-coloured ground, and looking as like the ant-heaps as possible, a lion and lioness, with one cub.

Shortly after this, and now about two years ago, the same gentleman, Otto Landsberg, met a lion within twenty paces of his own house. He was returning home, unarmed, in the early moonlight, and might have lost his life had his horse not been well trained, as he came upon the brute most unexpectedly, and without preparation of any kind. My reason for mentioning these facts is to impress upon strangers visiting South Africa, that from want of experience in watching the appearances of both bush and plain, under varying lights and at different seasons, they may often err as to the presence or absence even of large game. Hunters
will always find it to their advantage to have with them experienced "volk;" and in my opinion they should, as the Boers invariably do, provide a mount and a good gun for a coloured satellite. I cannot, however, advise the mixing of large parties of European and African sportsmen. There is a rivalry: the old hands take advantage of their superior bushcraft; and jealousies, too often resulting in quarrels, are the result.

A young Englishman who sailed in the same ship with me when I went out first, lost his life through this cause. He was up country along with a number of experienced hunters, under whom he was to serve a sort of apprenticeship to the elephant business. One of them chaffed him sorely about his inexperience, telling him he would be afraid to face the game, and otherwise irritating him. Next morning when the camp awoke, they found he had taken his horse and gun and gone alone into the bush, leaving a message that he would kill an elephant by himself or never return. Knowing well the danger to which the young fellow would be almost certainly exposed, the older hunters, now sorry for the chaff, but still expecting all would be well, rode off on his trail. They picked up (from the trampled ground), after about four miles, evidence that their friend was spooring a herd of five or six elephants. Still pursuing their course, they shortly heard the sound of a rifle, and coming on a clear space, were just in time to witness the death of the unfortunate youth. When they caught sight of him he was standing away from his horse, in the cover of a small stunted bush, which would not have sufficed to stop the charge of a goat, and was aiming at a furious bull "trumpeting" and "charging," already within twenty or thirty paces of his ill-judged place of concealment. The new arrivals at once fired, trying to stop the great brute in his charge, but it was too late; he had seen and probably smelt his enemy, who in a moment more was lying dead, his skull fractured into atoms, while the angry animal kneaded his body into the sand. The elephant was, of course, shot dead. Quite apart from such tragedies, which fortunately are not of everyday occurrence, I am still of opinion that new and old hands should never hunt together.
It has been remarked that, as the country has become more settled, a wonderfully rapid diminution in the quantity of game in the Transvaal and Free State has taken place. This still continues; and if sportsmen want to "do" Africa, they will have to make haste, as at the present rate of decrease, in a very few years wild animals, with the exception of springbucks and perhaps blesbucks, will have ceased to exist in these two large territories. Some people profess to account for this by the heavy slaughter which undoubtedly has been the rule in this and the last generation. I and a few others, however, feel inclined to doubt that killing alone will account for the destruction of "the wild." Birds are seldom shot, and never by the Boers; yet although their enemies—polecats, porcupines, and other marauders, with many of the larger and fiercer hawks and eagles—have been got rid of, and vermin generally has been kept down, birds of all kinds, from "paauws" (bustards) to the smallest partridges, sometimes called the "namaquas," are disappearing from some districts, and becoming scarcer everywhere.

In 1872 I saw as many as sixty large bustards together in a space of less than one hundred acres. Except under unusually favourable circumstances, a man will now seldom find more than three in a day. Some of those birds are of enormous size. Mr E. C. Buxton is stated to have shot one weighing nearly 40 lb. Andersson speaks of individuals he has known exceeding 30 lb. in weight; but John Dugmore of Albania and myself, travelling with William Byron Sampson, saw at a store on the Reed River a bird shot for us which weighed 93 lb., and the shank of which, still in Dugmore's possession, was as thick as that of a sheep. It had been kept for us for several days, but getting too high, was unfortunately given to the pigs. It was the "Kori bustard" of Burchell (Kori eupodotis). A few days after we saw another of the same species, also of gigantic size. It walked with great rapidity and got out of sight in the bush, without, I think, once attempting to use its wings. Smaller birds of this species provide the best meal a man can get in the veld. Cooking at home, however, seems to spoil them, for some inscrutable reason. I have never tasted one in a house that was not abominable.
But, as I have said before, birds are getting scarce everywhere, and especially immediately west of the mountains; and the nearer the Drakensberg one gets, oddly enough the wilder and scarcer they seem to become. A Mr Hutchinson, a man of considerable talent and energy, both as a painter and a naturalist, now living at Karkloof in Natal, but who frequently visits the Transvaal on trading and hunting trips, says that he believes the country to be drying up; that the streams are not so full as they were some years ago; that summer flood-rains are heavier and more frequent than of yore; but that the general and genial distribution of the rainfall spoken of by those who had experience of the country thirty years ago, is now noticeably absent. This entirely agrees with my own observations. The streams and waters in the north-east of the Transvaal are undoubtedly diminishing in volume, and even in flood-time bear no proportion to the channels in which they run, which must have been hollowed out by vastly greater bodies of water than they now contain. It has also been remarked that the dry seasons are longer and drier than they were heretofore. Observing persons state, and one in particular—a German residing in the Transvaal continuously from 1852—has told me that the rainfall was in the earlier days more than double what it is now; and that the winter was never an utterly rainless season, as farmers find it to have been of late. Lands have been shown to me, formerly well watered, for which now the same fountains do not provide a nearly sufficient supply. Springs have failed in many places; and it is to be expected that persons learned in such matters might be able to connect the disproportionate diminution in the game, to which I have referred, with the very extraordinary and unaccountable change in the seasons nearly everywhere observable. That the rivers have become smaller and weaker is undoubted. I have noticed places where crocodiles and sea-cows were formerly plentiful, but where now they could not live the year through from scarcity of water. I cannot believe that the crocodiles have been driven from the rivers by huntsmen, although, of course, that may account for the absence or destruction of the sea-cows. Even in the Steelport River I have seen but
two living crocodiles, and one lying dead on the bank (fourteen feet long), shot by Ashton. They are not at all to be found in the streams about Lydenberg. So markedly is this the case, that the inhabitants are even unacquainted with their nature, and seem to believe them to be harmless animals utterly incapable of mischief. I find, however, a far different description of them by the missionaries of the Amanda-bele, who say they are formidable, ugly, scaly, and ferocious, deserving even the name of "aquatic tiger."

It is said of the African crocodile that he is a wary, powerful, and terrible monster, capable of attacking man or beast. Now there is a crocodile river near Lydenberg where there are no crocodiles, although there are some, as I have said before, at Fort Burgers. Their absence can only be accounted for by the shallowing or drying-up of the river. At the fort I have never known them to meddle with the men, except in one instance, when a Scotchman, named Lorimer, who was drawing water at the river, had an iron bucket snatched from him by one of the hungry brutes. I am afraid he found the article both indigestible and inconvenient. It appears that the iron handle got between his teeth, which, as the reader must know, are widely separated from each other, standing up like prongs out of the jaw. The bucket, hanging down, of course got filled with water: the saurian was last seen going down the stream, evidently puzzled to know how to get rid of it.

The hunting below the berg has been pretty good during the last two years. I have known several parties that considered, quite apart from their enjoyment of the sport, that they had made a profit by their trip. The Glynns were down with three guns, and killed in twenty-two days 143 head of large game, including giraffes (camelopard). This number, if all the skins and more valuable parts of the game are preserved, cannot be altogether despised, even as a means of paying for ammunition. The flesh of the South African game, the marrow of some sorts, and the fat of others, are to most tastes extremely pleasant. I know of no meat that I prefer to eland (very large antelope). If the game has a fault, it is that the animals are wanting in fat; but this is easily remedied by the use of ham or bacon.
This remark especially holds good of the antelopes of all classes that roam about on the plains of the Orange Free State and on the Highveld of the Transvaal; but is not so true of the mountain and bush-rangers, who, I suppose, having more shelter, are not forced into continual exercise by the too frequent appearance of enemies. Delightful as the flesh of some kinds of game is found to all palates, and fond even as the English at home are, not only of receiving presents of venison, but even of paying for that article at a very high figure for the delectation of their friends, I have yet heard it charged against the Boers as a crime that they preferred good blesbuck to bad mutton. I am particular in mentioning this, because sportsmen, who constitute, I am happy to say, the better classes of the English, will be led from the criticism of such a remark, so prejudicial, so wanton, and so vicious in its ignorance and spleen, to estimate other partisan statements of the author at their proper value. I give the paragraph in full, that I may not be accused of misquoting the author, who is the sole and only apologist for a recent mistake. Mr Anthony Trollope says (vol ii. p. 9), in his work on South Africa, of the Boers, "That they will live upon the carcasses of wild beasts which they can shoot upon the lands, so as to reduce their expenses on food to a minimum." Here, however, he merely introduces the accusation as one amongst many, as to the truth of which he had not yet made up his mind. At page 13 he begins giving the results of his own examination of Boers' houses and their inhabitants; and in discussing their domestic economy, says: "But there are two sides to it; and the parsimony of the Boer, who will eat up the carcass of a wild beast till it be rotten, so that he need not kill a sheep, and may thus be enabled to stock a farm for his son, will have its admirers in Great Britain, if not among fathers, at any rate among sons."

The intelligent reader will here remark that Mr Trollope carefully avoids the use of the word "game" but talks of wild beasts so as utterly to distort the Boer's action in the matter. This is quite as unfair as if the deer in the Queen's parks were described as wild beasts, and her Majesty's household and friends accused of a filthy parsimoniousness because venison appeared at their tables. Had the writer
stated that the Boer preferred a "welderbeest" (the gnu), one of the largest of the antelope tribe, and very common on the great flats, to goats' flesh, he would have been more correct. But it is most unfair, and calculated to give quite a wrong impression of the South African people, for an author to call the gnu a wild beast, and to blame sportsmen for eating his body as if he were a hyena or one of the Carnivora. I need not say here to Englishmen that their brother Englishmen in Africa are quite as fond of game, and quite as proud to have the produce of their own guns on their tables, as any backwoodsman or hunter of the race.

From a sportsman's point of view, great and wanton destruction of game has been going on in some African districts for many years. When I first crossed the Drakensberg, the districts of Harry-smith, Kronstadt, Rhenoster-spruit, and Bethlehem, forming together an area of about 6000 square miles, were, as well as the great Middleveld, literally swarming with countless herds of antelopes of nearly every class and species. Quaggas were to be heard and seen in small troops nearly everywhere; and the land was fairly overrun with "welderbeests" blue and black, blesbucks, springbucks, and many varieties of the less gregarious antelopes; but they have been fairly shot off. The farmers stated, and I think with reason, that the larger game, which partook in some respects of the nature of cattle, were subject to diseases, especially in winter, and from poverty, which contaminated their herds. They were also shot down in every direction for the sake of their skins, of which I am ashamed to say how many hundred thousand were sent down for sale to the shippers in Natal, in a comparatively short time, from Kronstadt district alone. The springbucks, from their diminutive size and superior fleetness, seem to have escaped the all but universal destruction, which was aided, as I have said elsewhere, by natural causes, especially drought, and by farm improvements, including the enclosure of springs, the multiplication of houses and the habitations of man along streams and rivers. During this period large numbers of carcasses, after having been skinned, were left to rot on the veld. The Legislature interfered, and indiscriminate shooting has been to a great extent put
a stop to. It is forbidden by law for any person to slay the wild in the veld and abandon their carcasses, the waste of such valuable meat being very properly considered a wanton slaughter of God's creatures; and yet the Boers are abused by a modern author for eating the venison. I have known some of this abused class of men who showed, in the treatment of the wild, as much of the feelings of the genuine sportsman as one would meet with in the proprietor of a Highland deer-forest.

Early in 1870, I was travelling along the banks of the Vaal River with Mr Rudolph of Weenen, when, at the junction of “Vals” or False River with the larger stream, we saw some thousands of game caught in the deep mud where they had attempted to cross. An old Boer, a true gentleman, named Kreeling, living at the junction, told us that this was of frequent occurrence. It was suggested to him by one of our party that he had now a splendid opportunity of cutting their throats and securing their skins, which would be valued for half-a-crown each all round. The old man told us that he would never permit such barbarity, and, on the other hand, often sent his son and servants with a boat to assist the struggling creatures from their peril. This operation we actually saw in course of being performed on that and subsequent days. Very many animals were liberated. Those that were caught in false places and quicksands too deep and dangerous to get at, were shot, to deliver them from their horrid sufferings.

Another Boer gentleman, Mr de Jager, living at the head of Eland's Spruit, O.F.S., has also been known by the author to exhibit constantly all the better and more humane attributes of a real sportsman. He never permitted, encouraged, or took part in skin-hunting; but of course had no scruple in knocking over whatever was necessary for his table. The game, however, seem doomed to perish. The blue wederbeest went first, his black congener followed. The blesbuck are thinning out rapidly; and it is to be feared that in a few years sport will be restricted to places which are nearly inaccessible, and which, from fever and other causes, will be uninhabitable for Europeans during the greater part of the year.
I have been repeatedly asked if any of these animals are dangerous when wounded. All of them, except the smaller and more timid antelopes are so, if ridden down and approached too nearly. A companion told me once, that if I separated any one welderbeest from the crowd, and raced him over the flat, he would probably tumble down dead from utter fright. I had a good and perfectly safe horse, of much more than average speed, and next day turned out from the mob, and pursued what I thought to be three pretty fat animals. We tore away for a considerable distance up the wind before any of them showed signs of exhaustion. I was carrying, in addition to the rifle, a big-bore revolver—Adams's pattern, old style—which I determined to try on them at short range. I overhauled two, nearly together, and fired at them quite close, as my horse sped past. One tumbled in his tracks, the other swerved out to the right, where, believing he was wounded, I calculated my comrades would pick him up. The third, a bull, now thoroughly alarmed by the shooting behind him, rushed on over the slopes more furiously than ever. Putting the revolver back, and now thoroughly warmed up, I made up my mind to race him down. This was comparatively easy. Another spurt brought me within a dozen yards of him, when, to my utter astonishment, with a flop he tumbled apparently lifeless on the ground. So quickly was this done, that I was very nearly thrown by my horse springing suddenly over an ant-heap to the left, that he might not put his feet on the fallen welderbeest. I then dismounted, threw down the reins to let the horse stand and feed, and leisurely approached my victim, who, to my utter astonishment, when I was within seven feet of him, got up on all-fours in a dazed and staggered-looking manner, and began to stamp and dance with his front feet and head in a discomforting way. A gnu after death is a comparatively tame-looking animal; but alive, wild with terror, and on the flats within a couple of feet of you, he seems to be ugly and vicious-looking. We are all more or less fond of approbation, and I will own that, at the moment, I felt even flattered by the look of boundless astonishment with which "Aurelius," the horse, regarded our movements. This did not last long; the welderbeest
converted his pawings into attack: but the bullet from my rifle, passing clean through his body from throat to tail, brought his most unseemly capers to an end. I hastily tied the ends of the grass together over his body, and started back for the one that I conceived I had killed with the revolver-shots. This was lying dead enough where I had left it. There was, however, no blood visible; nor did subsequent search (I skinned the animal myself) disclose any bullet-mark whatever. When our party met again at the waggons, this unusual occurrence was discussed, and Rudolph, who knew I could shoot with a pistol, asked, "Are you sure the revolver was loaded?" It was promptly produced, when, on examination, five bullets were found in the bottom of the holster. Three chambers had been discharged, and two were still loaded, but with powder only. Of course I was laughed at; but I have since found this dropping of bullets during long gallops to be a common fault with all pistols, except those fitted with the patent metallic breech-loading cartridges, now so generally in use by all makers, and the Colt.

Buffaloes are of course dangerous. They have been seen, when wounded, to rush into narrow passages through the reeds and long grass around the marshes (vleys), and there await, in a most silent and treacherous manner, the advent of a pursuer. I have known several persons who had very lively half-hours with wounded game of this sort. Even a bushbuck will charge a hunter on foot if pressed too closely when wounded; but the great danger of the hunting-veld consists in the constant falls to which even the best riders are exposed in broken ground. The African soil is everywhere burrowed out in holes of great depth, made by anteaters and other digging animals, and these cause endless mishaps, even to careful and experienced men on well-trained animals.

Snakes, too, constitute a source of unpleasant excitement. They are usually timid and retiring creatures, but often retire into wrong places. I have seen a man who lay down for a few moments, rise up to find a snake inside his shirt—an anything but agreeable incident.

At horse-guard, after the peace of 1877, it was customary
for the men to lie about and read, there being no reasonable danger of theft or attack; it was merely their duty to mount occasionally and ride around the troop to keep it together and prevent animals from straying. Two troopers, Boult and Cyrus, were thus employed one very warm day, and had ensconced themselves under a big tree, one to read and the other to sleep, when, after a quarter of an hour, Boult, the reader, on turning to call his chum, saw him making dumb motions to him to approach cautiously. This he did, when the recumbent warrior, who looked dreadfully frightened, communicated to him, in a hoarse whisper, that "a snake had got into his trousers and was coiled round his knee." He could see no way to escape without being bitten. Boult suggested that he should, with the flat of his sword-bayonet, smash the reptile by striking over his head, but outside the trousers. The head was on the man's knee, and the neck seemingly just above it. This was agreed to; and drawing the lithe and flexible weapon, Boult struck again and again, till Cyrus, yelling with pain, conceived the enemy to be at length lifeless. He was then assisted to his feet, and his trousers carefully and quickly slit up, when out dropped a truss he had been wearing, but which had slipped during his slumbers and caused the scare. He suffered, however, nearly as much as if he had been bitten, from fright and the terrible sword-blows, which, even when given with the flat, may be seriously injurious to places where bones abound.

The worst of all snakes is, as I believe I have said elsewhere, the "imamba;" but there are smaller and not less vicious creatures. The horned adder—a rather rare variety—is one of the worst of these pests. His most usual lurking-place is at some windy turn, on road or path, where the sand, constantly driving against his body, at length covers him up, leaving but his little horned head visible. Passing animals occasionally suffer, as well as men who will prefer bare to booted feet. It will hardly be credited that I have met men—Europeans—who, in desert places, actually preferred walking without trousers, carrying that necessary garment as a bundle. This they excused by saying that nakedness kept the legs cleaner and cooler—a fact I should have doubted
till I found that, in hot countries, the natural perspiration becomes clotted with sand and dust, and especially when wearing the trousers. The best costume, however, for African work is a woollen shirt and breeches (with socks) ending in light gaiters, and firm, strongly-made Blucher boots, of soft, good material.

Wolves are in some places inconvenient neighbours; and wild dogs are dangerous when met in troops, being, I believe, the only African animal that wilfully and unnecessarily seeks an encounter with man.

I once witnessed with my own eyes an instance of calculated courage on the part of a tiger-wolf which is worth recording. We were two Europeans and seven Kafirs in a waggon, bound through the plains of Kopje Alleen (lonely hill) to the Diamond Fields. The veld abounded in game, and we had three carcasses by the waggon, killed, to be made into "biltong" (jerked meat) to feed our servants with on the journey and at the diggings. In those days men were in no hurry to get rich; and the saving of a five-pound note, by bringing with us a large supply of good food for our Kafirs, was of much more importance than a week's time. Two of the antelopes were tied up by the heels across the end of the waggon, and high above the ground. The meat of the other, already separated from the bones, was laid along the beam and iron-work (long-waggon) stretching fore and aft under the flooring of the vehicle. As our Kafirs would sleep under the shelter of the waggon, it was not considered possible for anything to meddle with the cut flesh thus stowed, wrapped in the skin immediately over their heads.

Early in the night we heard the moaning of wolves, mingled with the discordant and utterly unearthly uproariousness of the jackals. We had two large dogs with us, but at this time they never whimpered. At about two o'clock, however, when the moon rose, the dogs gave tongue, barking most furiously at some animal which they were pretending to have driven away. "It is a large wolf, certainly," said Andries; so we got out at our respective ends of the waggon, and, of course, gun in hand; when what was our astonishment to discover that the meat in the skin had been eaten
up, or so mauled as to be rendered useless; while the hide itself had been dragged several feet from the waggon. Now all this must have taken the wolf some time to do; and to get at the meat at all, he must have actually stood on the backs or breasts of our sleeping servants. The dogs had evidently been afraid of the wolf, or wolves, and dared not bark at their or his approach. Our full-bellied Kafirs must have slept utterly undisturbed during the whole performance. After that we always put the meat a little higher up.

Men should always bring with them plenty of shot, or well-made cartridges, for bird-shooting, as they will often find reaches of country where they will get nothing better to eat. Guinea-fowls, large bush-pigeons, and the like, are to be found nearly everywhere in the thorn-country; and even ring-doves are not to be despised. South-African water-fowl are, in my opinion, poor eating; but the so-called pheasant (Pternises Swainsonii), quails, partridges, sand-grouse, and small francolins, are to be commonly met with in the grass- veld. Cranes are occasionally eaten, and when baked are especially good. The crested crane, called "mayhem," should, however, never be shot; it is a snake-killer.

The greatest care should be taken in the selection of wild nuts and fruits, some of which are poisonous. Four young men, all Africanders, nearly lost their lives in the Speckboom thornveld from neglect in this particular. They found a large spreading tree, loaded with nuts of nice appearance, and pleasant to the taste. These they fed on, but were almost immediately seized with frightful thirst, closely followed by both stomach and bowel disorders of a violent kind. The vomiting and purging, with the thirst, soon reduced them to a state of utter weakness. They became unable even to mount their horses, and returned to the fort many hours afterwards, crawling along the ground, with their clothes hanging about them in disorder, and themselves in a state of most miserable pain and depression. A patrol had, I believe, to be sent to recover their horses; their rifles they brought home slung to their shoulders. The doctor treated them as if for croton-oil poisoning. One of them suffered for many weeks, and perhaps may never per-
manently recover. For the purpose of avoiding such accidents—if for this alone—a mounted native should always accompany a properly constructed party.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark that under no circumstances whatever should a European drink any refreshment procurable at native kraals, until it is first not only tasted but swallowed in fair quantities by the seller or giver. This custom is so common, that I do not think I have ever seen Kafir beer presented to a white man without being previously tasted as described, by one of the kraal, who, as a rule, kneels down for that purpose.

Travellers will at first have a natural dread of tarantulas, scorpions, and the smaller pests common to all warm countries. I do not like these creatures, but in justice to them I must say that, in ten years, I have heard but of one instance of a person being stung, even by the larger and more venomous of them. In this case the man was undressed, and sat upon a flat stone, from under which he must have disturbed the assailant. Considerable swelling and pain were the result; but the place was scratched with the point of a knife, and an application of the blue stuff used by women to colour clothes, followed by a poultice of tobacco-leaves wet with hot brandy, speedily removed all ill effects. There is, however, a biting house-spider, smooth, dark-coloured, and with thick black legs, which seems to take a fancy to special individuals, utterly neglecting others—a trait which I have noticed also among mosquitoes. The wound presents the appearance of two small punctures, surrounded by a hard white swelling, that will only yield to time and long bathing, or the patient application of very strong vinegar and brandy, which is best secured through the medium of a poultice. Ticks and bush-lice of all sorts are of course to be met with. For the removal of these, fat, oil, and some kinds of ointment, will be found useful.

Travelling in the winter in Africa is an eminently healthy occupation. In some places it has its inconveniences, including cold, want of food for cattle, scarcity of forage for horses, and sometimes even of water; but I have never known sickness to be the result of exposure, so long as men were properly clothed, even on the coldest and highest of the African
plateaux. On the other hand, I have known broken-down drunkards, and men whose constitutions were wrecked with every kind of dissipation, rapidly set up and pulled together by travel, even of the roughest sort, in the winter or healthy season. It must be remembered that winter, and winter only, is in South Africa everywhere healthy for men and horses.

With regard to these latter animals, I shall now venture to give a few useful hints, which I hope will serve somebody as well as they have served me. Horses that have never been shod, if used to Kafirland or coming from very mountainous districts—unless broken down about the feet, when they are useless—should never see the blacksmith; but animals from the flat must have their feet nicely prepared, and be thoroughly well shod by a reliable hand before being taken north or east of the Lydenberg district. If a horse is tender-footed, and inclined to shrink from stony places and sharp-pointed gravel, he is practically useless. After the feet, the mouth is of most importance. Nearly all the African horses I have seen are subject to an inflammation of the palate, causing the lower bars to grow down over the teeth, by which the animal is prevented from masticating hard food, and from crushing and grinding maize or mealies especially. This will be at once detected by his dribbling his corn about in all directions instead of swallowing it after he has taken a sufficient quantity into his mouth. This is called "lampers" or the "lampreys," and is only to be cured by the overgrowth being carefully burned out by a red-hot iron. This inflicts no pain upon the horse—that is to say, unless it is carried too far. Some people cut and slash the projecting bars with a knife or lancet. The irritation is just as great as if burning were resorted to, but the relief is not permanent. This whole matter may seem trivial, but if it is not attended to a horse will get off his feed, rejecting even the harder natural grasses, and will speedily lose strength and courage. The South African horse does not look much, but he is a rare good one to go; and if kindly treated, is more intelligent and affectionate than that of any other country. I have seen ponies that became as keen and expert hunters as dogs
might, stopping of their own accord when the master should fire, remaining apparently breathless, and as immovable as if carved out of marble, and then when the shot rang out keeping their eyes fixed on the game and actually hunting it themselves. A horse kindly treated, used to shooting, and trained to stand, will wait hour after hour, feeding gently all round him without ever treading on his bridle-reins, or rolling so as to crush the saddle. They are liable, however, when out of work and running on grass only, to roam long distances, and even sometimes to make journeys on their own account to favourite farms that seem to live in their remembrance.

The African horse is also vigilant, not only being a good night-sentry, but even in day-time warning his rider of unusual and suspicious sounds, and the approach of animals, and even human beings. Horses with what the Dutch call "slaap" or drooping ears, are always the best in this respect; and when otherwise sound, well-proportioned, and active, seem to me to be superior to other horses.

Both my horses Beaufort and Peter were of this sort; and I do not think that, riding either of them, it would be possible for me to fall into a Kafir ambush, as their senses of sight, smell, and hearing were so acute, that they could detect, and often did warn me of the presence of the unsavoury nigger in some rocky, bush-grown gully, when it was impossible for me to know otherwise of his propinquity. Real sportsmen, I am sure, do not require these hints to induce them to make friends with the beasts that carry them. I know plenty of men in Africa who have not carried a whip for years, although constantly riding journeys that would make even some pretty decent travellers wonder at their audacity.

A stranger must never despise an African horse or pony because he does not come fully up to his notions of beauty. A man with a good eye for clean limbs and general perfection, will often find thoroughly good animals under the most unsightly skins. A diamond-buyer named Watkins has a priceless pony at Kimberley, which he can back to trot against time, or nearly any other horse in the place, with the most perfect confidence of winning the money, and
which he picked up for £3 on the Jacobsdal road. The locally celebrated Natal horse "Loiterer" was, not long ago, in a most miserable condition, in the possession of an up-country Kafr; and I once knew the horriest and smartest fellow in the country to be taken in by a ragged ugly mulish beast thirteen hands high, for which he would not have readily parted with a five-pound note.

This man, a Mr N——, had a race-horse for sale known by the great name of "Sompseu" (Zulu for Shepstone). He wanted a very high price, and resolved, as good stallions were scarce among the Basutos, to make his money out of Molappo, one of the greatest chiefs of that horse-breeding nation. Mr N—— accordingly went with his racer, a noble-looking animal of good English blood, to the Kafr captain's village, situated about a mile and a half from the Caledon River. He asked 100 head of cattle, or perhaps 150 head, I forget which, for "Sompseu." Molappo said, "Yes; but we must try him. When he is rested I shall run one of my horses against him. The course will be from the river below to my house." Mr N—— knew his horse to be a thoroughly good one, but still, like a sensible jockey, he took precautions which I am afraid are not unusual amongst persons whose horses must win. When, however, the time for the trial actually arrived, he found the Kafr chieftain was too smart for him. Molappo said, "I will not run my best horse against yours, which has come a long journey and is tired: there are some common horses in the kraal yonder; whichever, on the gate being opened, runs about and plays the most when he sees the grass before him, will be good enough to beat your Natal race-horse." Mr N—— could not, of course, object to this, as the chief had not named his horse, but only said he would run a horse. When the kraal-gate was thrown open, a number of unsightly ponies came out, the freshest of which (uglier by degrees than any of the rest) was at once caught and saddled. He was backed by a villainous-looking Kafr of about 180 lb. weight, while "Sompseu" had on his back a professional rider, a nice active young lad, who has since won many races. In twenty minutes Mr N—— knew his fate; his horse was shamefully distanced by
the ugly Kafir "moke," which he afterwards learned was, though ragged and uncared for, of far the best blood in Basutoland. _Verbum sap._

It may be asked, "Can the eastern district hunting be got at from the east coast itself?" As the adoption of this route would avoid the tedious, long land journeys forced on travellers _via_ Natal and Pretoria, or those still longer ones where the stranger disembarks at Port Elizabeth or Cape Town, I shall answer the query fully. In the season—that is to say, June, July, and August, with perhaps the first twenty-six days in September—a party, or twenty parties, unencumbered with useless luggage, such as dress-clothes, and similar _impedimenta_, might make a very pleasant excursion by landing at "Lorenzo Marques," where they could obtain the assistance of native porters at a reasonable rate—say fifteen shillings for every 75 lb. weight of luggage for a hundred and twenty miles. They should then, in as light marching-order as possible, journey inwards and upwards across the "Fly," over the Lobombo to Pretorius Kop or Spits Kop, where they would be sure to find other Europeans and a storekeeper or two. This journey on foot is often made—but, be it remembered, only in the winter time, during which it is done by the shopkeepers, spirit-dealers, and, I am afraid, gunpowder-smugglers of the Gold Fields, as well as by diggers making their way, by this shortest and cheapest route, out of the country. Arrived in the Transvaal, hunters can go down to Lydenberg, where they will have no difficulty in procuring horses, waggons, and everything necessary for their tour, and where they will meet plenty of good men capable of giving them every needful help and information. I think that, notwithstanding the native disturbances, this route can always be travelled with perfect safety from hostile Kafirs. This is, I am sure, Colonel Warren's experience. He made the journey on foot, as I think is elsewhere mentioned, from Lydenberg to the sea in the winter of 1877.

No doubt strangers will hear many unaccountable sounds in the "bush;" but practically there is little danger except of a scare from the African mocking-bird—a little creature which I have never seen in captivity, but which often tor-
mented me and others during the Secocoeni worry. I don’t think it ever sleeps, nor could the filibusters imagine how it amused itself before the war; but I certainly know what it had learned by the end of it.

The Kafir war-trumpet is formed of a long horn, having the large end open, and the inside carefully cleaned out and hollowed, as I should imagine, through almost its entire length. On one side, near the opening at the thick end, is an oblong hole, to which the mouth is applied, when, by puffing and humouring with the lips, a hollow sound, half hoot and half whistle—not unlike the blowing of an interrupted fog-horn—is produced. This sound can be heard at enormous distances amongst the woods and mountains, and is the almost certain herald of an alarmed spy-party or a fight. The mocking-bird made it his particular business to imitate, with wonderful accuracy, this discomforting signal; and I do not think we ever made a patrol, either by day or night—if its course lay through ravines, deep glens, or dark and gloomy passes—that the little wretch did not hoo! hoo! hoo! hoo! with most disquieting accuracy, and to our bewilderment, until, the column halting, the sound would suddenly cease, when we would know it did not proceed from any alarmed enemy. When firing, however, had taken place, it assumed a different note, the “wheep,” “ping,” and “ming” of the bullet being now adopted. I have seen thoroughly experienced men start at the sudden and wonderfully accurate imitation of the leaden messenger’s little song in their ears. Now, as Kafir bullets are not always carefully made—being sometimes pebbles coated with lead, and at other times projectiles from every variety and shape of gun that has been invented within the last forty years—it can be imagined what a varying concert they produce; but the little mocking-bird had mastered every difficulty, from the whizzing rush of the elephant-ball (more than a quarter of a pound weight) to the chirrup of the Winchester pellet, which hardly exceeds half an ounce.

I will conclude my few remarks upon sporting by a little general advice. Bring as much food, in the way of mealies for the use of the horses, as your waggon can reasonably carry; never strike a Kafir with your hand, or you will
invariably cripple yourself for days; and never encumber yourself with anything excepting your arms and necessary blankets, clothes, and food. Be self-dependent. The principal difficulties to be met with in South African travel are those forced on a man when he has to avail himself of the accommodation offered by public conveyances and the so-called hotels of the country. A man can hardly travel by the former with any reasonable expectation of avoiding the latter. Some works on South Africa consist, to much too great an extent, of maundering descriptions of inspannings and outspannings, little treks and big treks, hotels with good accommodation, hotels with indifferent accommodation, and utterly unaccommodating hotels. This style of thing I shall not inflict upon my reader.

It should be remembered that shopkeepers and hotelkeepers are not as a rule Dutchmen, and whatever the shortcomings of this class, the Boers, who are the people of the country, certainly cannot be held responsible for them; but no matter who keeps a hotel, the traveller, unless riding alone or doing the country by post-cart, will be a singularly improvident person who leaves himself entirely dependent upon others for any accommodation he may want. This is why I especially advise strangers to provide themselves with the waggon and oxen. A man's waggon is his home, and during the winter season, when it rarely rains, he should require no other. I know most pretentious places whose proprietors rave nightly and daily about the dirty habits of their neighbours the Boers, which, on inspection, will turn out not only to be filthy, but actually unhealthy from dirt. There is one hotel, the principal (I had almost said the only) house of accommodation in a capital town in South Africa, which is kept, by an Englishman and his English wife, in such a way as would in any other country bring upon them legal punishment. I will describe the bedrooms; that ought to be sufficient. They are situated in the centre of an extensive yard, and consist of a row of brick cells far too low and too badly ventilated for stables. These rooms are 12 feet by 10, are only 8 feet high in front, and are covered with corrugated iron. In each of these wretched holes are placed two beds, two washing-stands, one chair,
and one table, filling up the entire space. The bottoms of the doors are on a level with the yard, and the windows are mere holes, with, I think, four squares of glass in each. In summer these terrible single-brick, iron-roofed ovens are simply maddening. I have known the heat in them to exceed 160° at night, and their fourteen or eighteen occupants were provided with only one tub for their joint use—a circumstance suggestive of every kind of discomfort. On the iron roof pigeons take morning walks, feeding on mealies, rattling, tearing, and scraping, cooing and fluttering, to the utter banishment of sleep.

In that part of the yard on which the doors opened, there were, and of course are, two stables and the kitchen, which, being only 9 feet by 5, compelled most of the work to be done in the yard by eight or nine blacks, some of whom were coolies and raw Kafirs, who filled the air constantly with yells, curses, profanity, and the sounds of fight. Behind the terrible row of sleeping-rooms was, and still is, actually joined on to them, with its fatal stench penetrating under all their roofs, an unfinished, half-opened, untrapped water-closet, a fruitful source of the most horrible odours conceivable. In the back-yard, which is undrained, is a small open sewer, leading from a filthy and unclean hen-house, crowded with birds. On a summer evening the smell from the whole concern is noticeable for 150 yards in every direction. £3, 10s. per week is charged for accommodation at this delicious establishment. I need not say where it is. The owner—his wife, otherwise a most excellent woman and good hostess—with all the boarders, frequenters, and friends of the establishment, will recognise the sketch at a glance.

If a man wants to travel in comfort, he must procure the means of cooking quickly, and under almost any conceivable circumstances of damp fuel. The plan I have found best may suit others. Get a common iron tar or oil drum, empty; put a grating through it, so that when it is standing on one end the grating will be a little below its middle. Below this, cut in the side of the drum a blast-hole about one-third the circumference, and at most three inches high. The bottom is left in, but the top is knocked out. With the smallest bit of dry grass, paper, or rag on the grating, a fire can be set
going even with comparatively wet wood; and if the blast-hole is turned towards the wind, that fire can be kept up easily. If a couple of strips of thin hoop-iron are twisted so as to sit on this machine, they will support a kettle or a pot, and allow plenty of room for the escape of smoke and flame, and the continuation of the fire-feeding process. This twoshilling stove can be carried hung on to the waggon, on one of the side hooks, and has been found of the greatest value, as it cooks quickly, and by its use the danger of grass-fires may be avoided. These fires are serious things. I have repeatedly known frightful accidents occur through them—many families ruined, and even many persons burned to death. Indeed I had once myself, with a party of men, a very narrow escape from, if not death, serious loss.

We had a cannon drawn by bullocks, but which, from the smallness of its wheels, could not do over two and a half miles an hour; and along with it some shells, thirty-six powder-charges for the gun, and a couple of rockets. We were making our way through high grass and scrubby bush, in a place where there was no road and never had been one. We had no water, and there was none near us. Suddenly, from twenty different directions came fire; and before ten minutes had elapsed, on every side the flames—sixteen and twenty feet in height where they had caught the bushes, but everywhere as high as a man—came rushing on us. With very great exertion, with knives and swords, a little clear place was made for the gun. We then set fire all round its outside edge, and so close was the shave, that we had to follow it almost the instant it was lighted, our boots and the hoofs of our horses burning and throwing up a frizzling smell for the moment. The new burn—that is, our clearing—was not thirty paces wide when it met the outer circle of flame, charging us in all directions. The rushing and roaring sound made by the furious fire can hardly be conceived. I do not think we could ever have forced our horses through it; and but for the speed with which we set up fire to fight fire, we must certainly have lost the bullocks, gunpowder, and shells, if not the gun. As it was, the shirts of the gunners, and the hair of both horses and men, were scorched and shrivelled. We had then eight miles to march over the
ash-covered and still smouldering desert before we reached water; and short as was the distance, several of the men fell down. Relief-parties of mounted men with water had to be sent a couple of hours later to bring them in. Travelers will please remember that grass-fires are so dangerous, that nothing can excuse any want of caution by which they are occasioned.

I have often heard men ask, “Is there not a great danger of cattle and horses being stolen?” To this I would answer there is not, but both may stray if they are neglected. Bullocks never stray while they are empty; but many of them, the moment they are fed full, begin to step further and further in search of sweeter morsels: the rest follow the leaders, who are soon out of sight, and unless turned, will undoubtedly get away, and perhaps travel to the very place where they were reared, no matter how distant it be. This can only be provided against by vigilance, and by checking all such tendencies at the outset. If it is necessary for any cause to let bullocks feed at night, they must be watched; and the moment they begin to scatter, wander, or any of them show signs of being full and satisfied by lying down, all must be driven to, and carefully tied up in, their usual places along the waggon-chain, where they will sleep just as well and much more securely than elsewhere. Horses and cattle are also likely to stray in cold winds and chilly rainy weather. Sometimes they go for shelter; but I have known them to run for days against the wind, apparently without any cause. This accident originates in the carelessness of the herd, who, being human, and feeling the cold very much, curls himself up somewhere out of the rain and wind, frequently sleeping, to the utter neglect of his trust. It is well to keep one horse fastened up to the waggon in bad weather. I have once known a very alarming incident to occur from cattle being neglected by the herds. We were lying, in company with the waggon of Mr Spencer Drake, in mid-winter 1870, near the Rhenoster Spruit. The bullocks, forty-eight in number, got mixed with the “wild” in a strong wind, and set to work, in company with the whole troop of game, to run as hard as they could straight away from us into the wind’s eye. Some of the horses got away
at the same time, and it finally cost four men a chase of eight hours before the fugitive animals were recaptured and driven home.

Another thing I will here mention which is too much neglected. Animals should not be under the saddle or in the yoke at sun-up unless they have previously had a full night's rest. Oxen especially fret and become miserable when this is the case. If you must travel at night, outspan in the earliest dawn. The beasts will sleep standing about wherever the sun catches them, and this morning rest in the first warmth of the day seems to make up to them for a whole night's toil. Deprived of this, however, they speedily become weary, and show the effects of their labour more than inexperienced people would think possible.
CHAPTER XIII.

BLUNDERING.


Most Englishmen gather their information, such as it is, about the colonies from books and newspapers. Trade books, as a rule, are not made by workers and thinkers, but by professional public writers, who, with pens and ink, and a tolerable amount of conceit in their own powers, have taken to rushing round continents, and across states and countries, to jot down their impressions for the benefit, not of the public, but of their own pockets. Few of these persons' books will be valued by the next generation. At best they are chroniclers of chit-chat, and may succeed in fairly writing down the impression made upon their own minds by the prejudiced small-talk of the circles to which their limited knowledge of the languages and customs of the countries they visit, compels them to confine their garrulous curiosity. Newspapers are sometimes still worse teachers. A few, written presumably for colonies only, are entirely unworthy of respect, even as mere chronicles of fact.

Witness the extraordinary error into which 'The Colonies' (a weekly summary published in London) rushed the other day, in the course of an essay on currency, in which it said that great inconvenience was occasioned to African trade by the existing confusion of Dutch and English money, both of which it supposed to be in circulation. South Africans, though of course not thinking it worth their while to correct every palpable and impertinent absurdity written about
them and their affairs by the posture-makers of the English press, yet often feel hurt and annoyed at the ready acceptance which every misrepresentation set afloat concerning them meets with. Now it is not a fact that the circulation of Dutch money leads to confusion in South Africa, either in the British dominions or elsewhere. More than twenty colonists, now in London—men who have dwelt in every part of South Africa, from Cape Town to the Zambesi—inform me that they have never, during their years of travel through the countries in question, seen Dutch coin anywhere in use. Some who have been over twenty years in the country have pointed out to me that a discrepancy exists between the American and African interpretations of the word dollar. This is the case. In Africa 1s. 6d. is spoken of as a dollar, yet there is no such coin as a dollar in circulation, and the term is only used as a sort of collateral to the ordinary English expression of value; as, for example, if I were engaged with a Dutchman in the purchase of a piece of land, costing, say, £7, 10s. the acre, I would say to him, "It cost me £7, 10s."—"a hundred rix-dollars the acre." Yet there is no such thing as a rix-dollar in circulation, no more than there is any other Dutch or foreign coin; and therefore the remarks of 'The Colonies,' repeated in the 'Times' and other admirable and powerful journals, with reference to the steps to be taken to bring about a uniformity of coinage, were, as regards South Africa, utterly uncalled for.

Another paper, calling itself 'The Colonial Mail,' of 9th May last, after describing what is conceived to be the value of a discovery whereby the bread-fruit tree will be utilised as cattle food, congratulated its Cape Colony and South African readers upon the immense value to them of its new "fattener,"—utterly regardless of the fact that the tree in question does not grow in any one of her Majesty's South African colonies, nor within many miles of them.

I could go on for ever quoting examples of the reckless ignorance displayed by the press in handling colonial questions. I think, however, it will be more interesting to turn from the newspaper men to teachers supposed to be of a higher class, and whose works are expected to attain a de-