

admitted ourselves without ceremony, and made good our quarters for the night. I now saw clearly, how unpleasant, if not impracticable, it would have been for me to travel alone through such a country, deserted at this season by the few civilized inhabitants who occupy it, and on whose hospitality and assistance I must have been in a great measure dependent. My good fortune in reaching Graaff-Reinet, just in time to accompany Captain Stockenstrom was, therefore, most satisfactory. In the evening it blew a storm attended with sleet and rain.

4.—Found another Bushman family at our *outspan*, apparently not so well supplied with food as the one we last met.

This day at noon, passed Plettenberg's Baaken, a stone erected by the Dutch governor of that name to mark the limits of the Colony in this direction. But this boundary has long been passed over. Near to this spot resided the Veld-Cornet Vanderwalt, whose house, or rather hut, we reached at two o'clock. This being the extent of Captain Stockenstrom's excursion for the present, we outspanned for the night.

We had hitherto been travelling on the east side of the Zeekoë River, but here we crossed. It was still an inconsiderable stream, but standing here and there in large pools, or as the colonists call them, *Zeekoe-gats*, deep enough to float a man-of-war. About thirty-five miles below this place it falls into the *Cradock*, which is one of the principal branches of the Gariep. The confluence of the *Cradock* with the latter is about one hundred miles farther down.

At Vanderwalt's we found a number of the *Sneeuwberg boors*, who retire to this quarter during the winter season. Some were also assembled here to accompany the Landdrost on the surveys he was going upon; and many others to make applications for grants of the places they already occupy.

It is the practice of the boors here, when one of them wants a farm, to proceed beyond the nominal boundary of the Colony, and take possession of the choicest situation he can find in the Bushman country. This they notify to the landdrost, forwarding, at the same time, a memorial through him to the governor, praying for a grant of the

farm. This memorial is remitted to the landdrost to be reported upon, &c. and in the mean time the boor is generally allowed to retain the occupation under the title of a "request place." The great ambition which the African colonists have to see all their children settled upon "full places," that is, farms of 6000 English acres in extent, is very detrimental to the improvement of the Colony; inducing the population to spread itself out much beyond its competent means of occupation, and habituating them to a lazy, wandering, nomade life,—content to subsist on mere animal food, rather than by regular industry to earn a comfortable livelihood as mechanics. At the same time it is also true, that in this quarter of the Colony but few of the large farms could be with any advantage subdivided, the country being so arid, and water so scarce, that 6000, or even 10,000 acres of land are frequently not supplied with water more than sufficient for one family; and large tracts of good pasture (or what is called good in South Africa) are often entirely useless from the total want of water in their vicinity.

The want of timber is also a great drawback to

the settlers here. I had not seen a tree, nor even a bush, large enough to supply a walking-stick, since we left the banks of the Sunday River, near Graaff-Reinet. For fuel the inhabitants are forced to use dried cow-dung. Timber, for building and other purposes, they procure with much labour, and of indifferent quality, from the Craddock River, about forty miles distant. In consequence of this, and of the wild and wandering life which most of them lead, their dwellings are extremely small, and chiefly occupied by their valuables, the people themselves passing most of their time in the open air. Many are even destitute of a hut, and live entirely in their waggons. The climate favours this sort of life, being very dry and salubrious, and considerably milder than in the mountains. No rains fall except in the summer months, and these not regular, but proceeding from passing thunder-clouds. Enough falls, however, to nourish the hardy pasturage with which the country is covered; and this pasturage is salubrious and capable of supporting a great quantity of stock. Some boors here, living in the rude way I have described, possess 10,000

sheep and goats, and 1500 or 2000 head of cattle. Others are comparatively poor, and are anxious to spare their scanty flocks by hunting the wild game for subsistence for their families and servants; the latter not unfrequently eating the flesh of the quagha or wild ass. These boors are a very hospitable, but at the same time a boisterous and unpolished class of people. The men are tall and athletic; the women also are usually of a goodly size, and on the whole rather good-looking.

This morning I was busied with preparations to prosecute my journey alone into the wilderness. Captain Stockenstrom, finding me determined to proceed farther North, pressed me with the most urgent kindness to accept of his waggon and two Hottentots, as far as the ford in the Cradock River, two days journey from this place; and at the same time ordered the Veld-Cornet Westhuizen to accompany me thither with four good horses, with which, and one Hottentot, I was to launch myself into the wilds. The friendly solicitude of Captain Stockenstrom to facilitate my journey evinced a degree of kindness, which, on so brief an acquaintance, I was quite unprepared

to expect, and which I shall ever remember with gratitude. He provided me, moreover, with a pass, and an official order addressed to all the Veld-Cornets and other colonists of his extensive district, to provide me with horses, guides, and every other assistance which I might require on my return into the Colony by a different route.

5.—At sunrise I bade adieu to Captain S. and my two other agreeable and obliging fellow-travellers, and set off in the eight-horse carriage, attended by the cavalcade of two boors, two Hottentots, and the four led horses for my future use.

The country preserved the same monotonous aspect, relieved only by the appearance of the wild animals scattered over its surface. As we proceeded, however, the soil looked more fertile, and was covered with fine grass; and the detached hills, diminished in size and number, having the odd and regular appearance of hay-ricks scattered over a level meadow.

In two hours we passed Biscuit-Fonteyn, and in two hours more Hamel-Fonteyn (Wether Fountain). At both these places I found a num-

ber of boors, from the Sneeuwberg, with their families and flocks. They were very anxious to know who and what I was, and whither I was bound. On learning that I was going to cross the Great River and the Bushman Country with a single Hottentot, they expressed their astonishment, and their apprehensions that I should either be destroyed by the Bushmen or devoured by the lions. Some of them urgently entreated me to give up thoughts of it and turn back ; but having fully made up my mind on the subject, I was not much moved by such representations. I had, however, had some hopes, previously, of persuading a boor or two to accompany me ; but such expectations were soon abandoned, when I came to talk with them, and found them to be so timorous and unenterprising.

I was told here that a lion had just killed an ox, and been shot in the act. It is the habit of the lion, it seems, when he kills a large animal, to spring upon it, and, seizing the throat with his terrible fangs, to press the body down with his paws till his victim expires. The moment he seizes his prey the lion closes his eyes, and never

opens them again until life is extinct. The Hot-tentots are aware of this; and on the present occasion, one of the herdsmen ran to the spot with his gun, and fired at the lion within a few yards distance, but from the agitation of his nerves entirely missed him. The lion, however, did not even deign to notice the report of the gun, but kept fast hold of his prey. The Hot-tentot reloaded, fired a second time, and missed; reloaded again, and shot him through the head. This fact, being well authenticated, seemed to me curious and worthy of being mentioned.

At noon left Hamel-Fonteyn, and after five hours hard driving we reached Rhinoster-Fonteyn (Rhinoceros Fountain), where we found a small hut occupied by boors, the last wanderers from the Colony, with their numerous flocks. The climate here was much warmer, and the country more expanded and pleasing, than any part I had yet seen on our route from Graaff-Reinet.

The principal boor residing here was named Vanderwalt. He had been wounded about thirty years ago by a Bushman's arrow, and although the poison had not been strong enough to prove

fatal, it had inflicted an incurable wound, which to this day gives the old man, now about eighty years of age, excruciating pain.

These farms lie so near the wild Bushmen that the inhabitants are all extremely watchful and well armed; guns, indeed, seemed almost the only furniture of their cabins.

Understanding that a *Kraal* or horde of Bushmen was close by, the inhabitants of which were on good terms, or partly in the service of the colonists, I set off with some of the boors to visit them. A set of beings in more miserable plight I could scarcely have conceived: they were nearly destitute of any sort of clothing, crouching together under a few thorn bushes, which formed but a poor defence from the chill night blast; nevertheless they seemed in excellent spirits, and instantly commenced begging tobacco, which they are immoderately fond of, and will do almost any thing to procure. They exhibited several feats to me, and gave me ocular proof of the accuracy of their aim, and the great distance to which they can shoot their slender but dangerous arrows.

These poor creatures subsist chiefly upon cer-

tain wild bulbs which grow in the plains, and also upon locusts, white ants, and other insects. The bulbs and ants they dig up by means of a hard pointed stick, with a piece of stone fixed on its head to give it sufficient impetus. Living on friendly terms with the boors, and doing little services occasionally, they also come in for the offals of the cattle killed for food, and of wild game which their patrons sometimes shoot for them. This miserable fare, with a supply of tobacco, and a few sheep-skins, satisfies all the wants of these degraded beings.

In the evening a small tent was pitched for me near the boor's little cabin. Four or five large fires were kindled near the kraals, partly to warm the slaves and Hottentots who slept around them in the open air, and partly to scare the beasts of prey from approaching the kraals. The flaming of these fires, the people moving round them, their wild laughter mingling with the lowing of the oxen, and the bleating of four or five thousand sheep, had altogether a striking effect.

In the course of the evening I learned that

one of the boor's wives had been safely delivered of a stout boy. In these affairs the South African females seem to require very little assistance or care. Medical aid is of course out of the question.

6.—Proceeded on my journey, and having now got beyond the remotest colonists, I soon passed several Bushman kraals, and saw numbers of Bushwomen on the plains digging up roots in the manner I have mentioned. This is all they have to subsist upon, except where now and then the men succeed in killing game with their poisoned arrows, or in destroying still more rarely the larger antelopes, or the hippopotamus, on the banks of the Cradock River, by pits dug in the ground, with a sharp stake fixed in them. Some of the women on the plains seemed to evade us, others approached to beg tobacco.

This day and the preceding, my course being across the wilds, where there was no beaten track, the motion of the waggon was very unpleasant, jolting over the grassy tufts and irregular ground ; and occasionally we ran no small risk of being

overset by the excavations of the great ant-eater, which were sometimes sufficiently large to admit a man and horse into them. Captain Stockenstrom mentioned to me that a friend of his once owed his life to one of these holes. He and Captain S. were hunting gnoos on the plains, and one having been wounded by a musket-ball, (in which condition these animals are very furious,) it gave chase to the gentleman, and was gaining fast upon him, when all at once he disappeared by tumbling into an ant-eater's hole which was concealed by long grass. There he lay for some time secure from the enraged animal, which, after searching for him in vain, scampered off in another direction; nor could Captain S., who was galloping up to his assistance, conceive what had become of him, until he saw, to his great satisfaction and amusement, his head cautiously emerging from the bowels of the earth.

About two o'clock we reached the bank of the Cradock River. It was at this place about 400 yards broad, and gliding down with a steady current. The banks were lined with fine willow-

trees, which hung gracefully bending over the stream; and altogether it was a magnificent and beautiful scene, and doubly impressive from the contrast presented by such a body of fresh water, to the parched and dreary deserts through which I had lately passed. I had some debate with the boors as to the practicability of fording it, of which they seemed doubtful, from its discoloured and swollen appearance. I was determined, however, to make the attempt, and after taking some refreshment I got ready, and mounted with my Hottentot, Frederick, he leading one spare horse, and I another. On entering the stream we found it was about four feet deep, and it continued nearly the same the whole way across—just low enough to allow the horses to keep their feet, running at the same time with considerable force. On nearing the opposite bank we found our horses put to their strength, owing to the heavy sand, or rather quicksand, with which the bottom was lined. However, by great exertion, they carried us safe through. Our escort on the southern side were watching us all the while with great anxiety,

and as soon as we were fairly through we gave them three cheers, which they cordially returned. They then turned back towards the Colony, and Frederick and I pursued our solitary way to the northward.



CHAPTER VI.

Deserted Griqua Hamlet.—Perils of the Wilderness.—Lions.
—Escape from Drowning.—Yellow River.—Korannas.

FREDERICK had been informed that a party of *Griquas* (or Hottentots of the mixed or bastard race) resided not far from the ford where we had just crossed; and I directed him to lead me to their Kraal,—being desirous of acquainting myself with the condition of this class of people, and willing besides to shelter ourselves in the

dwelling of human beings, however rude, rather than be exposed in the wilderness by night to the beasts of prey.

The country we had now entered upon was very different from the dry and naked deserts we had lately traversed. The magnificent windings of the Cradock were full in view ; and to the west and north-west an extensive and almost boundless landscape opened out, adorned with thickets, and enlivened with multitudes of large game. Turtle doves, wood-pigeons, eagles, and others of the feathered tribes, were likewise seen in great numbers. While contemplating these agreeable objects, we were speedily recalled to less pleasant reflections, by observing the fresh traces of lions and Bushmen,—neither of which, in present circumstances, we had any inclination to encounter.

At sunset we reached the expected station or hamlet, to which Mr. Campbell, the missionary traveller, has given the Scriptural name of *Ramah*, but were not a little disappointed to find it totally deserted, and only the miserable ruins of four or five huts left. Of the two best of these

we immediately took possession ; and having kindled a fire in one, we made it our kitchen and sleeping-room ; in the other we secured our horses, after having let them graze till it grew dark. Beside the latter, too, we kindled a large fire, to prevent the lions from carrying them off in the night.

Near the huts we found a fountain of excellent water. But another consideration now claimed our anxious attention:—it was still a long distance to Griqua Town, and I had brought no supply of provisions, having calculated upon meeting with Griqua or Koranna Kraals,* and on procuring from them flesh and milk. However, upon questioning the Hottentot, I found that he had been somewhat more provident than myself, having in his wallet a couple of small loaves and a sausage, which he had intended for this day's consumption. This slender supply we were now obliged to husband with care.

After supper we sat ruminating on our forlorn

* The Dutch word *Kraal*, as used in the Colony, has three different significations :—a string of beads, a cattle fold, and a native horde or encampment.

situation, and I found my guide already quite chopfallen : and not altogether without cause ; for it appeared that he was entirely ignorant of the road, and had depended upon the Griquas he expected to meet here, to direct him. He had indeed been at Griqua Town some years before with a missionary's waggon, but he had either now forgotten the road (track there was none), or pretended to have forgotten it, to induce me to return. He told me, moreover, that I had acted very imprudently in coming into this wilderness without more company. Though vexed by this awkward explanation in the midst of a desolate and unknown country, and somewhat irritated by his presumption in blaming my conduct, yet I saw the necessity of suppressing my feelings, lest I should lose him altogether : so I assumed a gay air, laughed at his apprehensions, and told him I would myself find the way by my map and compass, which I displayed to him. My assumed composure soon restored his confidence ; and, chatting pleasantly together, we heaped more fuel on the fires, and then laid ourselves down to sleep ; having previously inspected our guns, and put

them in proper trim in case we should have occasion to use them in the night. But, though somewhat disturbed by the wild animals assembling at the fountain to drink, we were left unmolested, and a little before day we turned out our horses to graze before we proceeded.

7.—At sunrise we left the desolate station of Ramah, and having now little dependence on my guide, I determined to steer our route towards Griqua Town, partly by the compass and partly by keeping near the course of the Cradock River, which I knew joined another large branch called the Yellow River, and that these had their confluence at no very great distance from Griqua Town. My previous intention had been to recross the Cradock about a day's journey further down, and then cross the united streams (which form the Orange River or Gariep) at Read's Drift, from whence the road leads straight to Griqua Town, Frederick's ignorance of the country now rendered a more intricate and circuitous route indispensable.

Soon after leaving Ramah, we again approached the river, at a place where there is a curious

rapid, occasioned by the whole body of water being compressed into a narrow defile between rocks. The eddies and whirlpools produced by the force of the stream, had formed cavities in the rocks resembling large cauldrons, in which were a number of round stones continually in motion; these cavities being in fact formed by the attrition of the stones, especially when the river is flooded, as it always is for several months during the summer.

The river soon afterwards taking an extensive sweep to the westward, I steered our course over a sandy plain, bushy in some places, but entirely destitute of water. Of this we soon felt the want, the weather being very warm; and before mid-day we became quite faint with heat and thirst. At noon we unsaddled on a rising ground, to refresh the horses; but there was no appearance of water, and scarcely a bush at this spot to shelter us from the scorching sun. The heat in the shade by the thermometer was nearly 80°. What a contrast to the chilly Sneeuwberg which I had so lately left! I was not able to eat my small morsel of food on account of thirst, although I had

not yet broken my fast. I had two bottles of brandy in my holsters, but I could only taste it, and would now most willingly have exchanged the whole for one glass of water.

In an hour we remounted, and proceeded on our course, over extensive plains, sprinkled with numerous herds of game—quaghas, elands, gnoos, koodoos, hartebeests, gemsboks, and smaller antelopes, the movements of which helped to relieve our lonely journey. The gnoo here was of a larger size, and apparently different from that on the other side of the Cradock, being of a dark blue colour, and having a black bushy tail, instead of a white one. I observed also two sorts of hartebeests.

As we travelled along, I observed my Hottentot continually looking out for the *spoor* (track) of human feet, being exceedingly anxious to get to some kraal before night: but the only tracks he could discover were those of the wild animals abovementioned, and of their pursuer, the lion. The footprints of the latter were so frequent and so fresh, that it was evident these tyrants of the desert were numerous and near to us. Frederick

also remarked to me, that wherever such numbers of the large game were to be seen, we might be certain lions were not far distant. The numerous skeletons of animals scattered over the plain, presented sufficient proofs of the justness of our apprehensions, and these were soon confirmed by ocular evidence. We were jogging pensively along, the Hottentot with two horses, about ten yards before me,—I following with the other two: Frederick was nodding on his saddle, having slept little, I believe, the preceding night. In this posture, happening to cast my eyes on one side, I beheld with consternation two monstrous lions reclining under a mimosa bush, within fifteen yards of our path. They were reclining lazily on the ground, with half-opened jaws showing their terrific fangs. I saw our danger, and was aware that no effort could save us if these savage beasts should be tempted to make a spring. I collected myself, therefore, and moved on in silence; while Frederick, without perceiving them, rode quietly past. I followed him exactly at the same pace, keeping my eyes fixed upon the glaring monsters, who remained perfectly still. When we had got

about seventy or eighty yards from them, I rode gently up to Frederick, and, desiring him to look over his shoulder, showed him the lions. But such a face of terror I never beheld, as he exhibited on perceiving the danger we had so narrowly escaped.* He was astonished, too, that he had not previously observed them, being, like most of his countrymen, very quick-sighted. He said, however, that I had acted very properly in not speaking nor evincing the least alarm while passing the lions; for, if I had, they would probably not have let us pass so quietly. Most likely, however, we owed our safety to their hunger being satiated,—for they appeared to have been just devouring some animal they had killed; a quagha,—as it seemed to me from the hurried glance I had in passing.

Redoubling our speed, in about an hour afterwards we discovered a fountain, where we and our horses quenched our raging thirst. Thus refreshed, we pushed on, and about four o'clock ob-

* The prefixed vignette is drawn from the recollection of this scene.

tained a distant view of the Cradock River, but remote from the course it was necessary for us to keep. We continued to observe numerous traces of lions, and began to look forward with some anxiety for a place of rest during the night. In passing down a valley, we came upon a chain of deep pits dug right across it, and adroitly concealed by reeds slightly strewed over with sand. Fortunately some of them had been recently broken down, otherwise we should most likely have fallen into them, and been impaled on the sharp stakes fixed in their centres. These are contrivances of the Bushmen or Korannas, to entrap the larger game.

About 5 P. M. we fell in with another fountain; but, as there was no wood near us, we were forced reluctantly to proceed, after filling with water one of my bottles, out of which I poured the brandy to make room for it. Our situation now began to be very unpleasant. No wood was to be seen as far as the eye could reach; and without fire we should run imminent risk of losing our horses in the night by the hyænas and lions; and might not improbably fall a prey

ourselves. As we galloped on in this anxious mood, the sun seemed descending with unusual speed. Not a bush appeared over the naked surface of the desert. At length, just as the day was closing, and the sun already sunk below the horizon, we reached a rising ground, and discovered, close at hand, a clump of camel-thorn trees (*acacia giraffæ*) a species of mimosa, with beautiful branching top, spreading like an umbrella. No time was now to be lost. Our horses were hastily *knee-haltered* (i. e. tied neck and knee to prevent their running off) and turned to graze till the night closed in; while Frederick and I set eagerly about collecting wood to make fires for our protection. Having chosen our resting-place under a large camel-thorn, we lighted one huge fire there, and others at a little distance on our flanks, front, and rear. I then began to feel somewhat more comfortable; and overhauling our wallet, we found a small piece of coarse bread and sausage remaining, which Frederick and I divided. With this short allowance, a glass of brandy, and a grateful draught from the bottle of water which I had provi-

dently brought from the last fountain, I made my breakfast, dinner, and supper all at once, with a good appetite.

Our horses, which we had tied up within a few yards of us, seemed to enjoy our company, lying down with the greatest confidence near our fire. Poor animals! we had rode them above fifty miles this day, and as far on each of the two preceding, so that they stood in great need of rest; and during the journey they had seldom had an opportunity of feeding.

The ground here I found covered with nitrous particles like a hoar-frost. Such a couch is considered, I believe, rather dangerous to sleep upon. In India, as I have heard, it often proves fatal to the weary traveller, lying down never more to rise. The soil was also sprinkled with the seed of a plant covered with prickles, making it very unpleasant to sit or lie down. These seeds are jocularly called by the colonists *dubbeltjes* (two-penny-pieces). Making my bed, however, as comfortable as circumstances admitted, I wrapped myself in my great coat, with my saddle as usual for my pillow, and my loaded gun by my

side. We knew pretty well that the fires were sufficient to scare off the lions, but we had some fears of the crafty hyæna attempting a snatch at our horses. Nor were we altogether without apprehension of the Bushmen, some of whose traces we had seen during the day.

As I lay thus beside our watch-fire, I could not avoid some sombre reflections upon my present forlorn predicament, uncertain of our route, and surrounded by savage hordes, and ravenous beasts of prey. The flashing of our fires only added to the gloominess of the scene, making the heavens appear a vault of pitchy darkness; nor was there any kind moon to cheer our solitude. Thus ruminating, I unconsciously gave utterance to my feelings—lamenting the uncertainty of our situation, and how unfortunate it was that we did not know our road better. This stung poor Frederick, who with much emotion exclaimed—“ Oh! that I had wings like a bird, that I might fly and bring from the landdrost a better guide than I have been!” Finding him in this disconsolate mood, which was not unmixed with terror for his own safety,

I changed the subject, spoke to him cheerfully, and committing my safety to Providence, I turned myself to sleep. After enjoying a couple of hours' refreshing repose, I was awakened by the shrieking of the jackals. I rose and replenished the fires with fresh fuel, and after smoking a segar, again addressed myself to sleep. Frederick expressed his surprise at my composure in falling asleep in such a hazardous position. For his part poor fellow! he was too much alarmed to sleep, and comforted himself with smoking away the principal part of the night, a pipe being the Hottentot's usual solace in all his distresses.

8.—We hailed the first dawn of morning with no common pleasure, and with feelings of thankfulness for our safe preservation through the dreary watches of the night. On looking round our station, we perceived, by the fresh traces of lions and hyænas, that numbers of these ferocious animals had been prowling round within two hundred yards of us during the darkness, being evidently prevented solely by our watchfires from making their supper of us.

We immediately saddled up, and pursued our

journey, for at this spot we had neither grass nor water to refresh our horses. At starting, our road lay through a narrow defile, which opened upon more extensive scenery. This defile Frederick thought fit to name "Thompson's Poort," (i. e. Gate or Pass,) in honour of the narrator. On clearing the ravine, we could descry the mountains beyond the Vaal or Yellow River. We travelled on two hours without seeing any object worthy of notice. Fine grass we found in abundance, but there was no water, without which our horses could not eat. At length we came again suddenly upon the banks of the Cradock, where we immediately unsaddled our exhausted steeds, and turned them loose to drink and graze their fill. Our own rations consisted of a small crust of dry bread, now as hard as a piece of wood ; but we soaked it in water, and ate it with all the relish of hungry men. Here we observed fresh marks of Bushmen.

On examining my map, I found that the nearest way from our present station to Griqua Town, would be to recross the Cradock, and proceed athwart the country to Read's Drift, in the Orange

River. As soon as I proposed this route, however, Frederick remonstrated against it most strenuously; maintaining in the first place, that it was impossible to cross the river; and next, that the lions on the opposite side were more *kwaad* (angry or fierce) than those where we now were. To these objections I paid little attention, considering them mere pretences to cover his timidity.

Having carefully examined the river, I determined on crossing; for it appeared at this place not so deep, though somewhat broader than at Vanderwalt's Drift. We accordingly saddled and mounted our steeds; but I found it impossible to persuade Frederick either to lead the way, or to accompany me. My utmost urgency could only extort from him a promise to follow me across, in the event of my getting safe over. To this condition I agreed, and immediately plunged into the stream. I found it only about three feet deep, and it continued nearly the same till I had got about three-fourths across. I already considered this difficulty surmounted; a few yards more and I was safely ashore—when all at once down plunged both my horses into deep water, and

into the power of a rapid current. Fortunately for me, the animals proved manageable. I grasped the mane of the one I rode, with one hand, and with the other contrived to turn his head back towards the side where I had entered; and in a short time got him again upon his feet, and reached the shore—thankful to God for my escape from the most imminent danger I had ever encountered. My guide met me as I reached the bank, and eagerly grasping my hand, with tears in his eyes, testified the most lively joy at seeing me safe out of danger; adding, that if I had been drowned, he could never have looked Captain Stockenstrom in the face, as he had particularly charged him never to leave me on any account. I was pleased by Frederick's display of feeling on this occasion, and the danger I had now escaped, as well as the alarms and privations we had shared together, contributed to attach him more and more to me; nor can I ever sufficiently express my obligations to Captain S. for his considerate kindness in providing me with such a faithful attendant.

Having now abandoned all idea of re-crossing the Cradock River, I resolved to follow its course, at no great distance, to its junction with the Yellow River; and crossing the latter at the first convenient place, to proceed by that way, either to Griqua Town, or to Campbell's-dorp, a small Griqua village, at no great distance from its banks. Soon after recommencing our journey we met a Koranna riding on a bullock. We accosted him with a view to learn intelligence as to our route, but could not by any method make him understand our meaning. The Korannas are a tribe of independent Hottentots, nearly allied to the Namaquas who reside on the west coast: I shall have occasion to speak more fully of both these tribes hereafter. We had scarcely left the Koranna when we fell in with a solitary Bushman, who appeared much surprised by our appearance. A little farther on we came unawares upon a large party of the same people, but being not at all desirous of nearer acquaintance, at this time, with these suspicious savages, we galloped past them

with all speed; while they seemed completely taken by surprise, and remained, as if rivetted to the spot, gazing after us as long as we were within view. I took it for granted, that they would imagine that we were the outriders of a larger party, such a thing as single individuals crossing this country being unprecedented, and I did not give them leisure to discover our weakness. We still kept the banks of the Cradock, and were frequently struck with the picturesque views it presented; its deep solemn waters, flowing along under the shady willows which every where overhung its banks, afforded a fine contrast to the parched country at a little distance from its course. At one place, the stream, for a space of about two hundred yards, is confined in a narrow defile, not more than forty yards broad, through which it rushes with amazing violence, roaring tremendously. By the vestiges of inundations on the banks it appears to swell up at certain periods, like an immense lake, above this narrow.

The day being warm I soon got dried from the drenching I had received in the river. About

noon we reached the confluence of the Cradock and Yellow Rivers.* The latter, to my astonishment, was at this time much the largest; and I now saw clearly that it would have been very hazardous, if not quite impracticable, to have crossed the Gariép at Read's Drift, where the waters of the two streams are united, had I effected my plan of getting across the Cradock. It was, therefore, extremely fortunate that the attempt had been frustrated.

The scenery, at the junction of the two great branches of the Gariép, was the most magnificent I had yet seen in this country. The immense confluence of waters,—the steep banks overhung with majestic willow-trees,—the sedgy recesses of the hippopotamus, which abounds here, all

* The English name of this latter branch is a translation of the original Koranna appellation, *Ky Gariép*. The Griquas and Boors give it the Dutch name of *Vaal rivier*, which has nearly the same meaning. The Cradock is termed by the Korannas *Nu Gariép*, or Black River. The word *Gariép*, signifying simply *river* in the Koranna tongue, is applied by way of eminence to the united streams, or main trunk, generally known in the Colony by the epithets of *Groote*, or *Orange River*.

contributed to fill the mind with sublime emotions, and with admiration of the wisdom and power of the great Creator.

We were now obliged to wind up the banks of the Yellow River for some miles in search of a ford where we might safely cross. In our way we passed several Koranna kraals, and stopped at one or two of them to make enquiries; but we found only women and children at home, who could understand neither our language nor our signs. The men we supposed to be out hunting. These simple people seemed astonished at our appearance, and uttered a wild cry of admiration —“*ah! ah!*”

A little way from these kraals, as I afterwards learned, are very large, natural salt-pans, of the same description as those near Zwartkop's River, from which the neighbouring inhabitants supply themselves with salt.

In about an hour we found a place which we considered fordable. We immediately entered, and found the water about three feet deep, but very rapid, so that we were obliged to keep the heads of the horses strongly up the stream all the

way through. The river was here about two hundred yards wide, and was much more discoloured than the waters of the Cradock. Both these rivers are now ascertained to be chiefly fed by the periodical rains which fall among the mountains near Delagoa Bay. From December to April they are at their highest, during which time they can only be crossed by rafts, or by swimming. At this time they were rapidly decreasing, and next month would be at the lowest.

CHAPTER VII.

Campbell's-dorp. — Griqua Town.—Mr. Melvill. — Internal Dissensions among the Griquas. — Their origin, progress, and present state.—Huil, the Bushman chief.

HAVING safely forded the Yellow River, we unsaddled to refresh the horses, and divided at the same time, between ourselves, our last remaining crust, which we had frugally eked out thus far. It was now past one o'clock, P. M.; and, according to my map, we appeared to be still distant six or seven hours hard riding from Griqua Town, with no chance of finding it in the dark. On the other hand, the village of Campbell's-dorp was only about four hours distant, and my guide had a pretty clear idea of its local position in reference to the spot where we now were. We therefore determined, if possible,

to gain the latter place this evening, having no ambition of another nightly *bivouac* amidst lions and Bushmen.

Another description of country now presented itself, covered with flints, and overgrown with bushes. Having no track we were continually in danger of falling into the numerous holes of the *aardvark*, or great ant-eater. The bushes consisted chiefly of a thorny shrub (*acacia detinens*) well known in the Colony by the name of *wagt een bitje* (wait a bit), the prickles of which being shaped like hooks, there is no getting loose from them when they catch hold of one's clothes, except by tearing out the part entangled. Their grappling properties I soon experienced to my sorrow, for I was nearly pulled off my horse several times by their catching hold of my clothes, and only retained my seat by throwing my arms round the animal's neck. The poor horses, too, got quite nervous, by feeling their lacerating effects. As we galloped through the jungle as hard as we could spur on, (for we had no time to lose,) on nearing a bush my led horse would throw himself against me with all his

force, to avoid touching the thorns ; at the same time crushing me and the horse I rode, upon the bushes on the opposite side ; so that I came in for a severe share of bruises and scratches. This rough riding continued the whole afternoon.

Sunset now approached, and still no appearance of human habitation in the wide extended desert. I began to fear that my guide had again led me astray, and that we should be forced to pass another night in the waste, and without either food or water. But just as the sun was sinking down, we descried at a distance a cloud of dust. My Hottentot hailed it with ecstasy, explaining to me that it arose from the herds and flocks of the Griquas, now driven in to their evening kraals. Urging on our jaded steeds, we accordingly reached the village before it was quite dark, to the astonishment of the natives, who could not imagine who I was, or what was my object.

However, I was hospitably welcomed, and immediately invited to the house of one of the chiefs. In the meantime the news of my arrival had spread like wildfire through the village, and in a few minutes the house was filled to the door

with people, hurrying in to satisfy their curiosity. It was at first supposed that I was the Landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, or some person sent by him on account of the civil broils in their community; and they concluded that my escort was coming up behind. I saw several of them sounding my Hottentot guide on these subjects. After being assured, however, by him, that I had no political objects, but was merely a traveller who had thrown myself, thus unattended, on their hospitality, they expressed a desire to render me every service in their power.

I seated myself without ceremony near the fire in the centre of the house, and was soon quite on familiar terms with them. I found I was the guest of Abraham Kok, and that his brothers Cornelius and Adam, who resided in the same village, were also present. These men are three of the hereditary chiefs, or captains of the Griqua tribe, being sons of old Cornelius Kok, mentioned by former travellers, who died about twelve months ago. They expressed considerable surprise at my venturing to come alone through the Bushman country, where, as they alleged, even well-escorted

travellers are liable to be attacked by the crafty savages, and where the whole country is infested by lions. My escape from both, they said, I ought to consider almost miraculous. There was, doubtless, some hazard, but I could not help thinking that these people, as well as the boors, were disposed to exaggerate it. I learned that Messrs. Hodgson and Broadbent, Wesleyan Missionaries, had visited this place in November last, and had proceeded up the Yellow River, or one of its branches called by the Griquas the Hart. A little above the salt-pans formerly mentioned, another stream, called by the Griquas the *Modder* (Muddy), by Mr. Campbell the Alexander, joins the Yellow River.

Having rode about sixty miles to-day through a very fatiguing country, and having fared very poorly for three days back, I was glad to partake of some food; and retired as soon as possible to repose, leaving Frederick to satisfy the craving curiosity of the natives.

It may be necessary to explain here, that about two years previous to my visit, the Colonial Government had sent a Mr. Melvill to reside among

the Griquas as Government Resident, or agent. Previous to this time, these people had been governed entirely by chiefs of their own tribe, who had acquired some sort of hereditary authority among them, such as the Koks, and one or two more. Mr. Melvill, however, had thought fit to elevate a man named Waterboer to the principal authority, who being considered by the other chiefs, and the Griquas in general, of mean lineage, on account of his descent from a Bushman stock, (for Griquas, as well as others, have their notions of rank and precedence,) a great part of the tribe had refused to acknowledge his authority, and had retired from their chief village, Griqua Town, in disgust. In consequence of this defection, Mr. Melvill had denounced them as rebels, and having himself no means of enforcing submission to his authority, had lately applied to the Landdrost of Graaff-Reinet for a commando from the Colony to reduce them. This application, as I formerly mentioned, Captain Stockenstrom had declined to comply with; neither approving in fact of the policy pursued by Mr. Melvill, nor considering himself authorised, without special

instructions from the Government, to interfere in the internal disputes of a community beyond the boundaries of his provincial jurisdiction. The party among whom I now was, therefore, were the rebels or disaffected, whom Mr. Melvill had denounced, and from whose violence he considered his life in danger. Notwithstanding this, I went to sleep without any apprehensions of their intentions, although Frederick had hinted to me that it was with no small difficulty that he could persuade them that I was not a spy.

9.—This morning, at an early hour, I had the same assembly around me, as on the preceding night. Making Frederick my interpreter, I put many questions to them, respecting their late dissensions. I found their principal ground of complaint against Mr. Melvill was, his making a chief of Andries Waterboer, and his wishing, through him (as they alleged), to control *them*, the “real hereditary chiefs.” This they considered as a sort of usurpation or infringement of their privileges, not to be tolerated, and to which they had, accordingly, resolved not to submit.

After a long discussion, I promised to represent

their case to the Government at Cape Town, and, in the meanwhile, I proposed that they should accompany me to Griqua Town, and try whether matters might not be yet accommodated with Mr. Melvill. To this proposal they agreed, and it was accordingly arranged, that the two brothers, Cornelius and Adam Kok, should accompany me. They, moreover, furnished me and my guide with fresh horses, my own being so much knocked up, that I found it expedient to leave them behind, to be brought on to Griqua Town more leisurely next day.

The village, or station, of Campbell's-dorp, contains a few straggling reed huts, and three or four houses of a little better construction. The latter are the dwellings of the chiefs. It is well supplied with good water, and the inhabitants possess large herds of cattle and sheep, and a great number of excellent horses.

After some breakfast, consisting, like my supper, entirely of milk and flesh, (for they had neither bread nor vegetables,) I set out, accompanied by the two Koks, and my man Frederick. The road was, like that of the preceding day, through a

country covered with flints, and encumbered with thorny brush-wood. These coverts enable the Bushmen to lurk here, in spite of all the efforts of the Griquas to root them out. They are a great annoyance to the latter, as well as to other pastoral tribes in their vicinity, and they are consequently pursued by them, equally as by the boors, with the utmost animosity.

About halfway between Campbell's-dorp and Griqua Town, we met Mr. Sass, a Missionary, who resides at the former station, returning from a visit to Mr. Melvill. On our approach he jumped out of his waggon, apparently much agitated, and was scarcely able for some time to answer the most common questions. I attributed his discomposure to the apprehension, that probably struck him on seeing the rebel chiefs, that they were proceeding to attack their opponents at Griqua Town. This man is a German by birth, and in the service of the London Society: he has married a Hottentot woman, and has long resided among the wild tribes of the interior.

On entering Griqua Town, our appearance seemed to excite general surprise; and I observ-

ed several persons fly to acquaint Mr. Melvill, who had gone out with his wife. Presently they hastened to meet us ; for, having been told that there was a white man in the party, he concluded it was Captain Stockenstrom. On perceiving his mistake, he seemed surprised, — seeing me in company with his enemies, the rebels ; but a letter of introduction, which I presented to him from Captain S. and a brief explanation of my objects, put him at ease ; and I was welcomed to his house with the utmost cordiality.

While some refreshment was preparing, Mr. Melvill gave me an account of the state of affairs among the Griquas. The Koks, it seems, on his arrival, held the authority, conjointly with another chief of the name of Berends. Finding that these men were not sufficiently active or friendly to his views, Mr. Melvill had thought it expedient to elevate Waterboer, as before stated, to the dignity of a chief, and by this measure had excited the jealousy and animosity of the others ; and to such extremities had their long-brooding jars been carried, that, according to Mr. Melvill's account, a diabolical plot had been laid by the disaffected

party, to fall upon himself, Waterboer, and their principal adherents, when in the chapel, and massacre the whole of them in cold blood. This treacherous design had been, by some means, brought to their knowledge, and was thus defeated. But whether the insurgent party had actually concerted the perpetration of such an atrocity, or whether the report was invented, or the features of the case exaggerated by some of their rivals, who had thus imposed on Mr. Melvill's credulity, in order to exasperate him more against them, I could not positively determine.

No one who is acquainted with Mr. Melvill personally, can for a moment doubt the benevolence and disinterestedness of his character. Indeed his being here at all is a sufficient proof of these qualities. He formerly held an easy and respectable situation under Government in Cape Town, namely, that of Inspector of Public Buildings, &c. with an income of about 7000 rix-dollars per annum; but being a religious man, and zealous for the civilization and conversion of the heathen, he applied to the Government for his present appointment, and voluntarily resigned for it his

lucrative situation, with the benevolent purpose of promoting Missionary operations.

How far Mr. Melvill justly estimated his own qualifications for the arduous task of influencing a semi-barbarous people, may well be questioned, on witnessing the unhappy results of his interference with the affairs of the Griquas; but his praiseworthy motives and generous self-devotion must ever be respected. He now receives, as the Government agent here, a salary of only 1000 rix-dollars (75*l.*); besides which he occupies a small house belonging to the London Missionary Society, has a garden well stocked with fruit trees and vegetables, and cultivates corn sufficient for the consumption of his family. And, except for the unfortunate disturbances among the people, he appeared to live quite contented in this remote seclusion, where, save his wife and children, and a German missionary, he has no other society than the rude and untutored natives.

10.—Having agreed to spend this day with Mr. Melvill, I devoted the forenoon to survey the village and its vicinity. It lies in a pleasant valley well watered by several copious springs.

The valley is closed on the north-west by a range of low hills of argillaceous schistus, which, either from the presence of iron ore, or some other cause, are so highly magnetic as to prevent the traverse of the needle. Among those hills asbestos has been found in considerable quantity. The surrounding country beyond the limits of the Vale of Griqua Town, consists of extensive sandy plains, covered with brushwood, and of the same arid and uninviting aspect as that through which I had passed since leaving the banks of the Yellow River. The cultivation of corn has been carried on by the missionaries and a few of the Griquas with tolerable success, by means of irrigation, but not to any great extent. The food of the inhabitants consists of milk and flesh, and occasionally a few pumpkins. The country is, indeed, chiefly adapted for grazing; and the Griquas, who have been but lately reclaimed by the missionaries from a life entirely nomadic, are as yet with difficulty excited to agricultural labours, to which the aridity of the soil and the uncertainty of the seasons are also great obstacles. Their internal dissensions have recently added another

obstacle to settled pursuits and agricultural improvements, not less influential, perhaps, than their propensity to wandering habits and the defects of their soil and climate.

The rains here are not regular, but merely thunder-showers in the summer season. Occasionally the long want of these not only destroys the produce of their fields and gardens, but parches up the pastures so much that they are forced to remove with the greater part of their cattle to distant fountains where grass is to be found. The country is also very deficient in timber. The camel-thorn is, indeed, found in the neighbourhood, of a considerable size, but the wood is too hard for common purposes, being wrought with much difficulty and frequently breaking their tools. The inhabitants are therefore forced to resort to the Gariep for all the timber they use, and find there an inexhaustible supply, though not of the best quality, in the large willow groves which line the banks.

The Griquas, as is already pretty generally known, are a mixed race, originally descended from the intercourse of the Dutch colonists with