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Hardy and Hunter A Boy's Own Story

Harriet Ward

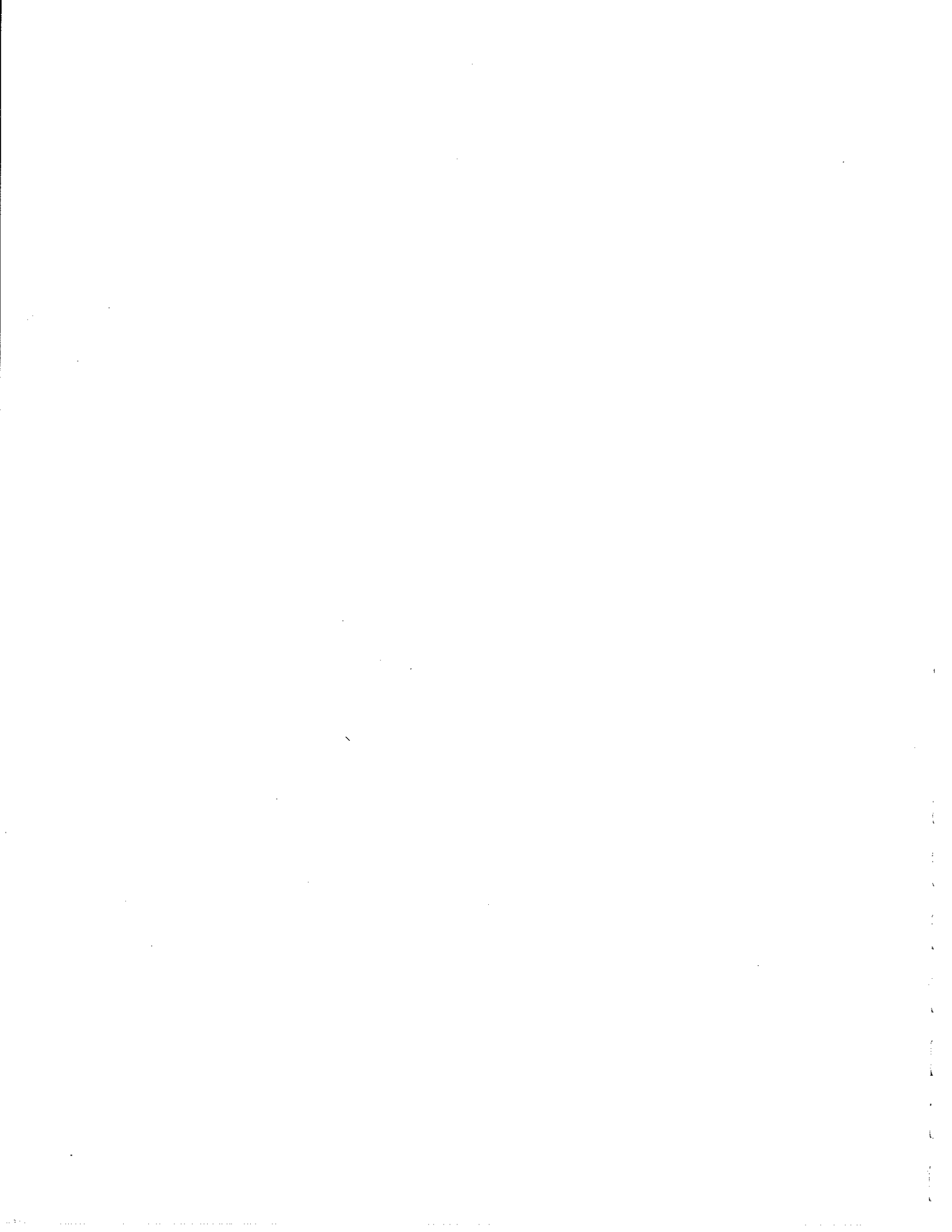
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HARDY AND HUNTER.

A Boy's own Story.

BY MRS. WARD,

AUTHORESS OF

“JASPER LYLE,” “FIVE YEARS IN KAFIRLAND,”
ETC. ETC.

A NEW EDITION,

With Illustrations by Harrison Weir.

LONDON :

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FARRINGTON STREET.

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1859.

[*The Author reserves the right of translation.*]

LONDON
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS,
CHANDOS STREET.

NOT A PREFACE,

BUT

A FEW WORDS TO THE READER.

DURING the progress of this work through the press a great movement in favour of emigration has taken place at the Cape of Good Hope, and the sum of fifty thousand pounds has been voted in furtherance of this important object. The story of "Hardy and Hunter" could, therefore, hardly appear at a more opportune moment; since, although but a tale of boyish adventure, it relates to scenes which, it is to be hoped, will become familiar to many a British settler, now struggling against poverty in our own overpopulated island.

In conclusion, the Authoress desires to observe, that there is scarcely an incident in the

book which is not founded on fact, and though some may seek to accuse her of harshness in delineating Kafir character, she has no fear of being mistaken in this matter by those competent to judge. The late accounts from the Cape of Good Hope show that these Savages have been reduced to a pitiable condition through their own folly and superstition; and that the Colonists, forgetting all old grievances, have come forward nobly to their assistance. Time will show what return the Kafirs will make to their benefactors; in the interim, Colonization, with her trusty handmaidens, Commerce and Agriculture, will, by God's blessing, be the best antidotes to those evils which have hitherto been the stumbling-blocks to Emigration.

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HARDY AND HUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOLDIER'S SON.

ALTHOUGH born in England, my earliest recollections of life date from an Indian cantonment, where my father's regiment was lying when he joined head-quarters, I being then but four years old. We were seven years in India, and, after a severe campaign in which my father's health suffered, we returned to England. He was beginning to recover his strength, when he fell ill at Portsmouth, and was obliged to go into hospital.

My mother hired a room for herself and her three children, supporting her family by washing, clear-starching, and working at her needle; but it cost her much weary thought and labour to

do her duty by us, and give a good part of her time to my father.

I have a vivid recollection to this day of that dark, dismal home at Portsmouth. It looked into the court of the hospital, where my father lay dying, for we soon knew that nothing could save him. Beyond the court was a hideous group of barrack buildings, and in rear of these a churchyard, which my little sister Marion used to say was "planted with graves." I remember her wondering one day, when she heard that a man was in the coffin which she saw lowered into the earth, "if the man would come up like the seed Uncle David used to sow in his garden," when we were visiting his farm in Scotland; and when the rain fell in torrents for several successive days, I verily believe she expected a growth of human heads among the docks and nettles, cumbering the ground, and emitting a steam of noxious vapours, the odour of which I have never forgotten to this day.

My mother was a silent, patient woman. Her marriage, in the eyes of her family, had been an imprudent one; but on her first acquaint-

ance with my father, all things had promised better than it had pleased God they should turn out. My father was at that time a sergeant in the —th regiment; he had received a good education, and was in a fair way to rise in his profession. He had, indeed, indulged in dreams of becoming an officer; but my mother's ambition was not of this kind; and when, on reaching head-quarters, they got charge of the regimental schools, she professed herself well satisfied, for the life she led interested her, and the pay and allowances being more than equal to our wants in the upper and healthier province of India where we remained for some time, a little money was laid by, and all went on smoothly and respectably.

A campaign broke up this state of quiet usefulness; my father's health was shattered in consequence: we came to England, and on returning from furlough in Scotland, he caught a final illness from lying down in his wet clothes on the guard-room bedstead. He never did a good day's duty afterwards, and on getting into hospital, his case was pronounced hopeless.

But I could not believe this till I began to notice the great change in my mother. She went working on every day harder and harder it is true, for all her Indian savings had been swallowed up in English expenditure, but she no longer sang as she ironed or stitched; and one day, when she bid me carry her poor little canary as a gift to a staff sergeant's wife, she burst out crying, saying she had no heart to look after it.

I remember her putting down her iron and casting herself into a chair, in a fit of tears, as the little thing stopped his song suddenly, and turned up first one bright eye and then another, now at his mistress, now at me, as much as to say, "What are you going to do with me? whither are you carrying me?" I did not give way to my own sorrow at the moment, but took him off to Mrs. Burnley's at once, and as soon as I got out of sight cried bitterly with grief and bewilderment. I had a vague terror, as well as sharp regret, on thinking over my father's state, and what was to come of it.

Our distress was aggravated in a few days by

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news of the regiment being under orders for foreign service again. My poor father grieved sorely at the idea of his old comrades leaving him for active duty, while he lay helpless, dying, never more to wear the uniform he had been so proud of.

I said nothing to my mother, but on the morning of its departure I determined to have a last look at the old corps; and stealing out at dawn, took my stand opposite the gates of C—— Barracks, where a crowd was already gathering to see the troops march out.

They came forth, the band playing and colours flying; at sight of the standards, weather-stained and pierced by many a bullet—the sudden route having prevented their being replaced by new ones—there arose a deafening cheer. The commanding officer who led the way, touched by the enthusiasm of the spectators, dropped his sword in recognition of the loud “Hurrah,” and his men answered it with that shout which has since stirred the hearts of our French allies, and daunted the enemy’s column in a fashion he cares not to admit. The band

struck up the stirring quick march of the "British Grenadiers," the men with all their belongings, even to their field blankets, strapped on their backs, kept steady time to the inspiring tune, the crowd increasing, surging down the street as they marched, till, suddenly wheeling to the left, they carried the stream of human beings with them. In a few moments all was still as night again, only some sorrowful women occupied the space; the open barrack-gates showed comparatively an empty square, and the solitary sentinel pacing on his beat wore the uniform of a Highland regiment, instead of the scarlet coat and white facings of my father's corps.

And he! my poor father! I found him, on entering the long lobby of the dreary hospital, at the window. He had got that far, weak and aching as he was, had caught a glimpse of the troops, heard the fading notes of the old tune, and now leant upon the window-sill in an agony of pain and sorrow. Too well he knew he should never march again.

I was chief mourner at his funeral about a

fortnight after this. What a strange thing is human pride! A certain sense of my position, as number one at this woful ceremony, filled my weak mind, and checked my tears on the road to that horrible graveyard; but the rattle of the earth on the coffin-lid startled me into a sudden burst of tears, and as the drums and fifes played off with a dancing melody, I fell into a passion of weeping, and was led home to my mother almost exhausted with excitement and grief.

She was very patient under her trouble. I remember that evening when she spread the tea-things for my little brother and sister and myself, seeing her try to take a cup of tea, but she soon moved away and began packing a small box, which with its contents became my property a week afterwards, when I was told I was to be sent to her eldest brother's, who was the "Grieve" or Factor on a gentleman's property in Argyleshire, among the hills which lock in those beautiful bays and lakes branching off the Clyde.

Alas! my heart was with the regiment in which I had been born; I was thirteen years

old, a meditative, precocious boy it is true, but though more stout of heart than strong of body, too dutiful to say a word against the plans chalked out for me. I knew my mother could scarcely manage to earn bread for herself and the two little ones, and being told by an old Scotch sergeant that I was a fortunate lad in having a good home to go to, and work to do, I felt bound to believe it, whether it was so or no. Truth could only be fathomed by the result.

I had never been parted from my mother before. I had carried my little sister in my arms for many a long day, and looked upon myself as her only natural protector. My brother Jack, though upwards of ten years old, looked less than seven, for his health was very frail. Marion was eight. I gave Jack my box of books, bought by my father out of some prize-money, and Marion my kitten. A poor little dog which had followed me from the barracks, and which nobody cared to keep because he was ugly, I left with my mother, who would not talk of any difficulty in feeding him; and with a new suit of clothes, a few books, my

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mother's old Bible in my box, and five shillings in my pocket—the amount of a subscription raised by some comrades of my father's—I prepared to embark on board a Whitehaven collier, commanded by a distant relative of my mother's, who promised to send me safely to Glasgow, where my uncle Duncan, a man of importance in his family, was to meet me.

My mother accompanied me on board, and, to use the hospital-sergeant's expression, "kept up a brave heart" till the parting. The signal gun from the old guard-ship at Spithead boomed out its notice of sunset; we loosened our fore-sail, the anchor was already tripped, a boat waited for the friends of the crew, and with a desperate embrace, during which not a word was spoken, my gentle parent and I parted, for the first time in our lives. I leant over the gun-wale and waved my arms, and saw my mother strive to rise; she fell back, with perhaps the motion of the boat; tears rushed into my eyes, my heart beat, my soul was swayed with conflicting emotions; from this condition I was roused by the rough but cordial voice of the captain.

“Come, my lad,” he said, “cheer up—turn in with me and take a glass of grog.”

Thank God, this was not in my way at that age, and never has been a habit, albeit a good drenching has at times, as I do not deny, required its remedy. I turned in to a recess in the captain's cabin, or rather cupboard, and slept till daylight, when I mounted the deck and watched the sun illuminate the sea with indescribable splendour. I accepted the sight as a good omen.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST START.

My cousin, the captain of the brig, was a cheery, cordial sailor, who took a fancy to me "because I was not a land-lubber," having crossed the line twice! Moreover, I had learned to handle the ropes on board ship, little as I was, on our homeward voyage; so he gladly let me assist the sailors as far as I could. He would fain, indeed, have had me learn to box the compass, by way of beginning navigation, but I liked working the ship a great deal better than study of this kind; and the confinement of a narrow vessel would have been inexpressibly irksome to me if condemned to bodily inactivity. I failed in one point, then considered necessary for the completeness of a sailor's education—I could not endure the smell of rum; and never, save when I found myself in the deserts of Africa, far from the water springs, do I remember

enjoying a draught of "Adam's ale" as I did on the evening of my arrival at Whitehaven, where the good-natured cook of the "Jolly Collier" pumped for five minutes, before she suffered me to fill my glass from the crystal stream.

My journey to Glasgow was without incident. There my uncle met me; and taking ship with him, we steamed down the Clyde.

I was so entranced with the lovely scenery around me, that I did not express myself as so wonder-stricken with the beauties of this magnificent river as my uncle expected, and his national vanity was wounded. The month was August. As we neared Greenock, we found ourselves in the midst of a fleet of yachts dressed in their flags for a festal; a band of music was playing on board, the commodore's graceful schooner, and ladies and gentlemen were dancing on her deck. The regatta fête was about to open its proceedings by a race between two famous boats—Montgomery's Lily, and Robertson's Red gig. The passengers on board our steamer raised a subscription on the spot, as the captain had anticipated, to indemnify

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him for hauling up beside the commodore's yacht, and we had not taken up our berth many minutes ere the signal gun fired, and the rowers took their places.

They were close to us—two as gallant boats' crews as ever pulled oars together—but somehow or other my attention was drawn to the Red gig, in which I recognised an officer of the Highland regiment which had relieved the —th at Portsmouth.

He was of noble stature, with that sunny complexion which often accompanies an honest expression of countenance. As he seated himself to assume the oars, and turned up his sleeves, he displayed a pair of muscular arms tattooed with strange devices. In the act of leaning back, it so happened that in necessarily pressing his feet forward, he did so with a muscular force beyond the resistance of so frail a bark, and suddenly stove a hole in the bottom of the boat. The accident escaped the notice of two of the Red gig's crew, though those of the Lily saw it, and cheered, as Kilgarry—so Captain Montrose was called on Clydeside, where his property lay

—snatched a flag lying beside him, and with admirable presence of mind thrust it into the aperture.

Again the Lily's crew cheered, the Red gig answered, the second signal fired, and off they flew. Kilgarry or the Red gig, which was the favourite? The ladies on board the commodore had not seen the accident at first, but they became informed on the matter before the boats turned in the race. We could read dismay painted on more than one fair face.

The rivals were now out on the Clyde. In the excitement of the moment, Heaven help the Red gig's crew if Kilgarry's device should fail her for an instant; she was as brittle as an egg-shell; and we already began to fancy her very low in the water. And now we heard the commodore shouting through his trumpet, warning a small steam-tug laden with boys and artisans from Glasgow, at her peril to approach too near the race, and thus increase the swell of the river.

No one dreamed of the Red gig winning; her safety was all that was looked to with intense

anxiety, for every one now knew of the accident which had befallen her, and some said, "It was just like that dare-devil, Kilgarry;" yet none seemed to blame him—he was evidently a popular idol.

All this time the gigs had kept pretty fairly together; at one moment the Lily was slightly astern of the Red gig, the next both were abreast; in wearing round, the Lily had the best of it; in a moment, her rival shot by her like an arrow. At last, both began to approach the winning-point whence we had seen them start; already we could perceive the veins in the rowers' arms swelling like cordage and empurpled with heat; Kilgarry looked coolest of all. Yet the Red gig, as she neared the stern of the commodore, was half a boat's length off the Lily.

Now they are abreast again; Kilgarry looks up to the deck of the schooner and smiles; and now the Red gig is abreast of the Lily—and now—and now—the signal-man prepares to fire the gun.

"The Red gig! The Red gig! She has beat after all. Kilgarry for ever!" The cry

ran through the little fleet, the band on board the commodore struck up "See the Conquering Hero comes," and we recognised the young Highland laird mounting the vessel's side amid the cheers of the gentlemen, while the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and one kissed her hand to the hero of the day.

As soon as I could make myself heard, I said to my uncle, "Is it Kilgarry's own boat, sir; and if so, why do they call it Robertson's Red gig?"

"It belongs to Mr. Robertson," said my uncle, who was a sententious man.

"Then why does Kilgarry get all the credit, sir?" said I; "and why are people shouting so about *him*?"

"Because," replied my uncle, "Kilgarry *always wins.*"

Some time afterwards, I happened to see the famous Red gig under repair, Mr. Robertson having bestowed her on Kilgarry, who had never missed forming one of the crew on her winning days. Now the motto beneath the young laird's crest, which was painted in the stern, was *Per-*

severantia Victor. Ah! thought I, as I read it—for I had learned sufficient Latin to enable me to translate so much—mottoes like these and men like Kilgarry are made for each other. I will adopt it, although I may only carry it in my breast.

Young as I was, I appreciated this gallant Montrose of Kilgarry; besides, he was an officer, and I set up, so to speak, a pedestal ready for him in my heart from the moment I saw him, for soldiers had spoken well of him at Portsmouth, and I was delighted to find that his property lay near Mr. Macnair's, where my uncle, as Factor, held a large farm. My uncle was proud and *dour*; I learned the meaning of this word only too soon after entering his service, for such I must call my connexion with him while at the Brae.

He did not like his master, for Mr. Macnair *was* his master. My uncle came of Argyleshire farmers and Factors, faithful stewards, but rough and "thin-skinned" men. They had lived on their hired farms for more than a century; now Mr. Macnair, who was he? "An obscure mon frae Glasgow, who kenn'd weel how to make money in Scotland, but had na the grace to

spend it there;" for he and his family passed part of the year in London, and had been known to visit Paris; a sore offence in their eyes then.

My aunt was as proud in her way as my uncle, and had never ceased to look down on my mother for marrying Sergeant Hardy. Nevertheless, it was a brother of my aunt's who had brought him to the Brae on furlough. My aunt never spoke of this brother, who had been drowned on an outward voyage; but she hated soldiers, strangely enough, for his sake. She considered they had decoyed Willie away; however, I believe he never repented enlisting. We have no right to think so.

I loved that Highland loch on Clyde side dearly. My father had fished in its waters, my mother sitting beside him. She strong in hope and trust; he more ambitious, yet moderated by her sensible arguments. His godfather had given him an education beyond his position, and my mother soon took a clearer view of what it might be turned to than he did. He found afterwards, when in charge of the school, and employed even in instructing some of the officer's

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children, how right she had been, and how much more suitable was such a position to one of his class, and a married man, than that of an officer without either money or connexions among gentlefolks.

I was no hand at "the gentle craft" myself. I often longed to join Kilgarry's gamekeepers when I heard the crack of their pieces on the hills, and envied Sandy Hunter, the young gilly, who was employed as letter-carrier in the morning and evening, but who could be out all day on the heathery moors with the men and their gallant dogs. He was a year younger than me—rather a stunted little chap—but he was already a fair shot, and free, except for two or three hours of the day, to go where he listed.

Happily, I was fond of books. The good minister of the kirk, which Mr. Macnair had built, found this out, and lent me many a volume from his small but well-selected library; and when in summer I had an hour or two to myself, I would steal away from the farm premises, and mounting a large stone, would seat myself in a kind of solemn triumph in the

shadow of the broomy hills that rose behind me—the sun glorifying the waters of the loch and the opposite mountains; I used to fancy fairies must inhabit the glens whose depths my vision could not pierce; and once I almost sprang from my eminence into the deep, silent stream, as I felt rather than heard the motion of wings close by, and found I had taken for a spirit a heron rising from the sedges, where she had been regaling herself in the cool of the day.

I think the fish grew to know me at last—one old speckled trout, I am sure, looked for me constantly, after I had once thrown some scraps of oat-cake into the stream: I remember him perfectly, with a throat as white as milk, and marked like a hemisphere with stars. I grew to love him; and so soon as Sandy Hunter and I became acquainted, the laddie won me to him completely by waiving his right—self-constituted, it is true, but undisputed—over my special little bay—Hardy's Bay he would call it—leaving my trout in peace, and herons undisturbed. Sandy would sit down by me on my tiny island, whither

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we used to wade above our knees, and ask me about my travels; wonderful stories I could tell him about India and the voyage home, and the strange things that came up out of the deep to look at us; fish that flew, and tiny men-of-war in which the nautilus mariners shone forth in all the tints of the rainbow; sharks with faithful pilots clad in shining armour of blue and steel,* who at sight of danger vanished through the cavernous jaws of the dread monster for whom it was their business to purvey; seas on fire with phosphoric light, fountains bubbling up from unseen whales. To such wonders of the deep did Sandy "seriously incline" his ear as I related them; and one day I found a treasure in my good minister's dusty study, which formed the key-stone to the arch on which I began to build a castle in the air. It was a tattered book of Travels in South Africa.

Sandy Hunter, when he had nothing to entice him up the hills, or about the steamers plying on our side the Clyde, would give up all other

* The pilot-fish, always in attendance on the shark.

pastimes of his leisure hours to listen to me as I read.

Ere, however, I proceed, I must give the reader a sketch of the life I led at the Brae Farm, where the hours were parcelled out for employment, in a fashion somewhat distasteful to me, as may easily be believed. My uncle, I say, was *dour*, and cared not to understand me; and as for my aunt, she was over-thrifty, and bent on snubbing "a doited conceited lad, who was too much ta'en up wi' learning even to gain knowledge o' what was most needed, and whose mother was a poor feckless body, just a bondage to her family." Her aim, in short, was to get all the work she could out of me.

The circle consisted of my uncle and aunt, two stalwart sons, with whom I could have no satisfactory communication, inasmuch as they chose to speak little but Gaelic, and a young girl, so like my notions of a fairy that I was half afraid of her. The dwelling was a long, low mansion, built of rough stone, so badly slated that the rain came through the roof, rendering the upper part useless in bad weather,

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till the cocks and hens took up their abode there, roosting on an ancient bedstead, in which, as the legend ran, King Jamie had once slept on a journey. On the principal floor were a parlour and best bed-room, seldom used; the first, with its china closet displaying through its glass doors some curious specimens of bowls and mugs, little tea cups, and hideous dragons, a set of liqueur bottles and glasses of blue and gold, being the pride and centre-piece of the middle shelf. The second room had its "kist," and "armory" of napery and Sunday gear for all the family, its cumbersome four-poster with chintz hangings, and a palampore or Indian counterpane—a sort of peace-offering from my mother in the days of better fortunes. Two patriarchal arm-chairs, with polished elbows and stiff backs—anything but easy chairs they were!—a square of faded carpeting, an old-fashioned table with bow legs, a narrow strip of looking-glass between the windows, and a shelf containing the family Bible, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Life of John Knox*, in short, such volumes as form the usual library of her class, completing

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the furniture of the apartment in which my aunt, when dressed for the occasion—*i. e.*, in a *match* (cap) with grey ribbons—for she was severe in her attire, wearing a flowered gown in summer, and one of dark stuff in the winter—was wont to pass the afternoons of the Sabbath day.

A passage divided these rooms, and at the end of this, by the stairs, was a clock—I look upon this clock as an old friend, I have bought it but very lately; it is, to be sure, a little out of repair, for, though the old cuckoo has never ceased to give his timely warnings, his voice is wheezy, and he will not come out in the bold way he was wont. In vain, too, the little sailor advances, and hitches himself into an attitude; his dancing days are over, for the present, at least, and the gay music of the past resounds no more. This piece of furniture is too antiquated to be trusted on a voyage to the grandson of its maker at Glasgow; he is coming to me next week to set the cuckoo on his legs again, to make the sailor dance, renew the mechanism of the jubilant hornpipe, and thoroughly repair the inroads which time has made on the lungs of

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my old friend. As I jot down these quaint fancies on paper, I am at first disposed to long for some healing physician who can treat the human frame as the mechanic does my venerable clock, but on looking round me, in much thankfulness for my present position, I yearn for a better part than this world's physicians can give, and——

But my book shall bear its own moral, and amuse, I trust, as well. To return to the Brae.

All the week was passed by my aunt in a room for general uses, being parlour, and kitchen, and all—it was dingy, and had a musty smell. This story of the house was a sunken one, so that the rays of the sun never penetrated into the apartment. The complicated smells of flax, and oatmeal, and dry pease, and mutton hams, &c., were overpowering. A hen with thirteen eggs under her, one matron relieving the other, usually occupied the space beneath the dresser, an old *collie*, or sheep dog, keeping guard close by; while in the centre of the den sat my aunt, her grey hair drawn off her hard forehead, where the skin was too tight to wrinkle, on the top of which was a thick *mutch*, whether for comfort or display I

never could make out. A handkerchief of dark tartan crossed her shapeless chest, a sort of bed-gown, or jacket, covered her body and met a striped petticoat below; dark stockings, and a pair of strong carpet shoes, completing the costume.

This apartment was truly a comfortless place, and so probably my uncle thought, for he seldom entered it, except for his meals. There was, in spite of thrift, plenty to eat and drink; the peat fire was always burning, the *parritch* pot always on; there was whiskey for the uncle and the *carles*, my cousins—I explained to Sandy, by the way, out of a book, that *carle* came from *churl*, a Saxon word for a boorish peasant!—and for me there was a bowl of milk, fresh from the *byre* every night and morning. We had not meat every day; but three times a week, or so, we were regaled at supper with bannocks and mutton ham,—the brose I never could manage, but took kindly to the oatmeal parritch, and now-a-days have it on my breakfast-table with the addition of a ewer of cream beside it.

My uncle was a well-to-do looking man, with

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an honest though severe countenance. He wore a good stout frieze coat, with a plaid wrapped about him in winter, home-knitted stockings, and on Sundays, *shoon* with silver buckles in them; carried an oaken stick even to kirk with him, though he did not need its support, and never exchanged his "blue bonnet" for a hat, as some of his friends did on Sabbaths.

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CHAPTER III.

SANDY HUNTER.

ALTHOUGH the life I led was not happy in comparison with that to which I had been accustomed, with all the interchanges of sympathy and good-will existing among soldiers, I contrived to pass some pleasant hours at the Brae, where I had space, novelty, and to a certain extent, freedom. My frame, too, strengthened under the northern sky.

My work lay in looking after the poultry in the morning, gathering fire-wood, stacking peat, milking the kye, and helping my aunt in her dairy — by no means like the dainty place I had seen at Uncle David's, now, as well as my soldier uncle, Willie, dead. At noon we dined, and after that I read to my aunt, who sat at her wheel and spun herself to sleep. She taught me to knit; I loathed the occupation, but dreaded going barefoot like little Sandy if I

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rebelled ; later in the day there was work for me in the *byre*, and “ down by the Bubblyjock dyke,” or “ Turkey cantonment,” as I called it, or in the kailyard ; after supper my uncle read “ a chapter,” and “ expounded ;” and by nine o’clock in summer, and eight in winter, the household was at rest.

My lessons in small farming then have been of the greatest importance to me since.

The deep winter months were dreary ; Sandy and I met but seldom then, but in the spring my uncle determined that I should assist his herd ; and the care of the lambs, with a few sheep of a particular breed, was handed over to me.

With what delight did I mount the Brae at sunrise, with my young collie dog, Brin, at my heels. The creature had his own speculation about me, no doubt ; for every time I turned to look down upon the farm and outbuildings, just warming into life with bleating kye and crowing cocks, he would seat himself on a broomy knowe, with his mouth open, his tongue out, and his soft eyes turning from me to the dwelling-house beneath, as much as to say, “ Oh, you’re glad to get away, old fellow, aren’t you, out of the whirr

of that eternal spinning-wheel, and the old lady's sharp voice? You and I like the smell of heather better than the steam of the keeping-room; so away with us up the hill. Come and see our muirs with the dew upon them, and hear the black cock and the grouse talking to each other in the still morning, before the sportsmen and the gillies are out in arms against the poor things."

And then he would utter a canine shriek of delight, and caracol before me, wagging his tail in welcome, as I advanced.

Sometimes I could see Sandy Hunter skimming along the opposite margin of the loch in the sunlight, bare-legged and bare-headed. His costume was very simple: a coarse tartan jacket, too tight in the chest, and too short in the sleeves, showed that his linen was none of the finest, and a kilt of dark blue lindsey, descending no lower than the knees, set off a pair of active legs; his long locks were not always so neatly combed as they might have been, and, like his face, were well tanned with sun and wind. Across one shoulder was slung his wallet, in which he carried his provisions for the day, as he had to wait on

our side the loch for the steamer with the mail; from the other depended the leather bag, of which the Kilgarry baillie kept the key, and the Castle B—— postmaster a duplicate. Castle B—— was Mr. Macnair's modern mansion.

One morning I shouted, but the gilly could not see me in the shadow of the hill, and at eventide, when the lambs were folded, I met him at our usual trysting-place, with my book. Folks then did not think so much of letters as they do now; "perhaps," as Sandy shrewdly observed, "because they cost so much;" it would have been a pity if they had, seeing that Sandy and I took small heed of time. My uncle knew I was a steady lad, fond of study, and patronized by the minister, so he did not insist on my constant presence at meals; a bit of oat cake and a lump of milk cheese suited my taste and habits far better than a bowl of brose amid the odours of peat reek, and other accessories, particularly as, my work once over, I was free to come to the Brae and go as I listed; creeping at bedtime to the cupboard where I slept on a canvas bag, stuffed with heather, without disturbing the rest of the community, not far off.

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“Sandy,” said I, this evening, as we sat gazing into the loch, “I will teach thee to swim, lad.”

“Ay?” remarked Sandy, in his usual tone of surprise and interrogation.

“Don’t you see, if you can swim, you need not come all round the head of the loch, because the Laird of Ballochbrae is away to India, and there is nobody there but the shepherds, who have no letters.”

“Ay,” said Sandy; “and the shepherds could na’ pay for letters an’ they got them. I’d like fine to swim, Hardy.”

He took his first lesson the next evening, and before a month was out, I had the satisfaction, one still morning, of seeing him cross the loch, with his post-bag and wallet strapped on his head. I sang out cheerily, to give him encouragement, but I never till that moment completely realized the idea of one’s “heart” being “in one’s mouth,” and all day I was in great anxiety and dread, lest he should return to Glenarm, the village where he lived, the same way he came.

I was on my islet before him; he did not see me at first, and was beginning to tuck up his little kilt and prepare for a plunge, when I hallooed, and startled him and the old heron of the sedges.

"Sandy," I said, "you are heated, and the water is chilly. I feel like the man I have heard of who made a monster, and set it going through the world, all for his own torment."

"Hech, sirs!" cried Sandy, grinning, "I'm no a monster."

"But I shall always have horrid fancies about you, now that I have taught you to swim."

"But I *can* swim, Hardy," was the sturdy little chap's reply.

"Yes; but you might get a cramp some day, my poor laddie, and then nothing could save you—you'd be drowned, my Sandy; and even those horrid blubber fish——"

"An wha would care?" said Sandy, not waiting for me to finish my sentence, and lifting his eyes to the sky, whose tints they bore.

I had heard tell that his mother was dead—that her name was never mentioned, and that "his

father had not been heard of for years. Sandy had not a relative in the world, at least one who acknowledged him, save his grandmother, who was looked upon by the people of the hamlet as a witch. I have since seen a picture of a hideous old French *chiffonnière*,* who strongly resembled her in appearance, but there was no one like her at Glenarm.

Her regard for the boy was tested before long.

One summer's evening I had folded the lambs, and in doing so missed one which I had a certain amount of interest in, because it was my cousin Effie's. She was a queer, wayward little thing; but though wicked to all, she was gentle with me, and often took it into her head to bring me my daily dole of bannocks and other homely comestibles at noon, when I was "o'er the hills amang the heather."

Among these hills I used to study the books supplied me by kind Mr. Macleod, of the manse. The glories of Africa, with its pathless "flats;" its tangled wildernesses, its solitary kloofs, so

* A well known race in Paris, who live by fishing for plunder in mud heaps and gutters.

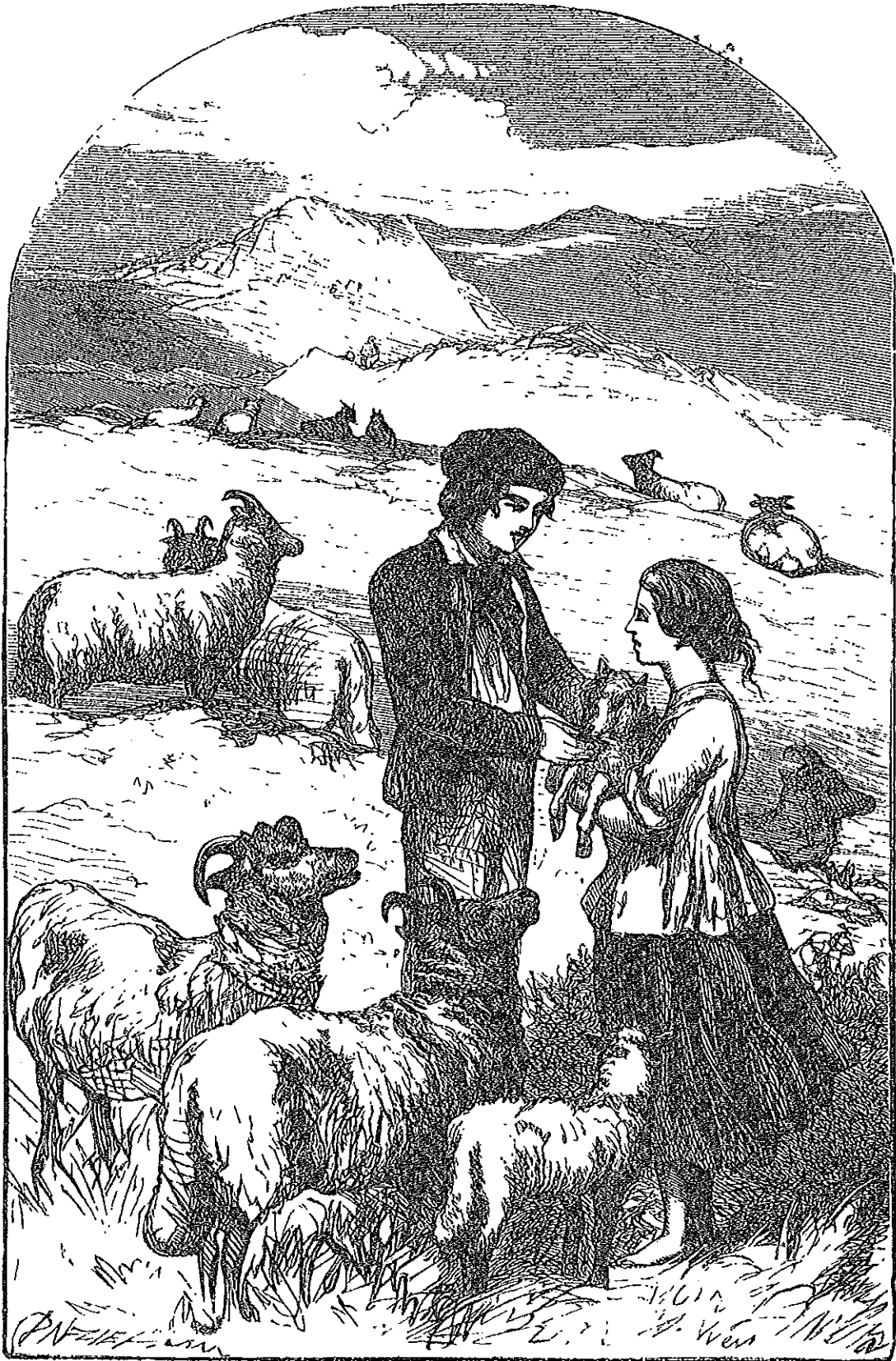
like the Highland glens, its strange rivers, "blind" (dry) at one moment, the next roaring and thundering along their rocky beds, its herds of noble beasts, free as air, its queer aborigines, so nearly allied to the ape generation, its bold tenants, the haughty implacable Kafirs, its strong-hearted colonists, who were then beginning to plant the land and sit down with their flocks and herds, their wives and their little ones—all, all were set before me in such glowing colours, aided too by pictures whereof I never doubted the realities, that I longed to go thither—to lead my mother and my young brother and sister into the midst of those pleasant pastures, where it was always summer, and where labour was attended with excitement, and was therefore less monotonous than in these Highland hills. But what these dreams came to shall be related in due time.

I had no deep affection for Effie—my best feelings were all bestowed on Sandy; still the child won upon me; perhaps if she had been pretty, I should, with the weakness of my sex, have yielded at once to the soft influence; but

she was not; neither did she evince any extraordinary regard for me; she was only good natured in a rough way, and when she brought me my dinner, would sometimes sit beside me and finish her own with a bannock, or "whiles" a green apple, which she would divide with me.

One day she found me in trouble about the youngest weaned lamb in the flock. She took it out of my arms, and wrapping her frock about it, sat with it till sundown, when she carried it home, and took it to bed with her. She came up the brae with it next forenoon, and when she received back the bowl from which I had eaten my broth, she said, "Tak care o' the lamb, Paul; it would hae droopit a' thegither but for me; I'm thinking to ca' it mine till it's big, and then I'll ask father no to have it killed—I'm fond o' the bit thing."

The lamb licked her hand and gambolled off; and after this, if it strayed to the hill side, I was sure to miss it. It was this lamb which I could not find on the evening in question. I stood at the head of the Brae wondering what to do, Brin fidgeting in and out of the furze bushes, and



barking with all his might, when I saw Sandy Hunter plunge into the loch just below the garden-ground of our farm. The water there was very deep. At our trysting-place, higher up, it was at times so shallow that even he could just touch the pebbles with his tiptoes. I shouted at the top of my voice, but the wind coming from the south-east, blew sharply in my face and seemed to carry my voice up the Brae. From where I was, I could see a yacht, tossed at the mouth of the loch by the gusts of wind which swept through the gulleys above Glen-arm; in ten minutes I knew the loch would be agitated like a sea, and I became certain that Sandy's motives for crossing at once were, that he might avoid the coming thunder-storm, of which he was somewhat, though he would not own it, afraid. I thought of nothing but Sandy's life and my own dreadful responsibility in the matter, so bidding Brin hie off ^{and} search for the lamb, an order which he obeyed without hesitation, I dashed down the Brae, across the stony track, across the turkey's dyke, through the rude garden, over another wall;

and kicking off my shoes, and casting my jacket beside them on the shore, I plunged into the loch and followed Sandy, whose head, with its accustomed adornment of leather bag and canvas wallet, I saw swaying up and down, and to and fro rather uneasily, as it seemed, about a hundred yards before me. The next thing that startled me was the sight of the red gig pulling towards Sandy; but a sail had been hoisted, and, as the gusty breezes from the gulleys in the hills caught it, it became difficult to manage; then a rope got foul, and the boat drifted off.

All this time my attention was divided between the swimmer and the little vessel, whose occupants evidently saw the boy's danger. I could discern Kilgarry himself in the stern-sheets, by his gestures showing how excited and annoyed he was at the awkwardness of his boatman; only the two were in the gig, but seeing the boat in such jeopardy as to feel sure Sandy's fate was independent of it, I struck out with all my energy, and at length got within a few yards of him. By this time his move-

ments were very feeble: the poor fellow, true to his employers, had strapped the leather bag so closely about his head, that it was an encumbrance; he was yet some five-and-twenty yards from the shore, along which the villagers of Glenarm were fast gathering, with a wail that filled the air like a death-chant, when I came up with him, only to see him sink suddenly below. Just at this spot the waters of the loch were clear and limpid as crystal, the rocks far beneath jutting out and forming a bay; but a deep treacherous under-current, like a bad heart masked by a smiling face, was at work, and drew the boy down with a force he was, in his exhausted state, unable to resist.

“Now God help him and me!” I exclaimed at that terrible moment; and being a capital swimmer, I dived down to seize him if I could. Engulfed as he was, he was quite sensible, and had the power to raise his arms as he was going down. While looking up in my face, he lifted his eyes with an expression which meant, “Oh Hardy, save me, save me!” then his limbs relaxed, as if in despair. I fancied there was

a reproachful look about the wan young features.

In a moment I determined to perish myself if I could not save him, and with one desperate grasp I clutched at his long hair floating upwards, next at the strap of the leather bag, and so swimming, all but overpowered, yet able to rise to the surface for breath, I succeeded in dragging the poor little gilly ashore.

I fainted on touching the land, and recovered consciousness only to behold poor Sandy's body laid out on the strand, with an ancient crone moaning over it, and Kilgarry kneeling beside it chafing the stiffened limbs.

The crowd had broken into groups, and stood apart; some of the women had used their best efforts to revive me, but I had no heart to move. I could only open my eyes and look wistfully at poor Sandy with his head on his grandmother's lap, a lifeless clod.

I had never seen the old woman close before, —a wretched looking creature she was, with a countenance "vexed with many storms;" grizzled locks floating wildly away from her thick

discoloured *mutch*, and a pair of eyes gleaming like an eagle's on either side of a beak, miscalled a nose. I had never thought to be sorry for such as her, but her moans made my heart ache. She looked up and saw my eyes fixed on her. "Aye, laddie!" she said, in a milder voice than I had expected, for her outcast condition I found afterwards was of her own choice in a great measure, owing, as it was said, to the troubles her daughter had brought upon her—"Aye, laddie, ye may weel look, ye hae filled my cup o' sorrow full this day. I had na thocht to care for the wean, but he had bound himself about my withered heart, and—" and she burst forth into a loud passion of tears—"I canna thole to lose him! Sandy! Sandy! will ye no wake; my bairnie, will ye never wake again? Awa' wi' ye, awa' wi' ye," she cried, working herself, as it seemed, into anger as she looked at me, "Awa' wi' ye, stranger lad that ye are, for fear I curse ye!" I covered my eyes with my hand, there was something so terrible in her demeanour.

"Be quiet, Janet," cried Kilgarry, authoritatively, "the child moves."

He opened his soft kindly eyes, his frame quivered, his mouth seemed convulsed for an instant, and then a placid smile played on his lips. I jumped up, I fell upon him, and cast my arms about him. I saw a flush float over his features—I put my hand to his heart; it beat, it throbbed quicker and quicker, warmth came into the stiffened limbs. Sandy lived!

I remember that the crowd drew near, that old Janet held out her withered hand to me, and that Kilgarry took Sandy living but helpless in his strong arms, and walked away to a wretched looking hut at the entrance of a glen, now almost curtained by the shades of night; and that when the boy had been rolled in blankets, which the laird had sent for, he, the laird, and I sat down together in that small highland shieling, and kept vigil over the sleeper, to whom Kilgarry had administered restoratives of his own prescribing, not forgetting a potion, and other comforts for the poor old crone.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER START IN LIFE.

POOR old Janet did not long survive the shock of Sandy's adventure. To this day her memory haunts me with reproaches. Comfort was suggested to me in the assurance that she had long been struggling against a mortal and internal disease; but I love not to think of her, save when I acknowledge my transgressions at the foot of that throne where mercy meets repentance.

The incidents of that period influenced my subsequent fortunes, in a fashion these pages are intended to illustrate.

To return, then, to the shieling at Glenarm. At daybreak, the storm which had moaned and whistled round the hut for hours, moderated, and the beams of a watery sun played through the aperture, miscalled a window, on Sandy's features. Old Janet slept on, the wife of Maglashan,

Kilgarry's boatman, watching beside her. So intent had I been on every movement of Sandy's that not a thought of what would be conjectured at the Brae farm concerning my absence, or the loss of the lamb, crossed my mind during the night; but so soon as I saw the flush of health returning to his cheek I rose to go, exchanged young Donald Maglashan's rough coat and trousers for my own gear, now dry, and after a cup of good coffee from the laird's provision basket, started homewards round the head of the loch. But first I stooped and kissed the cheek of my now beloved companion, the friend of my solitude. I began to realize the idea of my uncle's wrath at my suspicious absence, connected as it was with the disappearance of the lamb, and felt sure that I should have to leave the Brae farm. I own that but for Sandy the thought would have been a joyful one.

At a turn in the road, on my return, I discovered my cousin Effie waiting for me under a clump of old trees, near the gateway.

"Eh, Paul!" she cried, with more emotion than I had ever expected her to display, "I am

thankful you're come back. You did na steal the lamb!"

"Steal it!" I exclaimed, dashing past her up the garden, and through the house into the byre, where my aunt, in an evil humour, sat milking the cows.

On this scene I will not dwell long. High words passed between my uncle and myself; my two brutish cousins grinning at me, and muttering Gaelic in sarcastic tones. Besides having hints thrown out against my good faith, I was condemned as a luckless wight, who "was na worth his parritch." As to my tale about Sandy, it was cast in my teeth that "he had done nae gude sin' he had foregathered wi' sic a neer do weel gowk as myself," and for the lamb, my aunt sapiently remarked, if I "had na stole it, wha had?"

I did not wait to answer the last question, but fled up the Brae. To my surprise Brin rushed up after me; I felt sure he had been locked up to prevent his seeking the lamb. He was wild with joy, and by his gambols seemed to say,—
"Follow me, if any one can find the stray beastie it is me!"

He led me on, over rocks, beds of thistles, and through a labyrinth of whin bushes, till we came to an opening between the hills, through which wound a little rill. There, sure enough, was Effie's pet, quietly cropping the sweet fresh grass beside the stream, but now and then uttering a gentle bleating, like a child that talks to itself for very fear in a strange solitude. At Brin's bark it looked up, and came towards us, frisking with joy. I took it up in my arms, but was in no mood to return its gentle caresses.

On my way back I met Effie; she gave a cry of pleasure, clapped her hands, and cried, "I said ye'd never steal, Paul! I said ye'd never steal. I kent ye too true for that. Come awa' hame, lad; come awa' hame to breakfast."

"Never," said I. "Perhaps I was glad of an excuse to leave the Brae. "I'll get a living somewhere else, and with people who won't take me for a thief. Good bye, Effie; you and I have always been good friends, and I shall never forget you."

"Paul, Paul; you're no ganging awa' this fashion," cried Effie, frightened and sorrowful. "Laddie, where will ye gang to?"

“God knows, Effie,” was my reply, softened by her concern for me. “I am sorry to leave you and Sandy; but your people have never liked me. You’ll find my Bible among some books near my bed, and a clasp knife. The books are the minister’s; see that they are returned to him, and thank him for all his kindness to me; keep the Bible yourself, for my sake, and give the knife to Sandy. Don’t cry, Effie,” for she had sat down on a stone, with the lamb in her arms, and Brin at her knee, looking wistfully into our faces. “Don’t cry; some day”—and I felt my heart burn within me, with visions such as I had seen realised in the histories and biographies Mr. Macleod had lent me—“some day I will come back.” I paused and looked on the farm below, and the lands sweeping up from it; moors filled with game, the pastures teeming with cattle. “Yes,” said I, “Effie, I feel that I shall come back here some day, and we may meet again, and then I will thank you for all your good will to me.”

I sat down on the stone beside her, put my arm about her pretty bare shoulders, and kissed her. One caress I bestowed on the lamb, and

Brin, observing such unusual salutations, put out his paw after a fashion I had taught him. The dog and I shook hands, but I gave Effie the last adieus, then sprang up the Brae, forbidding Brin to follow. Before I reached the brow of the hill I called out a final "Good bye," adding, "don't forget Sandy," and crossing a ridge, was in a moment out of sight of the scenes in which I had suffered more for nearly two years than I have had space to describe.

The mists had lifted from the hills, and a glorious morning lighted up the landscape. The manse, with its pretty garden, lay before me—its gateway in my path. How ungrateful had I been not to think more of losing the good minister's friendship and assistance!

Strong in health, and with more experience of life before me than most boys of my age, I was marching onwards determining to reach Dumbarton, and thence work my way to Glasgow. I had but a trifle in my pocket, but I was far more active and observant than I had been before trouble overtook me, and I felt there must be

abundant ways and means in a large town for an honest lad to earn a livelihood, and even "increase his store." But God's providence brought the minister, Mr. Macleod, in my path that morning. He stood at the gate watching my descent from the hill, and calling me into the manse heard my story. After giving me some breakfast, he took me to his study, where, without offering further advice than desiring me never to swerve from my honest principles, he wrote a letter to my mother, gave me another to a friend of his at Glasgow, adding the means of helping me thither by way of Dumbarton, for I had but two shillings in the world, and, in short, having discovered that nothing but ill will could come of my remaining at the Brae farm, he did his best to set me on my feet, with my face turned from it. God has greatly blessed Mr. Macleod and his people, by preserving him to a green old age.

I was at Dumbarton by sunset that night. My heart stirred as I heard Dumbarton drums echoing across the Clyde; and walking straight to the guard-room I told my story to the

sergeant. The good-natured soldiers gave me some brose for supper—then stretching myself on the guard-room beadstead, beside a sleeping corporal, I too, despite the villanous atmosphere of the place, was soon in the land of dreams.

By noon, next day, I was in Glasgow, where, ere long, I received a letter from my mother. Fortunately, Mr. Macleod's letter had disarmed all feelings of disappointment at my leaving my uncle's, and she wrote as affectionately as usual, which was a real consolation to me.

Still the factory life, to which Mr. Macleod's letter had introduced me, could not be otherwise than distasteful to one of my adventurous spirit. Nevertheless, it would have been most ungrateful to Mr. Macleod to seek another livelihood, and I pursued my calling diligently, till another letter from my mother, containing unexpected news, summoned me to Portsmouth.

It was about this time that some kind people in England exerted themselves about emigration to the Cape colony. Excellent accounts had been received from parties sent out from certain estates, and societies were rapidly forming

to dispatch thither such of the respectable working population as were disposed to help themselves in the matter. A distant relative of my mother's was a secretary to one of these societies; he was a good man, and had never lost sight of us, in spite of my mother's marriage with a young sergeant. He was glad, too, perhaps, of an opportunity of providing for us in another land. Be this as it may, he visited my mother, and found her in her wretched lodging at Portsmouth, labouring to support her younger children, whom she was ill able to keep out of the streets and barracks; Jack's fragile health made him peevish and difficult to manage, and an Indian climate had unfitted her for our English winters. September was closing in, a passenger ship was waiting at Spithead to convey a few emigrants to Algoa Bay, and, as luck fell out, the wife of a Cape merchant was in want of a maid, her own having changed her mind suddenly after a cabin had been engaged for her. The credentials my mother presented were so satisfactory when compared with others, that in spite of the "incumbrances" of children,

this lady advanced her five pounds for her outfit, and our Inverness cousin gave us five more. Other arrangements were speedily made, and within a month after leaving Glasgow, I was busy in helping my mother in preparing for the voyage.

I had had a loving message from Sandy before leaving Glasgow; it was brought me by a Highland soldier on furlough, and with it payment for the knife, his superstitious feeling, he said, forbidding his acceptance of it, save in exchange for "a lucky sixpence," one of the little gilly's treasures. I drilled a hole in it, hung it round my neck, and wore it there till stolen from me by a being as superstitious as a Highlander, who probably looked upon it as a species of charm.

My Scottish cousin took a fancy to me, said he was glad I had left the Brae, as "Duncan was a hard man, and had his own sons to get on," and made me certain presents which proved valuable in due time.

These were some books, a small pocket compass, some bunches of beads and bright buttons,

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a few little looking-glasses in paper frames, some rolls of twine, pencils, a burning-glass, some packets of ink-powder, and bundles of pens, a bullet-mould, and a pocket-knife, more elaborate than the one I had given Sandy, for it had no less than two blades, a small saw, a corkscrew, a gimlet, a horse picker, a pair of tweezers, and a hole borer. Besides all these articles, the box contained a strong Holland housewife, made by Mr. Nicholson's daughter, and marked by her for the "cousin Paul," in whose fortunes she was also pleased to take an interest, and two maps of the country to which we were going, one an abstract of the other. There was also a package containing, in wonderfully small space, some tapes, threads, needles, pins, and buttons, wherewith to "begin a trade," if opportunity offered, and a packet of tobacco for the natives whenever we might meet with them. Letters had also been written to the colony with favourable mention of my good mother.

My mother was also well stocked; and such comforts as biscuits and tea were stowed in a basket for Marion and Jack. I was, of course,

to rough it; but the merchant's lady gave me permission to enter my mother's cabin on board ship when I pleased.

I was at this time barely fifteen years old, tall, active, and tolerably strong for my age; Highland air had fairly set me up in constitution. The captain asked me if I was willing to help in working the ship, and I, boldly replying, I was not only willing but able, he said he would see what I could do, and deal with me accordingly. He kept his word and so did I.

Certain signs, understood by sailors only, indicated a more rapid approach of the Equinox than usual, and we had not been settled in our new position an hour before we found that our foresails were loosening, and the men standing at the capstan bars.

Boats were coming out from the shore every moment—Mr. Nicholson was in the last: he did not leave us till quite dark; he shook hands with me at the gangway, and descended the ladder just as we began to heave in the swell of the ocean. In a few minutes the vessel swung from her anchor, and we could see the

light in the stern of the receding boat a good way off; at this moment I fancied I heard some one shouting through the air, but the tide was running very strong, the wind and sea rising; all our necessary canvas was hung out, and we were soon fairly off under a smart topgallant breeze, all hands busy, and such a row on deck as precluded any one but the initiated from speaking, or at least making himself heard when he did so.

We had been three days at sea, and the gale which had saluted us with all its force at the mouth of the Channel was abating, when I got leave to open the port of my mother's cabin on the windward side the ship. She was busy with her lady at the time, and I, as usual, took charge of Jack and Marion in her absence. The wind still blew very fresh, the night was hazy, and the spray dashed in my face as I leaned towards the port to fasten it back. But I revelled in the briny odours, which seemed to strengthen me after occasional hours of confinement under closed hatches, and peered into the great waste with a thrill that always lifts me

out of myself, so to speak, at sight of illimitable space, and the free air of heaven over it.

Jack and Marion were sound asleep; he behind a canvas screen, put up by the kind mate, Mr. Martin, she in my mother's berth; neither the creaking of the ship, nor the ocean's murmur disturbed their happy repose. Marion's cat, which shared our fortune—my mother had been unable to maintain the dog—slumbered at her feet, and a miner's lamp in the centre of the cabin cast strong points of light and shade upon the group. Satisfied that the air would do more good than harm in the cabin, I kept the port open, and watched the night at sea. By-and-bye I began to feel drowsy, and must have fallen into a doze, from which I was startled by a half-stifled cry, evidently, *outside the ship*. There were some stars out, and a young moon, over which the clouds were swiftly drifting. The night was no longer pitchy dark, not a speck was visible on the waters.

“Paul, Paul, Paul Hardy!” I heard the voice now distinctly, yet it was scarcely louder than a whisper. *It seemed close by!*

For the first time in my life I felt bodily fear. Was it a *wraith*, such as I had heard of in Scotland, or the Banshee that Irish soldiers talked about? I drew back terrified, but still I listened.

"Paul, Paul." I heard it again and still nearer. At this moment my mother entered the cabin with a lamp, which she handed to the steward ere she closed the door, not, however, before she had seen my white face.

"What is the matter, my boy?" she said. "You look chilled and half frightened. The wind is going down, my dear; get to your bed if you're not wanted on deck."

I could hardly speak, but rose and bid her good night in an unsteady tone. She attributed my manner to fatigue; and I, scarcely certain of the evidence of my senses, and unwilling—indeed, half ashamed to impart my terrified ideas to her—withdrew to my hammock on the lower deck.

I could not rest, and all next day the cry "Paul, Paul, Paul," haunted me. With a kind of fascination, I took my post as sentinel over the children the next night, the moment my mother had left the cabin; but Marion would

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not go to sleep, the cat gambolled about as if it were tipsy, and when I tried to open the port, I found the sea rougher than it had been at noon, when the scuttle had been closed by order. I knew the carpenter's mate was not far off now, so I hastened to shut it.

For two nights I heard nothing further.

The third day was calm, but there was what is called a "long swell" on. In an agony of curiosity and terror, and in spite of the heaving of the sea that evening, I dragged back the heavy rusty bolts, and opened the port for an instant, in dread, however, of the just wrath of the ship's carpenter, who was in the next cabin, "making all snug," as sailors term it.

Only for an instant, yet I heard the low stifled cry "Paul, Paul, *Paul!*" The last word rose louder as if in despair. What could it mean?

I lay on deck that night, and being called to the poop on some duty, I watched the first mate turn from me in his midnight beat; I leaned over the ship's side.

The moon had set, but the sky had cleared,

and many stars were out. The sea was very still. There was no appearance at this hour, nor any unusual sound during the first watch.

Just however as the bells struck, and the light from the east streaked the horizon, I beheld what I could only describe to the mate as a tombstone in the sea.

The outline was in shape like the headstone of a grave, with a figure sculptured on it. The form, gigantic and distorted, but lean as a skeleton, seemed to stand out in strong relief from the grey background; and what rendered the thing the more awful was, that it rose and sunk in the trough of the sea, now rampant on the crest of the wave, now buried up to the neck in the surging waters; at one instant it toppled over and floated on its back, but soon it was up again, bobbing its hideous head backwards and forwards, and, as the ship wore slightly, riding towards us on a tall wave.

Instantly I connected this horrible vision with the voice. I gazed till I literally felt my hair standing on end.

I beckoned one of the watch to me, and

pointed to the dread thing, that seemed gibbering at me with its stony head, which as I spoke fell into profile, and seemed about to pass by the ship. Again it rose, and now I could perceive its pinioned arms. The man I had summoned gave a terrible cry. His comrades darted to his side, and the second mate, attracted by the movement of the men, came among them. Uttering an imprecation which I will not repeat, he ran to the front of the poop, swung himself on to the deck, and soon disappeared down the fore-hatch.

Up came the first mate. He understood the vision at once.

“Confound that fellow, Reed!” he said; “he is as clumsy as a bull-dog on a jib-boom; he has just put enough shot in that black skeleton’s locker as keeps him above water, when there is no need for it. Send him here.”

Reed came, and grinned irreverently at his own clumsiness or economy. It seems he had not reckoned on the waste of proportions in the poor black cook, who had died the day before from fever, and been cast into the deep late on

the previous night, but had sewn him up with an insufficient weight at his feet. Thus the unhappy corpse had been floating close to the vessel all night, to the great terror of a lady who had looked out of her port at daylight, and closed it shuddering at the horrible thing apparently rising from the deep.

The mystery of the voice remained yet unexplained, and I began to fancy it an illusion.

The tombstone in the sea continued for many hours to haunt us; the passengers remonstrated, but the sailors for some superstitious reasons objected to convey any one to it for the purpose of sinking it. At last we left the hideous object in its solitude.

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CHAPTER V.

MORE INCIDENTS AT SEA.

ALL that I have related took place within a week of our being at sea, and we were now about the latitude of Brest—ships took a longer time then on their voyage than now—when one evening I took my station at a wide port. We were going with a steady wind on our quarter, and rejoicing in the prospect of a fair breeze through the Bay of Biscay. It grew lighter at eventide as we went farther south, and this night after watching that part of the vessel whence the voice invariably came, I distinctly saw a small lean hand, then its bare arm, wasted and white, extended from the ship's side. Terrified, but having presence of mind enough to prevent my giving the alarm suddenly, I rushed up to the main-deck, onwards to the poop, to the astonishment of the captain, who had just left the dinner-table, and

was enjoying the delicious air that filled the sails; there, seizing the first mate by the wrist, I drew him unresistingly in my frightened grasp to that part of the vessel overlooking the main-chains.

The small lean hand seemed to beckon some one, but the voice was mute.

The acute mate settled the question of this appearance as he had done the last.

“Some one is concealed in the ship,” he said, “in the steward’s store; but hold your tongue about it, my lad,” added the cautious Mr. Martin; “go below and send the steward to my cabin. I will follow.”

I did as I was bid, and then we all three proceeded to a stern cabin on the lower deck, where the steward kept various articles which were not needed for the first part of the voyage. Off this again was an inner cabin containing preserved meats, &c., and a small barrel of water for the captain’s special use. The largest store-room was pitch dark to us on entering it, and we had to wait till the ship’s carpenter could come and knock out one of the dead-lights. This

being done, in the pause that ensued we heard a groan from the reserve store-cabin.

Mr. Martin sprang over hampers, deal cases, and a sea-chest, but would have had to wait till the steward opened the door, of which he had left the key in his berth, had not the carpenter laid bare the secret; the door was burst open, and there on the floor, pale, emaciated, and in ragged clothes, lay Sandy Hunter! We drew him out, laid him on the sea-chest, bathed his temples and his lips with brandy, and after administering some refreshment in a spoon, very slowly, we gathered from him his story.

That on his grandmother's death the post-master at Glenarm dismissed him from his service, making other postal arrangements; that certain news had arrived of his father's having died in America; that in despair at having no prospect of employment, he had determined to seek me, and that taking his pipes under his arm, and having a few shillings in his pocket, the proceeds of the sale of the poor furniture of the shieling, he had followed on my track to Glasgow; there he learned from a factory lad that I

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had started for Portsmouth. Undaunted, but with his money much diminished, his pipes his only means of dependence, the little gilly played his way to the south, getting an occasional lift from coachmen and carriers. On reaching the great dirty garrison town, he made his appearance in the barrack-square with his instrument, and a young drummer, taking him under his patronage, brought him to his mother. Hearing Sandy's story, she informed him of our embarkation, and, no doubt anxious to get rid of an incumbrance, for she had no dwelling-place but a few feet square in a crowded barrack-room, proposed to take him on board the Adventure, when she went, as she said, to bid her sister, an emigrant, "good-bye." The poor boy, in his hurry, left his pipes behind him. Whatever the woman's intentions might have been, we could not now tell; she had no sister on board that we could discover, and at the last moment, when, as I have shown, the boat containing Mr. Nicholson was hurriedly let adrift from the Adventure, Sandy, encouraged by the woman, alarmed at the prospect of going back to Ports-

mouth without the chance of employment, and finally, seeing a light through one of the ports, obeyed the impulse of the moment, and sprang like a cat into the main-chains as the boat rose on a wave; the next instant we heard the cry I have before described. It came, doubtless, from the woman herself, who could feel by no means certain that he had succeeded in reaching the ship. He had scarcely got in at the port, and concealed himself behind a huge hamper, when the steward, giving a glance round the little den with his lamp held up, shut the door, and locked it behind him; in another moment the carpenter's mate going his rounds outside the ship to make all "taut" in his department, closed the port, and left poor Sandy in total darkness.

He had an old wallet with him containing a great hunch of bread and a lump of cheese, but his condition, for one not used to the sea, was pitiable. Dismay at his new position drove away sea-sickness, it is true, but, in the first place, he dared not call out for sheer dread of the consequences, for he had had no experience of the disposition of salt-water sailors, and in

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the next, the roar of the waves close to his ear, the whistle of the wind through the gear of the main chains, and the creaking and groaning of a rather ill-shipped rudder, with the constant thumping against the ship's side of a jolly-boat slung overhead, precluded all possibility of his cries being overheard, save in the store-room adjoining, or in my mother's cabin.

Thus passed two whole nights and two days. On the second day he ate some of his provision, and to his joy found that close to him was a barrel, which he was sure contained water or some kind of liquid, but youth's buoyant hope soon yielded to the pressure of disappointment: there was evidently no means of getting at the water, and poor Sandy cried, "God help me!" from the depths of his very soul.

All at once he bethought him of my knife. *It had a gimlet in it.* In the utmost dismay, he began to fear he had forgotten it, for he had been using it just before quitting the barracks, and remembered laying it on a bench. You may be sure he felt anxiously about him for it, and—yes, thank Heaven!—it was in a leather

pouch, with what was left of his poor earnings. He drew a straw from the hamper close by, bored a hole in the top of the barrel, and imbibed a slow, but delicious draught.

The hamper contained bottles, but it was too closely packed to yield to his enfeebled powers. So much the better, perhaps, though, on the second night, he would have given much for something to strengthen him. On the third, while still drowsy from exhaustion, his poor store being out, and water through a straw his only means of sustenance, he was startled from an uneasy slumber by the sudden opening of the port-hole. The carpenter's mate passed on, but the light discovered a plenteous store of well-filled boxes and canisters of preserved meats. The only thing, however, available in the poor gilly's state was a bag of rice, which he at once appropriated to his use.

Now he heard some one cry, "Paul," and oh, happy moment! he distinguished my voice answering my mother from the port-hole of her cabin as she left it. He raised himself, and uttered my name; but, as it has been

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shown, I never answered him. This occurred two or three times, the boy ever anxious to make me aware of his condition before any one else became informed of it. Alas! when his hopes ran highest, the scuttle was sure to be closed by the carpenter's mate on his hurried rounds; and finally, when those hopes were raised by the admission of light, he was almost frightened to death by the horrible apparition of the black skeleton, in its canvas shroud, swaying about in the sea, right opposite his hiding-place. On the eighth day, half dead with famine, fatigue, and disappointment, he used the means I have described to discover himself, and, as soon as he was out of the sick ward, was handed over to my care.

A young sailor, William Dean, evinced a great interest in Sandy, and took him off to share his mess; but the boy clung most to me, for a time, and then Willie met with an accident. He was out on the studding-sail-yard one day, when he became giddy on the boom, and had only time to scramble back, before he fainted and fell on the deck.

Some days before this happened, I had felt at

a loss to account for Sandy being ever on the watch, so to speak, over William Dean. He knew throughout the day and night where Willie was to be found, in the shrouds, sail-mending, asleep, or on the forecastle; and now he took possession of the young sailor in his fainting-fit, and would let no one else come near him. At last he discovered that a severe injury quite disabled his friend, and beckoning to me, asked me to fetch the ship's surgeon.

“And dinna bring ony body wi' ye but the doctor, Paul,” said Sandy. “Come back, lad, as soon as ye can.”

I called the surgeon, who was at dinner, and not disposed to hurry himself; then returned to my friend.

“Paul,” said Sandy, as I met him coming for me, “would you bring your mother hither?”

I stared at him. “What for, laddie?” I asked.

“Eh, Paul, dinna be fashed wi' me for keeping Willie's secret frae ye. Will ye fetch your mither the noo?” and he led me to the young sailor's hammock. He drew aside Dean's blue shirt, and showed me the round and polished

throat of a woman. Her collar-bone was broken.

I ran for my mother at once, and that evening William Dean's name was struck off the list of able-bodied seamen on board the Adventure.

The poor girl's story was an uncommon one, but we did not hear it till we met her long afterwards at the Cape—and far up the country then—under circumstances which I shall have to refer to in due course, and in their proper place. Sandy lying on the deck, convalescent and observant, had suspected her secret before the accident discovered it.

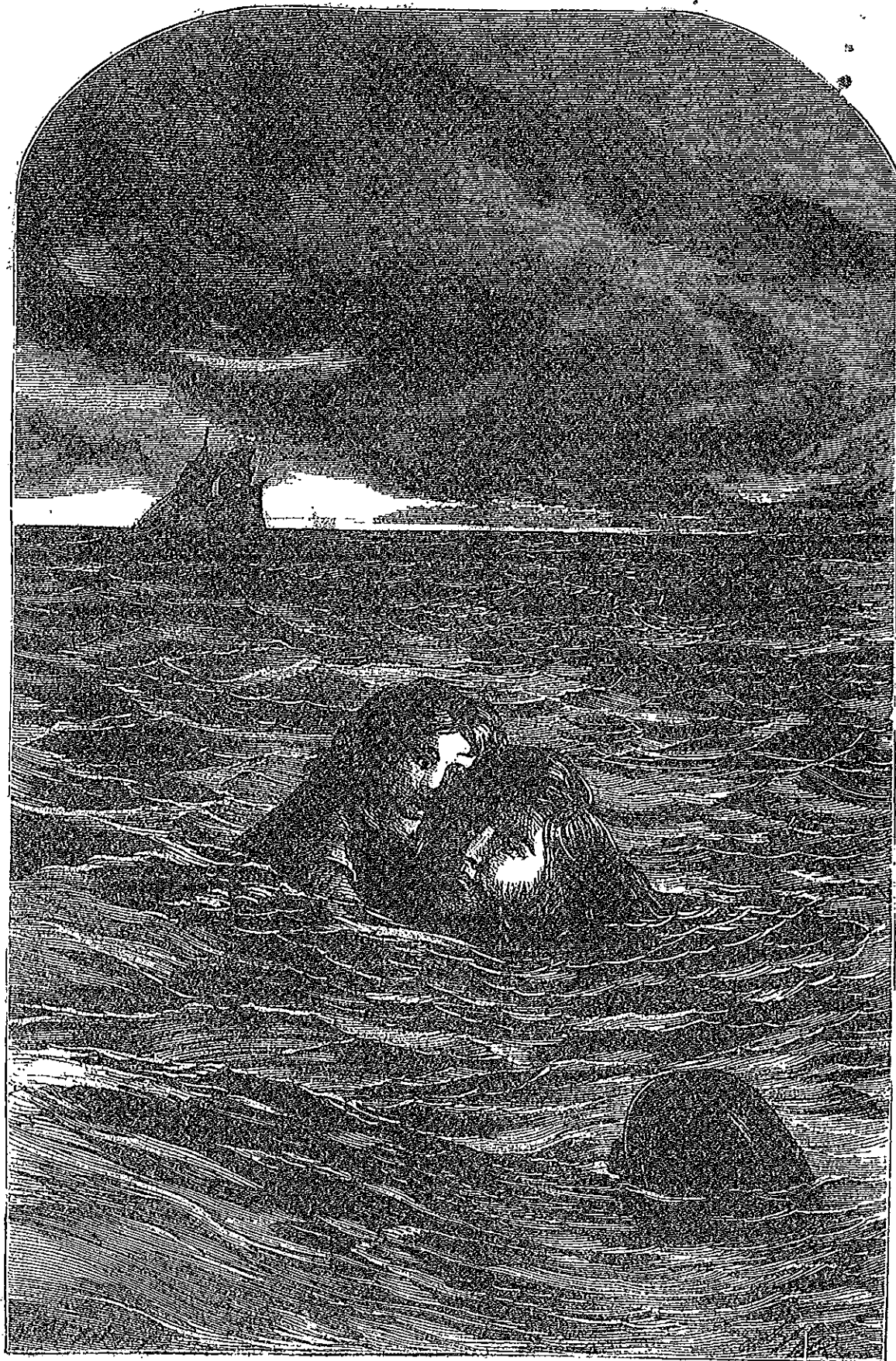
One more incident at sea, and then the reader will land with us at Port Elizabeth, now a thriving seaport on the south-eastern coast of Africa.

I have alluded twice to Mr. Martin, the first mate. He was as lithe and active as a monkey, but with sound sense and a kindly heart. He took an immense fancy to my sister Marion, and, when not on duty, would sit smoking his cigar near the large port by the poop steps. Here he would take the child on his knee, and keep her,

in spite of my mother's gentle remonstrances, till Marion would fall asleep in his arms. Thus they sat together one evening, when the ship was moving almost imperceptibly, but by no means slowly, through the sea.

It was a hot night, the wind coming from the coast of Africa, and the vessel cutting her way through a blaze of phosphoric lights which fairly gemmed the ocean close to us. Beyond lay the watery waste on which the shades of night were gathering; above not a star was to be seen as yet, though the upper currents of air were beginning to stir the lead-coloured clouds.

My mother was with her mistress, I busy with some halyards on the poop, Jack asleep in his hammock, when I heard a cry—"A man over-board." I had often thought if such a contingency should happen, how I should meet it, and only that very afternoon had, by good luck, busied myself about the ropes which suspended the jolly-boat from the stanchions. To loosen this boat was now the work of a minute, and then four smart lads and I were lowered in it without loss of time, for I had long known how



to handle an oar. We pulled off with all our might.

Meantime an old sailor had let go the life-buoy, and we could see its light floating some fifty yards away in a very short space of time.

I had no idea who had fallen overboard.

It was the first mate, with my little sister in his arms.

But he shall tell the tale himself.

“I was sitting close to the port,” he said, “with the child asleep upon my knee, her head on my shoulder, and I in a half doze, smoking my cigar, when the ship gave a sudden lurch, and the port being a wide one, over I went into the waves. I had the wit to keep a firm hold of the child, and the strength to swing her across my back, bidding her clasp her arms about my neck. Just awoke out of her slumber, the little creature seemed more surprised than frightened, and the first thing I said to her was ‘keep still;’ she answered me by a silent hug, and I put forth all my powers. My greatest dread was lest we should not be missed; but just as my heart sank

at seeing the ship speed away from us, I saw the life-buoy cast overboard.

“‘Keep steady, Marion,’ I said; ‘are you afraid?’

“‘No; I am *not* afraid,’ was the answer, in a firm voice.

“But the life-buoy floated off from us, and soon I could scarcely perceive the hull of the vessel. I rose in the water (he was a noble swimmer) and shouted. The sea was tolerably smooth, but by no means calm; the murmur of the waves was all I could hear. The child clung to me, but did not speak; I feared she might have fainted; I whispered her name—she gave me a silent embrace.

“At length there was a sound of oars; I shouted again. The boat stopped in its course; you were listening; I called till I was hoarse, and heard the movement of the oars in the rullocks once more, but you went another way. I was in despair. The ship was quite out of sight. I believe I gave a frantic yell, and when I listened again I heard you drawing near; I just had strength to cry, ‘This way, my lads,’ and to hear the answer ‘Aye, aye,’ and a cheer,

and I remember little more till we were dragged up the gangway."

As for me, when Marion was swung into my lap, drenched and icy cold, I screamed, she was so corpse-like. She lay there like a little mermaid, with her dripping hair flowing over her shoulders, and her teeth set. There were not wanting pea-jackets to roll her up in, and I held her to my bosom till she was warm. My mother happily had not missed her, nor had she dreamt that the "man overboard" was Mr. Martin, and those about her took care she should not be enlightened until it was necessary.

The child was sound asleep when we got on board. The captain of the ship received her in his arms without a word, and she was safe in his berth before the secret was let out. My own conduct in previously inspecting the boat was duly commented upon and applauded.

The first thing little Jack said to Mr. Martin on hearing of the adventure, was, "I say, Mr. Martin, what were the sharks about when you were in the sea?"

The first mate shuddered—"Thank God," he said, "I never thought of them."

Ten days after this we doubled the Cape, and ran up to Algoa Bay.

Many of us were loth to part. Mr. Martin made Marion a handsome present, to be put in the Cape Town Bank for her against future contingencies; neither did he forget Sandy and me. The ship's captain, who had never taken much notice of Fanny, in spite of her romantic tale, but who was a good-hearted man, took Fanny Dean ashore himself, and got her a place as housemaid; the merchant's lady was bound for Graham's Town, and accommodated my mother and her younger children at the back of a bullock-wagon; and Sandy and I, after very good treatment from the landlord of the single inn in the town, or hamlet as it was then, followed in the wake of a party of emigrants. "Puffkin," Marion's grey tabby, was her parting gift to her good friend, Mr. Martin, first mate of the Adventure.

CHAPTER VI.

A YOUNG COLONY.

IN those days the colony of the Cape was young. A farm was an *unnatural* curiosity. Our first encounter with wild beasts was with a harmless troop of quaggas, much quieter than I had expected to find the "wild apes" of the wilderness, for a wilderness it was, despite the advance, for I will not use the term, march, of civilization, through its tangled paths. The monkeys screeched at us from the first wood we came to. At night we heard the howl of the wolf, the call of the jackal, and the laugh of the hyena. At daybreak, in crossing a drift or ford, we saw the footprints of lions, but on the evening of the second day we came up, at Assegia Bush, with a regiment halting on the march. Here we had a lesson in tent fixing.

The first thing to consider in this part of bush education is the nature of the ground, which, to

begin with, should be chosen near a river or *vley* (a pool). Then select a mound, if you can find one, if not, dig a trench round the spot to catch any rain that may fall, and after ascertaining which way the wind blows, so that your tent may stand with its back to it, get the hands together to raise it. The operation we saw commenced as follows, and was a very picturesque performance of its kind:—

First, five men were selected for each tent; No. 1 man then drove a peg in the earth between his feet; next, the tent was spread on the ground, the flap side uppermost, and the pole fixed in the cap, the end of the pole being firmly set against the peg between the pole-man's feet. At a signal the tent was raised, and Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5 fastened the cords and drove in the pegs, No. 1 keeping inside, and holding the tent flap (or door) hooked, while the men outside did their part of the work.

N.B. Knowing hands will always take care to slacken cords at the first sign of wet weather, otherwise good-bye to your canvas house, perhaps in the middle of a storm at night. Three men may, on a pinch, erect a tent.

Sandy said he would have "likit fine to have marched with the soldiers," who were very kind to us, and so indeed should I, but I determined to see my mother and the little ones settled in their home with the merchant's family before I left them, and we plodded on, the troops hanging about our wake, on and off, and making a stir in the wilderness with their cavalcade and merry music.

The part of the colony through which we passed is now so well known, even to the untravelled reader, that I shall indulge in little description of what then struck me with such intense and delighted surprise. The wide-spreading park-like plains; the rivers that we crossed at noon on foot, and while we sat beside them in the "heat and burden of the day," saw coming down with "a sound of many waters;" the strange deceiving salt-pans, looking like ice in those parched regions; the echoing whip-cracks of the Hottentots who drove the only two wagons of our party; the call of the buck-ma-keerie, or whip-poor-will of the Cape; and though last, not least, our entry into Graham's Town in rear of the —nd Regi-

ment; a troop of Hottentot women in fantastic guise, yellow *douks* (handkerchiefs) on their heads, pink jackets on their shoulders, and short blue skirts depending from their wide proportions, and exhibiting the smallest of feet and ankles as they spun round to the gay music of the martial band, dancing before us into the straggling metropolis of the eastern frontier.

My mother and her younger children found a home with the kind Cape merchant in a pretty white house, standing in a garden at the entrance to the town. Sandy and I took up our abode *pro tem.* in the yard of a hostelry, where we slept soundly on Hottentot mats, after a supper provided for us gratis by the kind landlord, Mr. Masterman, to whose care Mr. Nicholson had committed me. He is living still, and has grown rich in the colony. His hotel is now quite a fine mansion. Long may he flourish!

He took much interest in Sandy and myself, entered into our boyish desire for adventure further "forward" than Graham's Town, and put me in the way of making a little money by my wares, before we started.

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There grew in the main street of Graham's Town—I hear the place “knows it no more”—a lonely tree. Beneath its sheltering boughs I took my stand with the pack Mr. Nicholson and his daughter had filled for me. Two empty barrels and a board formed my table, and Sandy was my book-keeper. Poor old Janet had given her grandson some idea of writing and arithmetic during the long winter evenings at Glenarm. How little she had thought where her teaching would be turned to account!

We had a certain pride in looking business-like in a colony where men learned to live by business, and though Sandy had no fixed ideas of how we were to prosper in the long-run—for remember, he was but a Highland gilly, who had spent great part of his life in sporting and idling in the Argyleshire hills—he thought everything I did was right, and *must* come to good!

I soon had reason to think the same of him.

So there he stood at my elbow, with a large slate and long pencil in his hand. He made wonderful hieroglyphics, to be sure, but explained them most satisfactorily afterwards, when

we counted out our money. "Our" money, I would call it; but the gilly did not say "Aye" to this.

I spread my wares out on my extemporized counter with great neatness and precision, packets of tape, piles of pins, hanks of thread of all colours, fancy boxes of needles, and at the bottom of the pack there turned up a lot of scissors and some one-bladed clasp-knives, with some women's thimbles. These, with my paper-framed looking-glasses and strings of beads and buttons, made a dazzling array, and had I had ten times the consignment, they would all have gone before mid afternoon, such was the demand for simple wares like mine.

I must not omit to mention that we were very tolerably dressed for the occasion; Mr. Martin and his brother mates having got up a subscription at Port Elizabeth for an addition to our outfit. We had a straw hat a-piece, a moleskin jacket, a checked shirt and gay cotton cravat, corduroy trousers, and a pair of strong leather shoes of the country. Socks we had eschewed altogether.

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By four o'clock my table was cleared. The soldiers' wives purchased all my woman's wares, a young Dutch burgher gave me more than I asked for a sack of flints, which I forgot to mention as among my stores; a *Winkler*, a sort of general storekeeper, paid me retail prices for my scissors and knives, which he bought wholesale; the Hottentots quarrelled over the looking-glasses, but paid for what they took, and a Kafir woman stole up for the last one of the lot, and screamed with delight as I gave it to her. The beads and buttons, like the looking-glasses, disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, Sandy securing payment, dropping the silver into one pocket, and giving change from the other as rapidly as it was possible to do, while "taking tent" of the earnings.

Meanwhile, a curious group of spectators had gathered round us. Some officers riding by halted and looked on, and a lady seated on a beautiful horse watched the winding-up of the proceedings; and on inquiry, finding we had secured five pounds sterling, minus half-a-crown, took her purse from her saddle-pocket, and ex-

tracting that sum from its depths, cast it into the open pouch, and wishing us good luck, rode away with a light laugh, whose gentle echoes often visit me to this day. The face seemed to me like something I had seen in a dream. Months afterwards, in the wilderness, I recognised it as that which had smiled at Kilgarry from the commodore's yacht when the Red gig won the race on the Clyde.

When I took my mother the money I had made by my wares, I found her sitting at work in the verandah of the mansion in which she was installed as housekeeper. Of gentle aspect and rather delicate appearance, I was delighted to see her so suitably placed, and a serene spirit of content shining in her soft brown eyes such as I had never noticed there before. Her small white cap was the neatest thing possible, and her trim figure was set off by a well-made lilac dress, with a linen collar and muslin apron, all as fresh as fresh could be. In short, she looked the very picture of repose and placid enjoyment. Her days of hard labour were over. I have told you she was of a quiet temperament; but when I laid the

money on the bench beside her—two sovereigns and a heap of silver—she threw her arms round me, pressed me to her in a close embrace, but did not utter a word.

“I am wondering, Paul,” she said, when she could speak, “I am wondering what your father would say if he could see us now!”

“He would say, mother,” said I, “that such a good mother deserved a better son; as it has turned out, it is very well that I left the Brae farm, but I was a selfish fellow in the way I went to work.”

“That is all over now, Paul.”

“I am thankful, too, that I went there,” said I, “for I have learned something about farming that may be useful to me; for you see, mother, I——”

I looked in her face hesitatingly.

“You want to go further, Paul—is that it? You and Sandy were both bewitched, I think, by reading Robinson Crusoe on board ship.”

“Ah, mother!” cried I, with a sigh, “only think that, after all, Robinson Crusoe is not true!”

“Well, my dear,” replied she, “I don’t know

much about that, but I am afraid you would not like to stay in Graham's Town; if you did——”

“Mother, do you wish me to stay?”

“Not if you wish to go, Paul; but where would you go to?”

I could not help thinking of Effie, who had asked just the same question some months back.

The end of this conversation was, that my mother consented to let me go with Sandy, in company with three emigrant families bound for the Klipplaats, where a friend of Mr. Masterman's would receive us, and forward us on to Glen Lion. There a situation in the homestead of a highly respected colonist was bespoke for us, and we were in great spirits at the prospect of thus trying our fortunes in a new world.

One fact alone gave us courage. We were told that, as a general rule, men who came to the colony penniless might work their way to afflu-^{ence}, while those who brought capital constantly failed, because they were obliged to employ others in doing what needed their own hands

and eyes. We found afterwards that this was quite true.

I told my mother this. She smiled; but I am sure she thought I should do as well by remaining in Graham's Town. However, she knew I longed for the freedom and novelty of the wonderful country I had read about for months; besides, she had no certainty of placing me at once and advantageously in a store in the town; neither was I qualified for such a situation; and finally, although she never said so, I cannot doubt that at first she looked on Sandy as somewhat of an incumbrance. I should have loved the gilly under any circumstances; and as poor Jack was neither strong enough nor old enough to be so companionable as my associate of hours that but for him had been weary indeed, my comrade was a real 'godsend, and so my mother thought afterwards.

Had Jack been nearer my own age, Sandy's companionship might not have been so necessary to me as it was; but the gilly and I had been associated together when each needed a friend, I most of the two; I had, as he chose to think,

saved his life, though I shuddered when I considered how nearly I had been the means of destroying it; I had, too, as I have before observed, occasional compunctions about the agony I had brought on poor old Janet; and, above all, the fact of the lad having followed me like some faithful dog—I mean anything but disparagement to Sandy Hunter in saying so—was and would ever be a steady bond of union between us. In the course of this narrative, the circumstance of its being written in the first person brings with it the need to speak less of myself than of my associate. I rejoice over this need; I love to record every instance of my friend's sagacity, patience, and affection; and the more so, that I am convinced he would do the same by me were he the relater of our adventures. It is well, therefore, for my reader that I am the narrator, for, with Sandy in the background, and the author foremost, the book, I fear, would bear but a comparatively sorry interest.

At last the day came when I was to open another page in the story of my life. I bade my mother farewell with a beating heart, carried

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Marion in my arms to school, and kissed her at the gate; I got leave for little Jack to march with our party for the first mile, and sent him back in charge of some soldiers whom we met on the way, quite happy with some trifling gift.

At night we bivouacked on the top of a hill, where it was piercing cold, and next day, on reaching a large farm, we found that a rumour of war was afloat, at which news our emigrant friends called a council of war, and resolved on halting, if not returning to Graham's Town.

Forthwith Sandy and I sat down near a bush to cogitate what *we* should do. The farmer stated that if the Kafirs *were* "up," it was not on this side the colony, but towards the sea, beyond the Fish River, and that until certain indications took place, we were safe to travel any distance. He admired our spirit, when we told him we were determined to proceed, and pronounced me "of the right sort" when he saw me spread my map on the grass, and take my compass from my pocket. Perhaps my boldness arose from two causes. First, I had never had

the experience of danger; secondly, I bore within me a burning desire to enter upon action, to be free; and as for Sandy, he was as ready as the Israelitish maiden to follow the destinies of the only being he truly loved, and I may add, trusted implicitly.

The boy, young as he was, was a good shot; for you know he had ranged the moors often with Kilgarry's keepers; but we had no arms beyond my small pistol, which I had only lately learned to use, under Mr. Masterman's instructions. The good farmer accepted it in exchange for a small rifle, which had belonged to a son now at Cape Town, we promising faithfully to redeem our pledge *when we could*; to this he added a powder-horn. His wife renewed our stock of provision in our havresacs, and as the road to the next military outpost wound visibly before us, below a steep declivity, there was clearly no difficulty in advancing some way further on our route towards Glen Lion, whither we were ultimately bound. After a good supper with the kind people at the farm, we lay down to rest in a clean pent-house

off the stables, and at cockcrow, long before light, we were up.

As soon as the sky began to glow in the east, we ran down to the river, behind the house, and bathed. After this, a Hottentot herdsman gave us a good draught of milk out of a *basket*, woven so closely as to retain any liquid, and his wife added a heap of cold potatoes, not forgetting salt. The family were yet asleep, the emigrants still snoring in their wagons, and the jackals only creeping homeward after their night's adventures, as we cut a goodly staff a-piece from a tall, sturdy oak which shaded the farm-house *stoep*, or terrace, and for the first time abjuring shoes, we slung them across our shoulders. The turf beneath our feet was soft as velvet, and embroidered with flowers of gorgeous hue; the sprews came glancing' out from the bushes, arrayed in all manner of colours, and the oxen fastened to the wagons pleaded so loudly to be free, now that the wild beasts had retired to their lairs, that we could hear them lowing for some time after we had started on our way.

I had no compunction about leaving the emi-

grants; they were evidently people of unsettled purpose.

We were in the colony still, and might always find shelter at night time in a fort, a farm, a trading station, or with wagon *lagers* (bivouacs). I determined to write to my mother as soon as opportunity offered, which it did at the first military post, and so work my way leisurely, with Sandy, towards the hills overshadowing the Hall's settlement at Glen Lion.

So we proceeded till we had crossed the Kat River—so often, indeed, that we sometimes hardly knew whether we were to the east or west of it—and then the beauty of the scene tempted us to sit down and rest, for our feet were weary and cut with the stones.

Until this moment I had never thoroughly realized my position.' We had not passed the different military outposts without being questioned. Our story excited interest, and always obtained us assistance; but we were now well northward of the British lines, and yet at some distance, as far as I could judge, from a trader's house called Klipspringer's station, where, ac-

ording to arrangement, I expected to find some stores and a fresh kit awaiting me. Sandy and I always contrived to wash our linen on the march, drying it while we bathed or sat in the sun.

Hitherto we had had no trouble in discovering the best drifts or fords on the various streams we passed; but the Kat River winds like a snake, and after crossing and re-crossing it this hot morning, we reached what seemed a tributary branch of it, and there discovered, in spite of map and compass, that we should have great difficulty in finding a safe line of road.

This scarcely daunted us, from the fact that hitherto we had done so well. Still I had had no opportunity till now of realizing the perfect isolation of such a wilderness.

Accustomed to the mountain solitudes and sportsman life of Argyleshire, Sandy took the matter very quietly; and having satisfied his hunger from our wallet, and his thirst from the stream, he lay watching me as I bent over my compass, till sleep overpowered him.

The difficulty lay not so much in tracing the

route to Klipspringer's, as in knowing how to thread the way thither through tangled paths and kloofs infested by wild beasts; and I began to repent not having waited a week at B——post for an escort of soldiers bound for a temporary encampment but little out of our road; but my fault had always been to trust to my own powers, which so much needed the benefit of experience.

So here we were in the wilderness—two lads under fifteen and sixteen years of age—with no great store of rations, but with perfect health, active limbs, tolerably sharp wits, a rifle and small quantity of ammunition, a good knife a-piece, and some tobacco and beads, with which to conciliate Kafirs, who seemed to have put aside all ideas of war for the present, and who, in meeting us, had given us the “good morrow,” and begged *baseila*—a gift—in friendly fashion; we had, too, thank God, the invaluable compass and map. We were, however, nearing the territory of a chief whose disposition towards the English we knew to be at the least uncertain. Still we had heard that Klipspringer had no idea of quitting his station, which we hoped

to reach without difficulty; be this as it may, whether imprudent or rash, here we were, and we must make the best of it.

It was a glowing day in the Cape summer; scarce a sound was heard save the ripple of the river over the stones, and the occasional call of the buck-ma-keerie. Sandy, with his head in a bush, and a superb spray of jessamine fanning his brow, slept as sound as youth can sleep; I, with a handkerchief tied over my head to save it from the sun, lay on the grass, and conned the map, but a drowsiness soon came over me, and I could hardly keep my eyes open. Presently I discovered that however still and motionless everything appeared, all nature about us was teeming with life, and a sudden dread of snakes seized me. I jumped up, and with my stick beat the bush and grass about us. Still Sandy slept on. There was no trace of snakes, and I lay down again. With eyes half open and drowsy brain, I watched our lair. At that time of day there was no fear of wild beasts, but the low hum of insects grew into a murmur as I listened. The creatures of the wilderness had trodden a little pathway up the

bank towards us, from the river, and now in the centre of this path to my surprise I saw the earth suddenly open, and almost as suddenly close again. I leaned cautiously forward. The aperture I had observed was not larger than half-a-crown, but I could not find a trace of it now. While bending intently over the spot, my nose close to the ground, a little lid in the earth was lifted—and then down it popped. My eyes were somewhat dazzled by using them in the light, the letters of my map had turned blood-red under my intense gaze, and I could see nothing explanatory of this curious incident; but while peering down, up flew the lid once more, and a pair of sharp little eyes looked forth for an instant; the next, the owner of them disappeared, drawing after him the roof of his house in alarm at the great shadow over it. With my clasp-knife, and acting on a boyish impulse, I besieged this tiny fortress, but all my efforts were in vain, the ground was hardened by the sun, the small captain of the stronghold had shut himself in so securely that all my attempts at conquest and discovery were baffled, and it

was not till some months afterwards that I had an opportunity of exploring one of these extraordinary homes of the insect tribe, a spider's nest, in which old Daddy long-legs, with his wife and his little ones, reside in security; the lid or roof moving on a perfect hinge, the interior being fully adapted to the comfort and convenience of the community.

By-and-bye there came past us the queerest beetle you can imagine, moving backwards, and pushing, as she went, a ball. I watched her down the bank into a track of sand, and saw her travelling on, no bad type of perseverance, and as such, encouraging to me. The ball contained eggs, and the beetle's object was to ensure the safety of her treasure by gathering a panoply of sand about it as she moved to some chosen spot. She neither turned to the right nor to the left, but pursued the track in her quaint fashion, concentrating all her powers on her work. "Perseverantia Victor," said I aloud, and Sandy awoke.

CHAPTER VII.

KAFIRLAND.

HE could hardly see at first, and fancied himself, I believe, in a dream; but in a few minutes he jumped up, and began to look about him.

I thought him no bad representative of Young England in the wilderness, as he stood before me, his broad-flapped hat shading his honest face, his loosened shirt displaying a fine open chest already tanned by exposure on sea and shore, our rifle poised on his arm, and, in short, his whole well-knit frame and attitude indicating a determined and settled spirit. He was shorter and broader than I, but not stout; and as active as a cat.

I am afraid my demeanour was not as "heart-some" as he liked; for, after examining my countenance, he said—"Paul, are you weary? surely you would na' turn back, lad?"

"No," said I, resolutely; "but we must con-

sider how we had better roost for the night here, for my right foot has got an ugly cut, and I should not like to fall lame in the bush."

"Eh, Gude forbid!" said Sandy, kneeling down to examine the wound, which he proceeded to bind up in his handkerchief. "We will do very well the night, roosting, as you say, in yon tall tree aboon the bink: I have had my sleep by day; it is your turn next."

"The solitude is awful, Sandy," I remarked.

"Aye!" was his quiet reply.

At this moment we heard a shout across the stream, and splash went a great stone into the water beneath! We looked at each other in silence, and Sandy jumped up, rifle in hand. I felt very helpless with my poor sore foot. Another scream was followed immediately by a shower of stones, one of which fell on the bank near us, and rolled down again. The sun dazzled us so that we could discern nothing for two or three minutes; and then, lo and behold! a great baboon saluted us from a rock with a yell like the cry of an infuriated human being. Sandy presented his rifle at him; on seeing which the creature, with a screech, sprang into a tree,

from which he abused us in his own peculiar language, to his heart's content.

We did not like our neighbour, feeling certain he must belong to a colony; and, sure enough, his cries soon drew a troop of his fellow-creatures to the cliffs. Some of them carried their young in their arms; and it was amazing to see how they clambered and danced with their screaming burdens. One little chap fairly swung himself by his tail from a bough, and gibbered at us with grins of unmitigated hatred. At length, Sandy determined to fire on them; "for," said he, quietly, "we may as well take our chance of savage men as be stoned to death by wild beasts, so here goes, though my ammunition wont hold out at this gait."

We were both sorry when we found he had hit the baboon with a baby in her arms, which yelled horribly: mother and child both fell together down the face of the rock, some of the troop scrambling after them, and the old fellow following in an agony of wrath and sorrow. It was pitiable to see his distress; the poor little imp was not injured, but evidently would not leave its mother, though she was

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soon dead; and then the old mate set up such a dismal howl as waked up the echoes round about us.

We did not like the sight, and, gathering up our belongings, prepared to mount the bank and seek another bivouac. I could move but slowly, which turned out well for me, for putting my sore foot cautiously forward, I recoiled on perceiving what Sandy had nearly taken for a bright silk handkerchief—it was an enormous puff adder, one of the most deadly enemies of man in the wilderness.

Its gorgeous colouring reminded me of the back of a dolphin, but we did not wait to examine it. Our rifle was only single-barrelled, and we had no mind to pause for the purpose of reloading to shoot the creature, a common mode of despatching it; so, gliding aside, we both made for a tree, the most natural fortress for safety under our present circumstances, whence we could take a survey of our position, while we watched our foes and held a council of war.

Sandy was soon perched on a bough, and assisted me in getting up; but scarcely had we seated ourselves in our aerial bower, a fine milk-

wood tree, when we perceived the puff adder rise, and throw itself on its back, preparatory to attacking something; in another minute we were startled by a whirring noise through the air, and soon beheld the enemy transfixed to the earth with a spear.

We could hear each other's heart beat.

Nevertheless we took courage and looked out from our leafy covert.

One of the finest objects in the world presented itself to our gaze.

It was a young lord of the desert, whose polished limbs, free from all drapery, were set off by a profusion of brass ornaments, and innumerable festoons of beads about his head and throat. A shining girdle marked the contour of his waist, and his finely sculptured arms were encircled by rings of brass and ivory; feathery anklets gave an extraordinary lightness to his lower limbs, which though slight were muscular; and his chest, glowing like copper, indicated by its great breadth extraordinary strength. With one foot advanced, the right arm, from which he had just cast the spear, raised high above his shoulder, his noble head thrown back,

and his glowing orbs fixed in deadly enmity upon the serpent, the tall crane's feathers over his brow vibrating with the emotions of his frame, he offered one of the finest subjects for a sculptor's study that man can imagine.

Sandy, laying his hand on my arm, indicated with his finger another object in the long grass at the young Savage's feet.

It was a little Kafir boy, as nude as the baboons opposite, but finely formed, and with a pair of eyes and set of teeth which bespoke health, intelligence, and good temper. Peering out from his nest of gladiolas, he had with the readiness of his race discovered our spoor or track, but cautious and discreet from education, had wisely abstained from drawing off the attention of the elder youth until the adder was slain.

In my hurry and pain, I had dropped my map and burning-glass at the foot of the tree, and these of course had fixed the little fellow's gaze in an instant; near these objects too was a heap of dried leaves we had gathered for a fire, which we had given up the idea of lighting on seeing the baboons. Meantime, the tall lad having satisfied himself that the snake would

never move again, though it had writhed fearfully at the first blow, relaxed the tension of his attitude, and cast a glance of inquiry at the little one who now pulled him by the anklet.

The child pointed silently to the objects in the grass; the glass of course attracted their wondering attention.

They expected, no doubt, to find a mirrored surface, such as had astonished them at some trader's or missionary's station, but in this they were disappointed.

They had seated themselves on a slope, rugged with the spreading roots of our tree.

The map they could make nothing of, but I dreaded their tearing it up. The only consolation I had was, that I had my little compass in my pocket.

They returned to the scrutiny of the glass again, and a thought struck me as they examined it.

I had determined to descend from my retreat, and was on the point of making a signal to that effect to Sandy, when the dry bough on which we sat gave a great crack. The two young Savages started up, the taller grasping his spear, and as he threw himself in front of the little one,

motioning the latter back, every attitude was a study. So now, making a virtue of necessity, I began to descend, but Sandy was before me; rifle in hand, with the muzzle down, he stood before the dusky children of the desert.

“Ma wo!”—which, being translated, means something like “halloa”—“Ma wo,” cried the little chap, peeping at the new comer from behind his friend’s body.

“Umlunghi,” (the white man,) exclaimed the other in a tone as much as to say—“I am the lord of this manor!”

And now I appeared on the scene, and, determined on seeming cool, I seated myself on the grass. Down squatted the two Kafirs; the taller keeping his eye on Sandy. I had taken up the map which the boy had dropped in his surprise, and the little fellow fixed his dark orbs on me. Be it remembered Sandy’s rifle was not loaded. I scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry for this, but at any rate determined that if we should be obliged to act on the defensive, it should be with caution and under the guise of peace. For the space of a minute we sat thus gazing at one another.

Then the tall Kafir leaned forward and took hold of Sandy's rifle. In those days fire-arms, especially the neat rifle the boy carried, were not so common in Kafirland as now, but the dusky youth examined it with the eye of an amateur: he did not, however, attempt to test its powers, but on the younger one holding out his hand for it, he gave it back to Sandy, making a sign for him to fire; but, taking up his loose assegais—for he had a bundle of these weapons with him—he resumed a warlike attitude, as he sprung again to his feet.

Sandy had but three or four bullets left, but the sharp little Highlander took care not to betray the poverty of his ammunition store to our visitors.

So he loaded the rifle, which was not one of the best in the world,—I suppose if it had been, the farmer would not so readily have parted with it—but Sandy knew its range. As luck would have it, at this instant a buck darted out of a bush at some yards from us; Sandy fired, and hit the animal just behind the ear.

The Kafir gave a delighted grunt, and snatching the rifle, bade Sandy by signs re-load it for him.

There was no help for it, in spite of our diminishing store.

Doubtless another buck would follow its poor wounded mate.

Sure enough a fine male animal sped out into the open, right in front of us.

Bang went the rifle, but the buck passed on untouched.

The Kafir flung down the piece with an angry gesture, caught up his assegai, and poising it gracefully above his head, sent it whirring through the air, as the animal, in its terror, darted between us and a clump of bush some fifty yards off.

After this passage of arms, we exchanged looks of recognition and good fellowship, and moved our position nearer the game which had fallen to the lot of the party so satisfactorily. As soon as we were seated, the elder Kafir, extending his hand in friendly fashion, but with the palm wide open, uttered the word "Baseila," — "a present!"

I put my hand in my havresac, and drew forth some tobacco.

And he from a small pouch of catskin, orna-

mented with beads and tassels of bright scarlet, took out a wooden pipe.

“Well, my lad,” thought I, “and how will you light it, I wonder.”

At sight of the tobacco, the little Kafir began hunting about for a kind of dry grass or shrub which is found in South Africa, and which ignites by friction, but there was none immediately at hand; we had found that out before.

“Now, Sandy,” said I, “knowledge is power; I will astonish the natives!”

So saying, I held my burning-glass over the heap of dried leaves, and the sun being then in full force above our heads, it was not long before the pile ignited; in fact, it blazed up so suddenly, that I was half afraid of it spreading and doing some mischief. As soon, however, as the pipe was lit, the two Kafirs looking almost stupified with surprise, Sandy scattered the burning embers and put an end to the danger.

Our dark friends surveyed us with an air of profound respect; the small boy commencing the ceremonial of introduction by turning his head away from us to his friend, and pronouncing the name of *Pois*.

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On which Tois performed a similar act of courtesy by the small boy, who was distinguished by the soft name of Seo.

"Paul!" said Sandy, laying his hand on my shoulder, and nodding to the Kafirs.

"Sandy," said I, laying my hand on the top of his broad flapped hat.

"Aye," observed Sandy, as a sort of "Amen" to the ceremony.

When the pipe was smoked, the two Kafirs held a colloquy, which was afterwards translated to us.

It was Seo who spoke first.

"The Umlunghi are wise," said he.

"They are men," answered Tois.

"These are boys," observed Seo.

"They have the hearts of men," said Tois.

"Ithlamba is not wiser than he with hair like the moonless night."

"Ithlamba is a great rain-maker," answered Tois, looking round lest the elements should carry away Seo's irreverent words.

"The dark hair draws fire from the sun!" whispered the boy.

"True, O Seo! son of Matabela."

After this we got the Kafir lads to understand, by signs and scraps of Dutch, that we were on our way to the Klipspringer station, but could not make out exactly how far it might be from the river which we now found we were to recross. My foot was growing more painful every moment, and on showing it to Tois, he set about searching for something in the grass. He soon pulled up a curious-looking bunch of herbs, which he proceeded to bind round the wound, and then rising, he, with an air we never thought of resisting, signed to us to follow him: so gathering up our belongings, and putting perfect faith in our guides, whose smiles, on hearing the name of Klipspringer, showed an immense amount of good will toward the individual rejoicing in that nomenclature, we descended the bank, and forded the stream in Indian file, bearing our trophies of the chase between us on sticks.

The dead baboon lay on the shore, the little one sitting dolefully by. Sandy went up to it, and it resigned itself passively to his keeping, but casting sorrowful glances at its mother as it did so, and making a sad moan. I confess I did not think much of my sore foot as I climbed

the rough bank, quite dreading the vengeance of old Paterfamilias, who was watching us from a cleft, and who followed, abusing us, nearly giving me a severe blow at one time with a large stone. In this procession we marched till sunset.

Not a human being greeted us on our path through the wilderness, which grew more lovely at every step, while the asphogels, the enormous vultures of the Cape, hovered over our path, intent on our burden of game; and here and there, on a mountain peak, we could discern a naked scout waving his kaross as a signal of something unusual to the kraal or hamlet in the valley below.

The way was grassy, the mimosa blossoms emitting odours like our English May, the gladiolas waving their lovely heads, as if in homage to the regal strelitzas rising beside them, arrayed in scarlet, purple, and gold. Clumps of tall trees, garlanded with wild asparagus, geraniums, jessamine, and all sorts of trailing plants, cast their lengthened shadows on the turf, and now there being scarcely half a hand between the sun and the western horizon, we knew that night must soon fall over us.

Tois and Seo were kind, and halted occasion-

ally that I might rest my lame foot—Tois's remedy had already eased it. We had, therefore, no fear of them, but I was anxious that our presentation to the tribe might take place before it was dark. My experience of Kafirs was rather limited, and I had heard that they would not in peace time violate the laws of hospitality. It was not, however, without emotion that I first heard the stir of a kraal; the women advanced at our approach, and gathered closely round us as we neared the edge of the valley, whence looking down we saw lights gleaming, and heard the barking of innumerable dogs.

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CHAPTER VIII.

MATABELA AND HIS PEOPLE.

A GROUP of dusky women advanced to meet us. They were all young, and as merry as larks: beads glittered round their heads and necks, and numerous brass rings encircled their arms. They were pretty, too, in their way; with eyes as bright as diamonds, and teeth like the finest pearls. Low soft voices they had; and some of them chanted a welcome, which I did not understand then, but which inspired the two lads, Tois and Seo, who doubtless took all the credit of the sport to themselves. They chimed in with the women, leaping and laughing, the children of the party struggling for the honour of assisting in the procession; and Sandy and I having resigned our share of the burden—Seo taking possession of the monkey—we brought up the rear, with three or four girls dancing about us in Kafir fashion, without lifting their feet from the ground, and humming a monotonous drone. The patriarchs

and elder women of the kraal were all at their posts—the former seated, some in semicircles, gossiping, a great pastime among Kafirs—some in pairs beside their huts; here and there lay one in a fox's sleep, as children call it, and too lazy to rise till his evening meal was ready; the Kafir dines at sunset. The old grandames—hideous witches they looked—were the cooks of the community; and the nursing mothers sat apart playing with their little ones, whom they love dearly till they can take care of themselves, when, like the full-fledged birds, they may forage where they can for a livelihood.

These parties had only expected Tois and Seo, till the scouts I have mentioned gave them notice of the strangers' approach. Nevertheless, there were no great symptoms of surprise. The men made their remarks with the usual interpolations of, "Soh, soh—Umlunghi, Ewa Umlunghi" — "Aye, aye—white men, white men." The young women repeated, "Shumayela indaba—Tell us the news." The grandames held up their sticks with which they were stirring their steaming cauldrons, and suspended their culinary proceedings to examine

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us by the light of their fires; the boy Kafirs raised their torches so close to our faces that our eyes winked again, and I felt my hair slightly singed, at which the lads shouted with laughter; for it was glorious fun to make the *Amaglezi*—the “English”—wince. An aged patriarch, however, seeing we were but boys—one “slender as the willows by the stream,” and the other “but a rush growing near the pool”—called the brats to order; and then a young girl brought us some sour milk in a basket. I drank heartily out of the strange goblet, and Sandy having finished the contents, the vessel was put down for the dogs to lick, this being the lazy Kafir’s mode of cleansing his milk bowls. Hideous dogs they were, evidently first cousins to the wolves, who were already beginning to whine along a deep kloof leading through the hills into the kraal. The cattle were all housed safely for the night, the few sheep the Chief possessed were folded, the fires blazed, the cauldrons bubbled, and the head of the community—a Chief of some importance, named Matabela, Seo’s father—was looked for from his hut, to open the ceremonial of the feast

by making the first incision in the skin of the largest deer.

Matabela was the first wild Kafir, so to speak, with whom we had come in contact; the few of his race whom we had encountered on our way, and at Graham's Town, had been either Chiefs who affected friendship for the colonists, and visited the garrison towns, where they bought gunpowder, or begged, or stole, or got drunk, as the case might be; or young men who had entered the service of the farmers, and stayed as long as it suited them, or till the war-cry of their tribe recalled them to the ranks of fighting men.

How he would receive us remained to be proved. In our own minds we determined to put the best face we could upon the matter; and, if we could not persuade the chief to send us forward at once with, a guide to Klipspringer's, to await our opportunity and escape; but this was easier said than done, as we soon found.

We were, nevertheless, well pleased with our reception so far, and already had a friendly feeling for Tois and Seo. To add to our contentment, we found the girl Sanna spoke English.

Tois, accompanied by Seo, who was Matabela's

youngest and best-beloved son, now volunteered to ask an old councillor to obtain an audience of the Chief for them, that they might persuade him to come out and meet the young white strangers.

In their absence we asked Sanna whether there was a chance of war.

She could not, or would not, reply directly to the question, but owned that Matabela wished Klipspringer to come first.

Now Klipspringer, as Mr. Masterman had told us, carried on a constant traffic with the Kafirs for thirty miles round his station. It was a pity, Mr. Masterman said, that he sold arms and ammunition to the savages; but then he and all other traders had the licence to do so from Government. "He was a capital fellow was Klipspringer, and respected by all the Chiefs; and in his hunting and shooting expeditions they always made him welcome. He was well liked, too, at the mission stations in his district; and as for his Kafir women customers, he knew how to please their taste better than any trader in the country. His beads were of the brightest hues; he knew how to string vivid reds, and pale greens, and opaque whites

together to their liking, and bartered such wares very fairly for 'charmed' necklaces and other 'fancy articles,' which he again exchanged with colonists in the towns for snuff, tobacco, pipes, &c."

In a word, Klipspringer was the main bond of union between the British Government and hundreds of Kafirs, especially Matabela's people. He admitted that any one selling gunpowder, knowing it was to be used for shooting Englishmen, deserved to be shot himself; "but I take it," Klipspringer would say, "that it is those who grant the licence who are most to blame. If they knew the country as well as I do, they would never trust such a parcel of blackguards as these Savages. However, when folks have an article to dispose of, they don't care to inquire who is to benefit by it when once it is off their hands!"

But every one said, in justice to Klipspringer, that he traded less in arms and ammunition than any of his fellow-traders, teaching the Kafirs the use of better things. Besides pipes, tobacco, and snuff, he dealt in coloured English counterpanes—which these savages readily adopted as mantles—bright handkerchiefs, and even imple-

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ments of Kafir husbandry. On the other hand, Matabela had learned how to bargain with the trader for his skins and horns, karosses and Kafir baskets; and report said that he was so far advanced in European commerce as to have begun hoarding sums of money in half crowns.

“He takes care to hide it safely,” Klipspringer said, when he told this circumstance to Mr. Masterman, “for he knows well what a temptation such portable plunder would be to his young men, who so often go idling into the towns.”

When Tois and Seo had first mentioned the name of Matabela, we forgot that we had heard of him before. When we remembered it, we felt prepared for craftiness, and gave him just the credit he deserved, and no more, for allowing us to rest at his kraal on our way through the wilderness.

It was not then without anxiety that on this memorable evening we awaited the first appearance of Matabela. As we stood by his hut, near which a fire was burning, casting a fitful light on the groups of Kafirs watching us, we tried to look calm and unconcerned, but started back at the

object which at length emerged from the low doorway of the thatch dwelling, which more resembled a huge bee-hive than anything else.

This object was the head of Matabela. The face was copper-coloured, from the application of red ochre to the dark skin—and this red ochre, by the way, was another source of wealth to Matabela, for he had a pit of it on his property, the produce of which he sold to Klipspringer, who, in his turn retailed it to his Kafir customers.

Now this red face was set in the queerest head-dress possible—Matabela's own hair curled in little pellets, framing in his countenance after the fashion of a bishop's wig. His face was closely shaven, all but a short, thick, coal-black moustachio; through one ear was a long brass snuff spoon, round the other was wound some beads, with pendant "charms" attached; a necklace of beads, intermixed with wolves' teeth, encircled his neck; and when his bare chest, slightly tattooed, became visible, he made as awful a picture as you can well imagine. He reminded me of those Egyptian portraits which we see illustrating books of travels in that ancient country; and though I could not account for this

resemblance at the time, I have learnt since how Ishmael's descendants became intermingled, in olden time, with the people of the Nile; some of them wandering thence, and finally reaching the fertile plains of south-eastern Africa.

He was truly a terrible object, as the fire-light shone upon his visage. The eyes glared like a wolf's, and when he smiled, or rather grinned, he showed a pair of front teeth that projected like fangs, and were the more remarkable from being of a dazzling whiteness.

At last, having drawn all his limbs after him, he stood up in front of his abode, with his leopard skin kaross across his shoulders, and his right arm at liberty, assegai in hand. We could see it quivering, as though he longed to send it through our hearts.

Smooth and honeyed were his words. "Uxolo lu yinto e lingayolo—Peace is good!" said he, and went on in the same strain. "Welcome, oh youthful sons of the Amaglezi;" and as he spoke he glanced from time to time at his councillors. "Whence had we come? Was the eagle in the sky? Were the black vultures waiting for their prey, or was the voice of the singing bird still

to be heard among the green boughs? Were storms expected, or was the air clear? Refreshing dews would cool the parched plains, and the words of the Umlunghi were looked for like music in the land. Some said that at this moment the Umlunghi were as lions seeking for their prey. Was it so? Truly, the lion was too generous, and besides, there was no prey; the Kafirs were his dogs now, and would find him all he wanted."

Which being interpreted, meant—"Was there yet peace in the land, or was war anticipated, and bad men looking out for its results? Was war about to be proclaimed, or was the political atmosphere of the colony free from clouds? The Kafirs were growing grave in their war councils, and a little dew, in the shape of presents, would refresh their loyalty to the Government. The Umlunghi were looked to for all goodly gifts—for the Umlunghi had lots to give! If they were intent on war, the Kafirs were grieved; they were not prepared, they must fall, and the Umlunghi would never attack their servants—their dogs, their defenceless neighbours who longed to serve them, 'to find them all they wanted.'"

We had no information to give. "The troops," we said, "were at their usual posts; but if war had been in the hearts of the Umlunghi, would they have permitted two poor boys to make their way through the wilderness alone?"

Matabela thought that *Umtiko* would take care of the Umlunghi *everywhere*.

This was all interpreted by Sanna, the young girl who had given me the milk, and who having lived for a few months in service at a missionary station, understood a little English.

"True," said I, "and *Umtiko* (God) takes care of all who believe in Him!"

"Soh!" remarked Matabela, after a long pause, during which he doubtless made up his mind in some superstitious fashion in connexion with *Umtiko* and "those who believed in Him," and then muttering something between his teeth, we heard the word *Leah*, which was passed on to a group of old Kafirs seated apart in the fire-light: on which there rose up, and advanced from a neighbouring bush, a tall woman strangely attired, with a bandeau of beads crowning her dark brows, and a leathern mantle draped across her bony shoulders, while

an assegai quivered in her withered right hand.

As she advanced in the fire-light, all the people turning towards her with a grave expression of fear, I guessed at once that she was the prophetess or witch doctress of the tribe.

A few words passed between the Chief and this Pythoness, of which we learned the purport afterwards. No doubt Sandy and I came in for some remarks on her part, but we heard the word "Umfazi," saw Matabela's demoniacal smile, and marked the glare of old Leah's eye.

She condescended to smile on us, drew Sandy to the fire-light, put aside his fair locks, and grinned hideously in approval of his blue eyes. As for me, with my dark brows and bronzed skin, she pronounced me "as black as *fagati*, the evil one," at which her men auditors murmured an assent, the young women laughing musically, and the children yelling delighted approval.

By this time the bucks were laid on the ground in front of Matabela's fire, and he having with his assegai commenced the process of skinning them, his "great men" drew near to await their share when the Chief's portion should

be laid before him. Ere long, the dissection began for the general good of the assembly, the boys and dogs standing by waiting to divide the remains between them; and then arose such a scramble between bipeds and quadrupeds as drew smiles from Sandy and me, till Seo made us start by coming close up to us, his face and arms all smeared with blood, and the skins of the beasts held up to our view in the glowing fire-light.

Seo's mother, Matabela's favourite and youngest wife, having taken command of the senior cooking department, a fine haunch of buck soon smoked on the Chief's fire, the offal being cast to the dogs, who growled and grumbled as they tore it to pieces with their fangs. Leah sat by watching the cauldron, into which she occasionally cast some roots amid the Kafir corn, looking the very personification of a witch; and some paces off sat Sanna, who had brought out some green meelies (bunches of Indian corn), and was roasting them on her fire for us, while four of Matabela's wives, besides Seo's mother—another wife we were told was "in the bush"—stood by, making their observations on us, wondering, as

we afterwards heard, how we "children of the foam" could so differ from one another in appearance. Sanna, as interpreter, softened her remarks; still I could plainly perceive by the looks cast on him, that Sandy Hunter's fair skin and golden locks gave him a great advantage over my *Zwart* hair and "purple eyes," the pride of my mother, poor simple soul!

Canny Sandy had in his wallet—for besides his numerous pockets and pouches within and without, he always carried a wallet—he had, I say, a small tin box of salt; how this, with one or two of my hoards, had escaped Tois's investigation I know not, but we found it a great relish with the meelies Sanna handed to us: before morning we contrived to hide the box under a bush, otherwise we should certainly have been robbed of it at once. One of the girls thrusting her hands into my pouch, drew therefrom a piece of alum slung in a couple of loops of twine, but I told Sanna this was a charm, and begged it might be spared to me; to which the other girl consented, on my promising to make the charm work some day, which I did. Happily, the pocket compass escaped observation, and as

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soon as I could, I concealed it; but my map disappeared—it was probably looked upon, like pictures, as something “uncanny.”

Matabela kindly offered to “take care” of our rifle and powder-horn, which he did so effectually that we could not get them out of his clutches. We were also greatly dismayed to see our clasp-knives handed about among the great men, but whether Leah had or had not taken a fancy to Sandy, or had a grudge against the particular councillor, Ithlamba, who seemed to have set his heart upon these articles, certain it is she ordered their being restored to us. But the moment I saw the rifle in Matabela’s hands, I made up my mind to content myself with the Irishman’s maxim, that “a thing is not lost when you know where it is!”

And now, what with the steam from the cauldrons, the crackling of the thorns cast into the embers beneath, the smoke from the broiling venison—very poor, Sandy pronounced it, as he thought upon the deer of Kilgarry’s domain—the gabbling of the greedy throng, the laughter of the women, the yelping of the dogs as they got kicked for coming too near the fires, glaring

and falling at every rise and lull of the wind, and the savage aspect of the naked figures seated round, cutting up their food with their assegais, or using their long black fingers instead of forks, drinking occasionally from calabashes and Kafir baskets, while here and there a tame ape or a large cat was added to the picture, I could think of nothing but some Pandemonium where the devils were making merry; and I was beginning to revel in the prospect of the gluttons all going to sleep surfeited with their supper, when the whole community was roused to its feet by the noise of a wolf calling to his friend the jackal a little way up in the hills.

Then every other Kafir seized a torch, men and boys ran to and fro, the cattle began to low, the sheep to bleat, the cocks to crow, the women to laugh, the children to scream and dance; an aged warrior rattled his assegais, and away went men, and boys, and dogs, not in pursuit of the invader, for that would have been useless, but to frighten the wolf, if possible, to a point where his readiest shelter would be a trap graciously prepared for his reception, and where, true enough, he was found by the herds next morning.

Good-natured Sanna uttered a sigh. "Nona! Nona!" she whispered, and sighed again.

"Who is Nona?" I asked.

"One of Matabela's wives," she replied.

"And where is she?"

"In the bush."

"In the bush! Where?"

"There," pointing to the opposite cliffs, dimly seen against the starry sky.

"And why?"

"Her *kint* (child) is dying."

"Dying! Why take it there?"

"To die or to be buried," was her answer.

"To die *or* to be buried! What do you mean?"

"*Suches, suches*—quietly, quietly—you will see."

She talked a strange medley of English and Dutch, but could make herself quite intelligible to us; but as old Leah was not far off, I thought it more prudent to keep silence, for the present.

Sandy, true to his old calling, was soon away "up the brae" after the wolf; when he returned, Tois accompanied him, and said that as the night was dewy, the Amaglezi might prefer sleeping in a hut to lying out in the open, as some of the

sturdier Kafirs were preparing to do, with their feet almost in the ashes of the fast decaying fires, and with the dogs bearing them company.

We accepted the offer of shelter, but regretted it so soon as we were ushered into our sleeping apartment, a low hut occupied by four Kafirs, one of them a discarded wife of Matabela—the *Umfazi* about whom he had whispered to Leah, his spy upon her; and another, the Chief's half-brother, a scout of the tribe, and a sullen-looking fellow named Nehemiah.

It was a horrid den, with the live embers of a fire in the midst, round which sat some of the occupants smoking *dagha*, a kind of hemp. I had exhausted most of my stores, but Sandy had got some snuff hidden away in one of his wonderful receptacles, intending it for trading purposes, and on presenting some to the crone, she, to our surprise, took a spoon from her ear, filled the little bowl with the powder, and sucked it through her old gums as if it had been some delicate sweetmeat. While the rest were squabbling for a share, Tois spread a rush mat in a corner of the hut, and Sandy and I lying down, head and tail fashion, as they pack the

poor wretches in some of the slavers, were soon sound asleep, notwithstanding the villainous odour of red clay, burnt bones, melon skins, &c., to say nothing of the occasional flutter of wings from a hen-roost almost over our heads, and the cock of the perch sounding his clarion at midnight when the moon rose. Fancy such odours, and such a row, in a den without a chimney, and with the only outlet closed up!

I awoke at early dawn, and half stupid with the close atmosphere, looked forth to admire the contrast of the scene that presented itself within. Already some of the people were astir, the sun had tinted the eastern hills with roseate glory, the grass and bushes glittered with dew-drops, and from tree to tree, here and there, hung webs of glittering silver, spun by the industrious spiders. A faint perfume pervaded the air, and the birds were beginning to wheel about, making a brilliant show of yellow, and pink, and green; and chattering away in their glee, after the bird's fashion of welcoming the day. "Up the brae" I could see a solitary jackal wending his way with tail down, and an occasional stealthy look into the valley where

the cattle stood lowing in the kraal, with no chance of being released till the sun was fairly up and the dew off the grass; a wise precaution of the Kafirs, and one which I took care in better times to adopt.

Ere long the fires were alight again, and most of the people were soon about. We learned from Sanna, indeed, that it was to be a holiday, and that an ox-race was to come off in the course of the morning, after which, there was to be a feast of beef. That is to say, Matabela had made the tribe a present of a poor worn-out brute, who, to use an Irish saying, was to be killed to save his life. He had been a faithful pack ox, and carried many a ton of gunpowder in his day; and now he lay panting, and awaiting his ungrateful destiny, with the eyes of all the boys of 'the kraal gloating over his exhausted frame.

Breakfast was preparing, and Sanna handed us a bowl of Kafir corn and milk—no bad refec-^{tion}, let me tell you, and the more welcome, because, she assured me, she had herself washed the vessel containing it in the clear stream running close by. We were still eating, when

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Matabela's head appeared in the doorway of his hut, and he emerged therefrom, bearing in one hand our rifle, in the other an assegai.

As soon as the powerful sun had dried the grass, the cattle were let out; some of the cows were milked, others, contrary to European custom, were sent off to pasture with their calves; the old men and boys, and some of the women, took charge of the herd, Seo leading away his father's sheep. They did not go far up the grassy slopes, for thence they could see the race, and take their share of the feast; and as they marched, they chanted their monotonous song in praise of Matabela; the hunting exploits of his son Seo, whose mother, a rather young woman, exquisitely formed, and coquettishly arrayed, stood at the entrance to the Chief's hut, and watched her son and heir up the hill. She, the youngest wife, was of the royal race of the Tambookies, and took precedence of all the others; so Leah* hated her.

Conky, so she was called, was a kindly crea-

* Patriarchal names are common among Kafir men and women. The translation of Sanna is Sarah.

ture, and often carried the *old wife* of Matabela a breakfast of corn and boiled pumpkin to the hut, where the poor wretch usually lay all the morning half stupefied with dagha, which is to the Kafirs what opium is to the Indian.

The whole hamlet was now wide awake, and young men and women gathered round the oxen preparing for the race. Tois was the great rider of the tribe; and there was another fellow, who set up as his rival, and who looked the queerest figure in the world, dressed as he was with an attempt at jockey fashion.

Some officer in the colony had given him an old regimental coat, but had not supplied the continuation of the costume. He had also possessed himself of a pair of what soldiers call "ammunition" boots, much too large for him; and to one of these he had attached a rusty spur. As he was somewhat stouter than the original owner of the coat, he could not button it far below the chest, but he contrived to make up for some deficiencies of costume by tying a ragged regimental sash—a gift highly prized—round his waist, with the tassels swinging about him, as he swaggered and strutted after a

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fashion that would have made Sandy and me laugh had we dared.

He was rather a knowing-looking chap, and his countenance was all the quainter from his head being closely shaven in token of mourning. I could only marvel at the thickness of his skull, as the sun beat down upon his shining pate without annoying him. He carried a *sambok* (a whip cut from the hide of the sea-cow) in his hand, and swayed it to and fro as much as to say—"Make way for me, if you please, I intend to cut you all out; don't you see my fine coat, and boots, and spur!"

He cast a tender conceited look at Sanna as he went by her, and we learned afterwards that he had offered several bullocks and some cows and goats for her; but her father knew her value, and preferred allying himself, if possible, with Matabela's family, more particularly as Croppy was no favourite with the chief or his advisers.

A trek ox, stolen property no doubt, was to be the prize run for to-day, and the circumstance of Tois and Croppy being rivals in love as well as in the race, made every one more or less

interested, Sanna, apparently, least so of all; but Kafir maidens are shy of testifying their regard. Like girls of highly civilized nations, they have less to do with choosing a husband than their parents have, who sell their daughters to the best bidder.

We followed Matabela to the spot where the old ox lay, and expected to see it put out of its pain at once by a blow from the kierrie—a stick with a heavy knob on the top; to our horror and surprise, however, we saw the unfortunate brute's jaws forced open, and Matabela's huge arm thrust down its throat.

We turned away our heads, so cannot describe all that followed. We could hear the wretched animal struggle, and caught a glimpse of a tongue held up, from which the blood was pouring; I felt 'sick; Sandy muttered an expression of disgust; we did not wait to watch the further process of dividing the beast, and to the astonishment of our Kafir acquaintance, declined to eat of the animal whose death had been compassed by such cruel butchery.

When a little recovered from the shock, we moved to the starting-point on the course. The

two racers were there, and fine handsome brutes they were—one coal-black, save two creamy spots on one shoulder, and with a space of six feet between the tips of his horns, which were of a pale clouded grey; the other was fawn-coloured, with a muzzle like the inside of a shell, large soft eyes, and a crown of brown hair between its milk-white horns.

They had been thoroughly trained for riding, having had the cartilages of their noses pierced when young, for holding the bridle of undressed leather. A small sheepskin crossed the back, and from this, which was fastened with a series of plaited reims beneath, depended, on either side, a thong with a loop at the end to serve as a stirrup. The animals had been thoroughly broken-in while their poor noses were sore, after the operation of piercing, and now pawed and snorted in most approved sporting fashion.

They were called "Noon," and "Night." "Noon" was Tois's steed, and right well the youth looked, as he took his seat in his primitive saddle, his dark skin contrasting finely with the fair sleek hide of the animal he bestrode; while Croppy thought himself wondrous fine on

his coal-black charger, and comported himself accordingly. I thought Sanna looked a little anxious as the signal was given for starting; but it was impossible to judge with which of the jockeys her heart went on the course.

They kept together pretty well till they came to a clump of bush, and into this shady retreat "Night" seemed determined to go; Croppy, however, got him past that, and came up with Tois, who, in high glee, grinned merrily in his saddle as he passed the different groups watching the course. Still he and Croppy kept neck and neck. Tois was on the off side, and as they wound along a bend in the line marked out, he lost a few paces; indeed we had wondered why he had particularly chosen the off side in the race, but the reason was soon manifest enough.

At the furthest point of the hamlet the course formed almost an angle, outside a bush of what is called the *Voch em bitje*, or Wait a little. As they neared it, Tois muttered something which caused Croppy to turn his head, on which Tois drew his near rein, when "Noon" by the movement was brought in sudden contact with "Night," and gave him the go-by in an instant,

while Croppy, caught by the coat on a wicked thorn, whence the bush takes its name, would have been dragged from his courser's back had not his well-worn uniform given way, and fairly split up to his shoulders. Ere he could recover himself Tois had won the race, and Croppy rode along the course much shorn of his dignity, and amid the laughter of the merry crew.

He was no favourite with the tribe, that was certain: had he been so, there might have been some inquiry into the matter of which he complained, but the fact was that Matabela had had his eye on poor Croppy's cattle for some time, and had his own plans for getting rid of him and coming in for his property. Months afterwards, we heard a horrid story of old Leah denouncing him for having bewitched the Chief, and of the terrible way in which the poor wretch was tortured to death—he had no friends—but I will not introduce more horrors into my tale than it fell to my lot to witness.

Tois was a relation of Matabela's, and a promising young warrior. He was the hero of the day, and Sanna took her place among the crowd of women who echoed the praises which

the men bestowed on "the Young Panther," "Swift of Foot," "True of Eye," "Cunning-brained."

About mid-day they fell to on the ox, from which they cut long strips of steaks with their assegais; first, however, skinning the animal, and stretching out its hide to dry, for the purpose of cutting it into reims or thongs.

They were all very merry. Matabela in high good humour, with Seo squatted beside him, finishing his repast with a dessert of freshly-gathered meelies and a huge water melon, while his mother, though past her prime—for a Kafir woman marries at thirteen, and is old at thirty—had the place of honour at her husband's right shoulder, just behind him.

We two were regaling ourselves on some of Sanna's cookery, not bad in its way, and watching with intense interest the habits and manners of a people who astonished us more and more every hour, when I suddenly saw Matabela's countenance change from a grin of complacency to a scowl indescribably terrific. Conky observed it in a moment, and cast a frightened glance in the direction of his eye, which was

turned towards the slope on which the cattle-kraal stood.

What could have possessed the ancient and discarded wife of the savage Chief that she should leave her hut at mid-day? Some said afterwards she was stupid from dagha; some that Leah had administered "a charm" to her,—some root or other; some, with more probability, that she was rather the worse for honey beer, a kind of metheglin brewed by the Kafirs; Sanna that she was certainly "out of herself," and had been so for a long time, ever since Nona had been sent into the bush with her sick baby.

Nona was Matabela's missing wife, of whom Sanna had spoken. Since the birth of her last child she had been in bad health, and was fast losing her youth and good looks, so she had been banished into the bush with her baby. There she had for some time subsisted on roots and the milk of some stray goats, sheltering herself in a deserted hut near a cluster of speck boom, or elephant bush, a shrub on which goats and elephants love to feed in Southern Africa. Sanna had ministered covertly from time to time to the poor thing's

wants; and now the old wife taking pity on the young sufferer, no longer a rival—and, by the way, her own niece—was mooning along towards the stream, which she doubtless had a vague idea of fording.

Above the stream rose the cliffs, through which the glens led to some grounds planted by Nature's gracious hand with clumps of trees and low bush. It was in one of these copses that poor Nona enshrined herself during the day, and from her retreat she could look down on the kraal, and perceive all that went on; at night, she would descend to the stream to meet Sanna—for Sanna was the only one, except the old wife, who dared to venture on assisting her. Having obtained provision, Nona would retire to the shelter of her hut.

There were two or three sick cows in the cattle kraal, and some calves, which having been stolen were not yet allowed to stray. Attracted by the sight, for a prey of cattle is dear to the heart of Kafir man or woman, the poor creature stood dreamily gazing upon the beasts, her calabash of honey beer in one hand, the other raised to screen her dim eyes from the sun. She

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was thin and shrivelled, no bright beads had she about her neck, no bracelets on her lean arms, and her back was bent too, all from the effects of labour; for she had tilled Matabela's ground, sown his corn, built his huts—aye, an abode for many a rival!—and a nice recompence she had met with! Ugly she was, it was true, and all unseemly was her robe, which was nothing more than a well-worn leather petticoat reaching to her knees; her only ornament being a snuff-box, made from the shell of a little tortoise. Her poor legs and feet were too thin and small to support her body, and her cheeks were so sunken that she looked far gone in a decline.

Old Leah had crept up to Matabela, like a snake in the grass as she was, and pointed out the wretched object of his hate and ingratitude.

He rose, and though others did the same, they neither dared to speak nor follow him closely. He had a heavy kierrie beside him. He took it up, seemed to calculate its powers as he raised it suddenly above his head, and casting off his mantle the naked savage stalked after his poor faithful slave.

She heard his step behind her, turned round,

dropped the calabash, and uttered a frightful yell. She raised her lean arms in a mute appeal for mercy, pointed to the fertile gardens she had tilled but a few months since, and essayed to speak. We saw her head cower, and her whole form shrink as the cruel Chief raised his war-club; in a moment it descended with frightful force upon her head, and she fell a mutilated corpse at her husband's feet. Her skull had been split open by the blow.*

Having achieved this inglorious deed, Matabela turned round as if looking for the applause of his people. Not many had followed him; it must be a rare sight indeed which tempts a Kafir to leave an ox feast as long as there is a bone left to pick on its carcass.†

* Literally the death by her husband's hand of a Kafir woman, for looking into a cattle-fold, a privilege from which the sex in Kafirland are excluded.

† Strange things have come to pass lately in Kafirland through the agency of false prophets, and the people, in a species of panic, have destroyed much cattle.

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CHAPTER IX.

KAFIR LOGIC.

AFTER this occurrence, we longed to leave Matabela's "Great Place," but whenever we asked Sanna or Tois to speak to him on the subject of sending us forward, he made some excuse for keeping us "till Klipspringer came." He "could not spare his young men for guides," or "the other tribes, who had opened their war-councils, might quarrel with him for assisting us," and so on. When some ten days or so had passed, we began to feel very uneasy, but kept our misgivings to ourselves.

Shocked as we had been at the miserable fate of the old wife of the chief, we were astonished at the manner in which Conky and Sanna treated the circumstance. We did not know then how evil customs blunt even women's hearts, setting Nature herself at defiance.

Kafir women are so identified with men in their pursuits, bearing indeed all the heaviest

burdens of labour, and assisting them in war and even council, that there is little to wonder at, when you know them, in the coolness with which they look on death through all the dreadful aspects it assumes in their beautiful, but wild country: but Sanna had been many years at a missionary station. Unfortunately, however, the homestead lay close to the "Great Place" of one of the most savage Chiefs of Kafirland, and poor little Sanna, despite all the pains taken with her, never could be kept away from witch dances, mock fights, and wedding feasts; so though she could read such parts of the Bible as had been printed at the time of which my story speaks, and delighted in singing hymns, she was not sorry when a change of Teachers gave her an excuse for returning to her own people, among whom her father welcomed her as something likely to add to his stock of cattle, and increase his interest with Matabela, to one of whose young men he intended to marry her. Fortune certainly favoured her in Tois. What pleased her best in the way of civilization was dress. Conky, on the other hand, was a Tambookie, a royal Kafir, and more

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clannish than Sanna, so though she too had passed part of her life at a Dutch farmer's, she, on marrying Matabela, had only been too happy to throw off her voerchitz petticoat and gay *douk*, to replace them with her cloak of *braded** leather, glittering with brass buttons, and her heavy head-dress of the same material studded with many-coloured beads. But Sanna actually rejoiced in a change of European costume, faded indeed, but in showy contrast to the scanty clay-coloured garments worn by Kafir women in their working hours. Sanna's yellow gown and scarlet head-dress certainly set off her bright eyes and polished skin, but Conky's beads and bangles, adorning head and neck and arms, quite dazzled one in the sun, and were the envy of old Leah, who used to look at her as if she could eat her, but not from any love she had for the merry, good-humoured Tambookie woman.

Tois took some pains to explain to us that the slaughter of the old wife in cold blood was not only an act of retribution, but of mercy, inas-

* *Brading*—Softening the leather by means of a stone, clay, and water.

much as by the rules of the community she must, in course of time, have been turned adrift into the bush, there to die of starvation, or be "finished" by the wild beasts and vultures.

"But why do you make such dreadful laws, Tois?" I asked. Tois and I already began to understand each other's language a little—signs helping where words were wanting.

In reply, he pointed to the remains of a hut which had been burnt shortly before our arrival at Matabela's kraal, for the reason, as Sanna informed us, that a man had died unexpectedly in it. When this is the case in Kafirland, the abode becomes in a manner accursed,* and it is burned with all its contents; thus the unhappy victim's relatives, like the connexions of a Hindoo widow, have an interest in getting rid of him or her, as the case may be. Of the two, indeed, old women are more obnoxious to their kindred and acquaintances than old men,—but for this matter, do we not see the same thing in civilized countries!

* By the law of Moses, when a man died in a tent, those who entered it, or touched whatsoever was in it, incurred a certain penalty. See Numbers, xix. 14.

Sanna, Tois, Sandy and I used at times to retire together, and seated on a bank above the river, under a fine willow, would discuss many questions of which I thought less at the time than I have done since.

"Tell him," said Tois, one day to Sanna, "that the Amaglezi have strange ways—ways we cannot understand; for instance, what do they mean by their foolishness in nursing us when they take us prisoners, and curing us to fight again in some other war. When they catch us, why don't they kill us?"

Here I thought to make good use of Mr. Macleod's teaching.

"We are told to do good to our enemies, Tois," said I; "and Sanna, have not you been taught that maxim too?"

Sanna nodded, and laughed.

"That is fine talking," observed Tois; "your Teachers talk a great deal."

"But you see we *do* what we are taught, Tois: we spare your lives, and trust to your word."

"We *do* not ask you to do the one thing," answered Tois, "and we wonder why you trust

us. We say the Amaglezi are fools. What is the use of mending a man and letting his chief have him again?"

"Ah! Tois, you have no gratitude."

But at this word gratitude Sanna stuck fast. *It is not translatable into the Kafir language.*

Another day we asked Sanna how it was that after being so many years accustomed to the comforts and kindness of a missionary's family, she could willingly give them up and come back to a Kafir hut.

She put on the prettiest air imaginable, and smiled at Tois, as much as to say, "It was he who brought me here."

Seo, however, who was by, said in the softest tones, and with the air of an old councillor—"Tois can give Sanna's father much cattle, three bullocks, two cows, and perhaps sheep or goats."

Then all three laughed musically.

One faithful being still remained at the mission station—a daughter of Zezani's, a good Kafir—that is to say, a consistent man, who did his duty after the dictates of his conscience, and said he "was almost persuaded to be a Christian." and

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“might see, when he had more light;” but he was a little bewildered, poor fellow! between what he *heard* the missionary preach, and what he *saw* the white man practise; and the more so, because while he was in a mist about the first—for, as I have said elsewhere, a Kafir believes only what he sees—he could have no possible doubt about the last!

Now Matabela, in his dealings with the traders near the mission station, had marked this gentle daughter of Zezani's. In his eyes the maiden was “very fair;” Zezani was “well to do” in cattle, and even tilled his land—tilling it himself, too—in better fashion than most Kafirs; so that, like Matabela, he had actually made money—collected “great big money,” English half-crowns—by the sale of vegetables, as well as by rearing poultry. Since the death of his elder wives he had been contented with one young one; she had four sons under the age of warriors; thus Ruth—for that was the name the missionary's wife had given Zezani's daughter at her baptism—was the only girl of this family. Truly she was one of those links between good and evil which bad men never recognise as such,

because they cannot see it: but wise and good people knew that Ruth's "word" often stayed her brothers from going to witch dances or listening to the gossip of war councils; that her "ways" had more to do in "proving" her "teaching" to her father than all the theories he heard propounded; and that, in fact, she was the means of keeping a whole community peacefully disposed, for her "word" and her example went far, even in council, when Zezani quoted the sentiments she taught him. They were very simple, beginning with duty to one's neighbour, and ending in the dogged belief that the white man's creed in the main was honest, and that the "big vley," the sea, was full of waggons with plenty of red men in them, all ready to come to the surface when Kafirland was "up." She had learnt, too, that Kafirs were as much intruders in the country, as Kafirs said white men were; and though she could not make up her mind to be fond of Hottentots, the original denizens of the land, with their coarse ways and habits—very different, it must be owned, from those of Kafir women, who are temperate and modest by nature—she always

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stood by them in need, and readily helped to nurse the herd's sick twins, when their mother died. Despite the charms of Conky, upon this maiden Matabela fixed his affections, and this maiden he was determined to have.

He opened his negotiations in the usual fashion. He sent a clever councillor to ask her hand of her father.

The councillor, the wily Ithlamba, found Zezani sitting in front of his hut, with his wife and boys about him, the great iron pot with supper in it swung over the fire, the cattle in the kraal for the night, the dogs asleep at their master's feet, and the great tabby cat blinking her eyes at the sunset as she lay at her ease on the roof of the hut.

Ithlamba stopped short when he came within some twenty paces of this peaceful-looking group, for he heard a voice reading aloud in the Kafir language some verses from "the Teacher's book." And the voice said—"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.

"Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

“Neither give place to the devil.

“Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

“Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

“And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”

And when the voice ceased, Ithlamba heard Zezani say, “It is good.” Ruth had wisely selected from “the Teacher’s book” what any man might understand.

Whatever Ithlamba might have thought of the wise and excellent maxims he heard propounded from Ruth’s lips, he paid no heed to them. He was come as an ambassador, and on his business his whole mind was set.

Ruth started up as Ithlamba, looking frightfully tall in his draped blanket, advanced from a thicket and stood before her, for she had been sitting a little behind her father, in the shadow of the hut, and had not noticed the silent

approach of the Savage; in a few minutes one of the missionary's children called from the garden, and she hastened to the boy.

So Ithlamba was left with Zezani and his wife.

There was a long pause after Ruth's departure. The "Sa buono?—How fare you?" had passed in her presence.

At length the councillor, with eyes fixed on something beyond Zezani—for Kafirs never talk face to face—said softly,

"The daughter of Zezani is gentle as the breeze that stirs the water-brooks."

Zezani answered by a deep inclination of the head.

Ithlamba went on—"Hear, O Zezani! By Ithlamba, Matabela sendeth greeting—Matabela hath said that the daughter of Zezani is very fair. He hath spoken."

Dark-skinned as Zezani was, his wife saw the cloud on his face. So did Ithlamba, but he affected not to notice it; he proceeded:

"Matabela is a great chief."

"And Ithlamba is his councillor," said Zezani.

"Ithlamba is Matabela's dog."

Which assertion Zezani neither chose to confirm nor contradict.

It was some time before the "dog" came to the great question of demanding Ruth in marriage; when he did so, poor Zezani was so driven into a corner by dread of the cunning Chief, to say nothing of the old sorcerer before him, and so helpless in his uncertainty of purpose, between his veneration for missionary teaching and dread of Kafir practice, that he could only sit in silence, and await the next point in the conference—viz., the amount of cattle to be paid for the maiden.

He was relieved when Ithlamba, in the name of the Chief, offered only four bullocks and one milch cow.

He could say with truth, and he had begun to find truth useful, that Ruth was worth more than that to him.

But the next instant he said to himself, "Ah, if Matabela tells my Chief this, I shall be ruined; he will 'eat me up.'* He will guess I am acquiring property."

* An expression used in the Kafir language, and by the sacred Psalmist, for describing the ruin of a man.

"Four bullocks and a milch cow," repeated Ithlamba.

Zezeni was silent.

Ithlamba had permission from the Chief to bid up, and he did so, to "seven bullocks and three milch cows."

He was so angry at Zezeni's declining so magnificent an offer for a maiden who was not a Chief's daughter, and who could neither dig, nor build, nor carry heavy burdens, that he departed from the hut, and took up his abode for the night with a petty Chief in the valley below.

A few days afterwards he again presented himself to Zezeni.

Matabela "had resolved to have the maiden; he would give many bullocks for her; but as Zezeni loved white men's ways, Matabela knew, he would give his daughter something—some silver pieces, for instance."

But here Zezeni fell back upon his country's customs. He was not a "great man," he said. "Who was he, to go back from Kafir laws?"

At the third visit, Ithlamba brought with him a fine black horse, which Zezeni recognised as one that had belonged to a settler in the Win-

terberg mountains, though he was too wise to say so.

The horse was a great temptation to poor Zezani, but he resisted it; however, he begged Ithlamba to lead the animal up to Ruth, as she stood near the corn-field with her mother. "She shall decide for herself," said Zezani.

Ruth's young brothers stood by her, and watched her countenance as she modestly, but firmly, said "No. She had no mind to be a great Chieftain's wife; she was but a humble maiden, servant to the white Teacher. She thanked Matabela for the honour he did the daughter of Zezani, but——"

Just as she was hesitating, Mr. Wallis, the missionary, stepped up. He was a courageous though a meek man; and he said to Ithlamba, in his own language—"Hear, O Ithlamba! Say to Matabela that the daughter of Zezani is a Christian, and cannot marry him. The dove may not mate with the eagle; besides, the eagle's nest hath scarcely room for her."

"Ithlamba is Matabela's dog," said the councillor, with a scowl, and rode away.

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Next day Tois came with another councillor, leading the tall black horse between them.

The missionary went to meet them.

Tois was spokesman.

“The Chief, Matabela,” he said, “was troubled. Sorrow had filled his heart. What the Teacher had said was good; but the daughter of Zezani had sat in the sun and ate honey. She was not as the women of her land were, fit to till, and good to grind corn, and carry water vessels, and build huts, and herd cattle, and help in war or in council; but Matabela had heard that Christian women could work in other ways. This, however, was not all; he, too, desired to become a Christian, and so *he wished to marry one who could teach him.*”

“Tell him,” replied the missionary, “I must have time to think of what he says. A Christian man can only have one wife. What will the Tambookies say if Conky is sent back!”

Tois so little liked this message, that he slipped away from the councillor, and, leaving him to bear the brunt of Matabela's wrath, walked off on a visit to Pato till the Chief's

passion was cooled or diverted elsewhere. The councillor, however, was never seen at Matabela's kraal again; he went over the Orange river, it was said, far, far away, to the tribe of Moshesh (Moses), and took the tall black steed with him!

Ever after Matabela hated Ruth, and sought opportunities of injuring Zezani, but never succeeded.

This story Tois and Sanna partly told us when out of earshot of Matabela, as we sat under the willow by the banks of the Tyumie. Afterwards, it formed one of a series of Kafir tales, which we used to hear told in a family circle, gathered round a great fireplace when it was Midsummer in England, but winter with us in Kafirland—ice an inch thick over the vlees on the plains, and the Twa Duyvels—two mountain peaks—showing each a “frosty pow,” as Sandy said.

And now it seemed as if on the approach of bad weather only could we rest our hopes of evading the wary Matabela, by crossing the river, and waiting in ambush till it overflowed, and became impassable even to Kafirs. There was a pool in the bend of the stream where we went to bathe

usually in the afternoon, and we took care to make the banks a favourite haunt, in order to lull suspicion.

Just above our bathing-place was a drift, that in fine weather was perfectly dry; every day we looked wistfully across it, longing for our release, and many a night have we watched the clouds careering above, and listened eagerly for the sound of the rain, which precedes the torrents of Southern Africa. When sitting by that river's brink with Tois and Sanna, they little knew of that yearning for freedom, which made every pulse in our veins throb, as we gazed into the fitful clouds floating away beyond the opposite cliffs. We had dreamed of the freedom of the wilderness, and here we were, prisoners, and nothing more, in the kraal of a notorious Kafir Chief. No white men came near; we were sure war was anticipated. Our time began to hang wearily on our hands, and one morning, when we saw the young men of the tribe set out on a hunting expedition, Sandy and I felt a keen desire to join them, but as Tois was not of the party, we gave up the idea: he had gone off with Seo and some other comrades on a foray.

We knew what a foray meant. Scouts were constantly on the hills looking out for stray cattle, and when they brought in word of it, off would go some of the lads from the kraal, who would return in the night, seldom without plunder. Sometimes the hunters and marauders would contrive to meet, so that if overtaken by settlers or soldiers, they could put on the most innocent air possible; they had "passes" into the colony, or "they were only carrying weapons to kill game, and as for the cattle, they had found it, and were driving it to Matabela, who would take care of it, and restore it to its owners!"

"I say, Paul," said Sandy, as we watched the young Savages crossing the drift, and scrambling up the rugged face of the cliffs, while some went shouting and leaping towards the valley—"I say, shall I tell you what I would do if I was a man and a colonist in this braw country? I'd no keep such great herds of cattle, it's just preserving mice for cats—I'd till the land, Paul; I'd hae corn to sell, and no so mony beasts for stealing."

"Don't you know, Sandy," I replied, "that

there is a deal said about the trouble of watering the land. What is the use of planting without the chance of water?"

"I'm thinking," said the gilly, "that the folk won't *try* the best way to help themselves? Do you mind, at yon farm, where we halted that wet night, that when the rain came teeming down they had not so much as a barrel to catch it in!"

"Nor pipes nor channels of any description," said I, remembering how my poor mother had fretted over the want of them in the dilapidated house where she lodged at Portsmouth.

Up beyond Klipspringer's, we had heard from Mr. Masterman, that they did wonders in the way of agriculture, and we longed hourly to be among busy people again, and at useful work, after our wanderings. The wilderness was, at first, delightful to us in many ways, but our detention at Matabela's kraal, which had now lasted three weeks, was, owing to the uncertainty as to how it might end, very far from satisfactory.

Meanwhile the Chief beguiled us by saying he expected visits from traders and missionaries; and perhaps he did, but not immediately, and

we had no mind to wait for them. I felt unhappy, too, about my mother, who would be greatly alarmed at hearing we had wandered on from the emigrants; and but for Sandy, I think I should have fretted myself sick.

We spent most of our time on the bank of the stream, watching the signs of the weather, which, for the season—the Cape summer—was unusually changeable; heavy mists were continually sweeping up from the valleys, and when these cleared away, we were overcome by the intense heat. No doubt Matabela's scouts kept watch and ward over us, but they permitted us to wander unmolested about the neighbourhood of the kraal. It was not pleasant, though, to think of being overlooked by spies from the bush or in the rocks.

The willows which formed our arbour grew on a green knoll, commanding on the one side the Tyumie river, on the other the sloping lands belonging to Matabela. And a lovely property it was, spread into gardens, rich in Kafir corn, and pasture lands, with patches of bush land; and further on a finely wooded valley, filled with game, and, for the Chief, a famous cattle-trap.

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We were only too glad to get up at sunrise, and come to this delightful spot to bathe, breakfast, talk, and at noontide sleep under the shadow of the great willow, fanned by its long tresses.

Of provisions we had as much as we needed. We could forage for ourselves within the neighbourhood of the kraal; and as Kafirs will not touch the hares of the country, nor fish, such as we killed or caught fell to our own lot. Sanna and we exchanged good offices, too, very often; for we ground corn and carried water for her as well as for Conky, and in return she gave us pumpkins and meelies, and now and then made us a loaf of unleavened bread. That was a treat indeed.

Well, on the morning when the one party of young Kafirs had gone hunting, and the other foraging for plunder, Sanna looking after the cattle, as the women often do, Sandy and I sat on our shady knoll munching nuts, and whiling away the time by carving wooden spoons from a branch of a yellow-wood tree, when, on looking into the valley, we descried a couple of Kafirs trotting along towards Matabela's kraal. On mounting the hill they perceived us. Probably

they knew of the Chief's white visitants, but they did not say so.

Walking straight up, the younger of the two surprised us by bidding us "Good morning," in very clear English; adding, "How do you do?" just as distinctly.

"Good morning," we replied; and down sat the new comers beside us.

"A fine morning," observed the young man; his companion was old and wizened, with a grizzly head.

"You speak very good English, my friend," said I.

"Yes," answered he; "I was educated at B——t's missionary station, beyond the river;" and he pointed over the stream to the north-east.

"And your friend,—does he speak English too?"

"No; he is too old."

"Too old?" I asked; "what do you mean?"

"I mean, that when he was young there were no missionaries in the land—there was no English."

Then ensued a parley between the two Savages,

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and at its conclusion the younger said, "My friend here wishes to ask you a few questions."

"Well," said I.

"Aye?" said Sandy, in his interrogative tone, and scanning the old Kafir, who, with his bundle of assegais in his hand—the war number, seven, as I remarked—looked sideways into our countenances, with keen attention.

"Have you," asked the young man, pointing to the herds of fine cattle browsing in the valley, on the slopes, and on the river's banks—"Have you, I say, in your country, beyond the big vley, such cattle as that?"

We told him we had many varieties; but he could not understand how such little animals as Scotch and Irish cattle could vie with the enormous creatures cropping the herbage near us. His eyes opened at the idea I tried to give him of Smithfield; but the thought of killing so many beasts distressed him: not from any feeling of humanity, but bullocks are silver to the Kafirs, and cows gold—they are regular misers over their treasure.

After this, the men talked together again.

"Tell me," said the spokesman, at last,

“whether the new Chief you have got in England is a man or a woman. They say she is a woman.”

“Our Chief is a woman,” I replied. “She is our Queen. The King is not long dead.”

“A woman! Ma wo!”

“Yes.”

“A great big woman?” expanding his arms above and before him, as though about to encircle a person of the enormous proportions of a Dutch boer.

“No!” I answered; “our Queen is small and girlish, and very fair, with eyes as blue as his,” pointing to Sandy.

“Ough!” grunted the young Kafir, translating what I said to his friend, who echoed the grunt.

Then they came back to the interesting subject of cattle.

“Has your Queen many cows and bullocks?”

“So many,” said I, laughing, “that she has never counted them,”

“Ough!” contemptuously.

“And grass?” asked the young man; “has your Chief grass such as this at her kraal?” plucking some of the herbage at his feet.

I told him I wished he could see Windsor.

Alas! I would have given much to have got a peep at it, or at the humblest English meadow in our island at that moment.

"Eh, laddie! I'd like fine to show him Rose-neath, and Kilgarry, and the Clyde!" cried Sandy, looking down ruefully into the sluggish pools below us.

There was another pause; then the elder Kafir made some remark, which the younger translated thus—

"You have a God?"

"Yes."

"Is He not a very good man?"

"Very. He is a perfect being."

"How do you know that?"

Luckily, I remembered part of what Mr. Macleod had told us of the omnipotence and goodness of the Almighty, and I answered the sharp, sudden question as well as I could.

Another pause.

"Have you ever seen Him?" then asked the young Kafir, after he had silently scrutinized my countenance, without thinking I observed him.

“No.”

“Who has?”

“No one.”

I had none of the right wisdom to say more!

“No one?”

“No.”

“What! not even your Chief?”

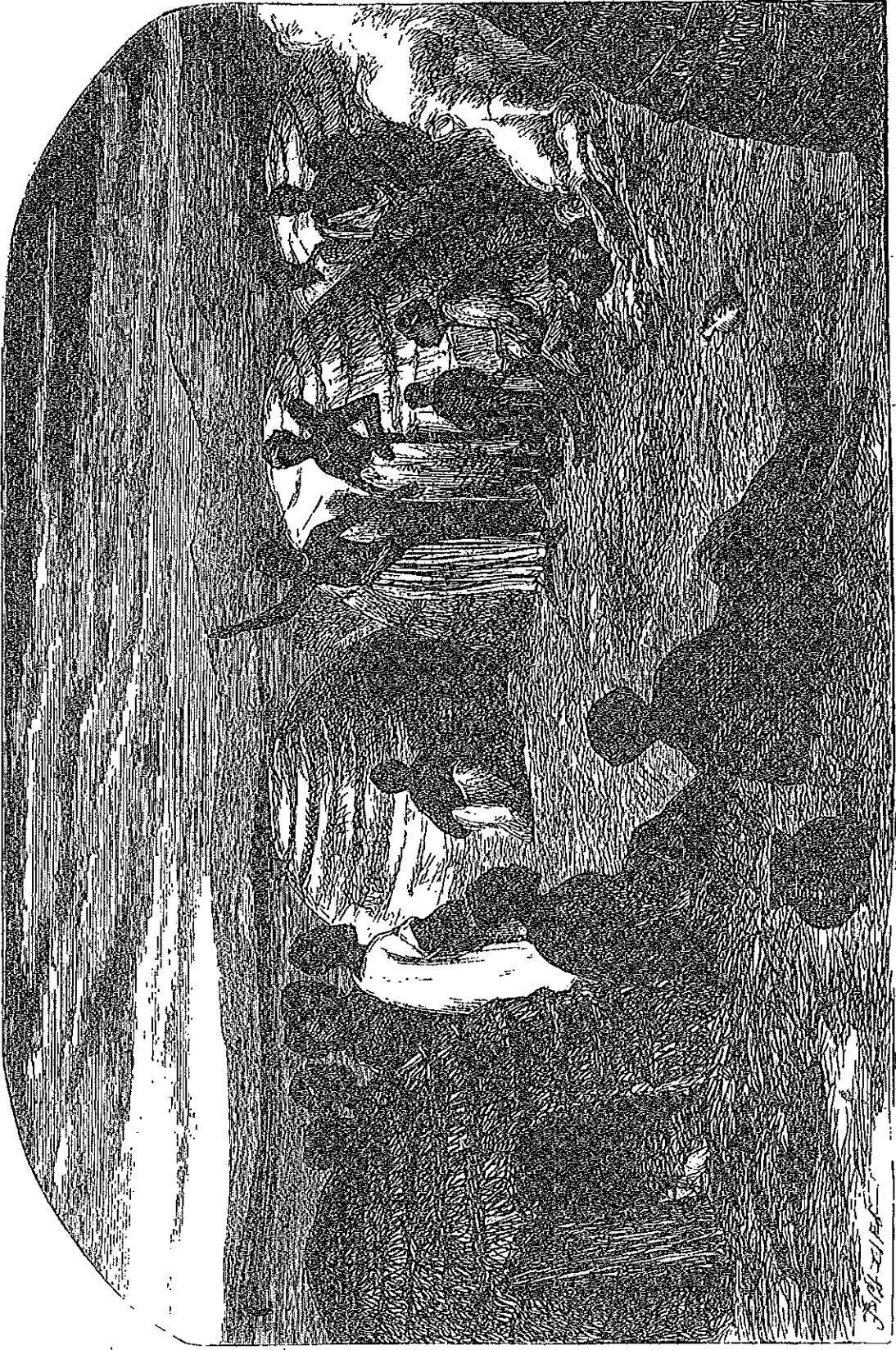
“No.”

Again the two parleyed.

Then the younger one looked me straight in the face—a marvellous effort for a Kafir—and said—

“Is your God black or white?”

At this I was too much taken aback to reply at once; the old man saw the advantage in a moment. He jumped up, drew his kaross round him, shouldered his assegais, and giving me a look, as much as to say, “We’ve the best of the talk since you cannot answer,” he trotted off, at the pace peculiar to his people, towards Matabela’s hut. The young man rising, extended his hand in token of farewell, and pointing to his companion with a smile, followed more leisurely on his track. We saw them enter Matabela’s hut, and there, no doubt, they held a war-council,



LEAH ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY.

for many of the old men were summoned thither during the morning; and before sunset, when some of the young hunters returned with a fine string of pauws and some ostrich eggs, Leah addressed the assembly, standing up and declaiming after the manner of an ancient prophetess.

Neither Tois nor Sanna would enlighten us as to what she said, but that her theme was war we had no manner of doubt.

We could make out the words, "Inkosi ya bunti!"—"Captains of the people!"—"Gaika noburoti bona!"—"Brave Gaikas!"—"Vusa abanti u ba hlanganise"—"Gather the men together," and a constant repetition of "Inkomoe za kuti!"—"Our cattle, our cattle!"—and next day all the women went armed with assegais, even the smallest herd boys bearing their knob kierries with a martial gait.

CHAPTER X.

HOPE IN THE DISTANCE.

ONE evening, when Sandy and I had been grinding corn for Sanna, she sitting by with a heap of wild strawberries in her lap as the reward of our labours, I saw a sudden glow come into the gilly's eyes, and observed him bent in the attitude of listening.

As soon as the task was done, and Sanna's bowl well filled, we helped her to raise it on her head; then she walked off, well contented with her burden, singing a hymn tune, but not very musically, as she went.

"Come along to the willows," said Sandy, "we'll eat our strawberries there; what bit things they are; but they're better than they look." And so they were. They were like him, "little and good."

Everything was very still; it was the hush of sunset. The voices from the kraal below floated dreamily up towards our bower, and when

day faded, the moon came out clear, serene, and beautiful.

“Sandy,” said I, “what made your eyes flash so just now?”

“Paul, my teaching in the hills of Argyleshire does na’ go for nothing here: listen.”

I could hear the soft sighing of the breeze, and the whisper of the willow-boughs.

“There will be rain before long,” he said; “and when it does come, the river will rise like a flood. A man came in this morning and told Sanna that up north the change had begun.”

“Hurrah! Sandy,” I cried aloud, too loud for prudence.

“Dinna sing a lilt till we begin to dance in earnest,” said the gilly, quietly. “Eh! Gude sake, what is that?” and he jumped up.

At this instant the sun cast its last bright glance upon a projecting scarp of rock from which a tree had lately been cut down, or maybe razed by lightning, for some scathed branches still extended from the prostrate trunk, and as my eye followed the startled gaze of my companion, I beheld a hideous scarecrow.

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clad in tattered European clothes; a weather-beaten hat concealed the features, the long lean arms were encased in sleeves far too short for them, and hanging down in shreds, while from beneath the cuffs depended two skeleton hands. The legs of this dreadful object were concealed from our view. We did not go quite close up to it on that evening, for it was not a pleasant object to look at in this short hour of twilight, but next day we clambered up and examined it.

The unhappy wretch—a man six feet high, at least—had been killed by a knob kierrie, that was pretty clear, but I will not detail all the marks of violence we discovered on the poor battered head and body. On making inquiries of Sanna, she told us a horrible tale of old Leah denouncing a man for witchcraft, and of a death by torture, and a confiscation of property. The clothes had been taken from an unfortunate Hottentot killed in the foray which had given rise to disputes about the cattle. Matabela taking possession of it, gave Leah's husband a share, and then ordered the victim to be hung up in the bush, whence he had fallen before we discovered him.

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And now, in spite of what the Kafir visitant from the mountains had said about rain, Ith-lamba decreed that it should not come for seven days. This great councillor was wizard and rain-maker, as well as chief adviser to Matabela. He was certainly weather-wise, as these men always are. Matabela therefore gave out that there would be a feast of honey beer. Tois and others had already made some, which had caused the Chief's mouth to water for more; and as a party of lads were going in search of nests, we proposed joining them: they were glad of this, especially Tois. We were good friends with all the young Kafirs.

Seo, who was a regular little bee-hunter, had discovered a nest in the cleft of a tall krantz, not far off. That busy restless little thing, the honey-bird, had coaxed him on and showed it to him; when he returned he pointed out the place to us; we could see it from our willow mound, and we promised to be up ready as early as he pleased next morning.

We were out before dawn, for Sanna said the whole day would be spent in honey gathering.

The morning was lovely, and, in spite of our

troubles, we felt the excitement of the occasion as we entered the glen shaded by the tall krantzes. It was very still, and cool, and beautiful, and we soon met the little harbinger, as with fluttering wing he hurried towards us, wheeling round and round. He made quite a clatter in his own way; a dusky fellow he looked, but he was commander-in-chief of our party for all that, and when we would have turned one way, he made such a fuss that we were fain to yield and go his road, not ours.

At one moment, remarking a cluster of bees round a fine Euphorbia, I called Seo's attention to it by signs, for Sanna was not by to interpret; in reply the boy made us understand that blindness might follow our eating honey distilled from this tree. We remembered his caution ever afterwards.

Seo marched on at the head of the expedition, carrying the monkey, which by rights was Sandy's, on his shoulder; though the imp was so little, he made a precious uproar in his attempts to join the sport. Seo tried to keep him back, but he contrived to slip his reim, and made a spring up the tree. Out flew the bees—how the monkey screeched!—but he succeeded in grabbing a bit

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of comb, which he began to munch with great relish, though he scolded and gibbered like a small fiend at the poor bees, while the honey-bird sat quietly looking on, and as soon as we were gone, sat down, no doubt, to enjoy his feast in peace.

As Seo was not old enough to keep up with his comrades, and as we had no mind to go very far away—for we ever had a vague hope of some stray Trader passing by the kraal—we and the little Kafir turned back in the afternoon. Tois, too, having despatched two inferior Kafirs with honey to the Chief, gave up the chase and overtook us in the valley.

Near the kraal was a grassy mead where the cattle browsed on the sweetest grass. Here we found "Noon" and "Night" feeding beside a pool, three or four Kafir women and boys being in attendance on these high-mettled racers. Tois jumped on "Noon" without much ado; Seo "making a back" for me, I sprung upon "Night," and away we went up a slope, and then downwards towards the huts.

Such a ride as it was! I could scarcely keep my seat, for with every motion "Night's" flesh shook like a jelly, jolting me backwards and

forwards in a way I could not control; but I could not help laughing, although I felt vexed at observing how merry the Kafirs made themselves at my expense—the women, especially, screamed with mischievous glee on seeing my ungainly attitudes, as I tried to hold on like grim death; but when, not without difficulty, I remarked Tois's mode of bestriding and managing his beast, I found that the secret of oxmanship lay in sitting as near the tail as I could; after this I proceeded very well, till I came to a narrow ravine between the river and the kraal, when, in the very face of Matabela and his pet wife and councillors, the mischievous Seo propped the racer with an assegai, and up went the brute's heels; then with a fine flourish of his tail he sent me sprawling into the fence of the cattle fold; as it was made of mimosa bushes and prickly pear leaves, it was not the pleasantest bower to fall into, and I own I did not like Master Seo the better for what I suffered from the thorns of these "natural defences" of the country.

Next morning all was excitement at the kraal: the rain-clouds had been driven off by a change of wind, Ithlamba was in high favour, Matabela

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in great good humour, a quantity of honey had been brought in, and every one went to work at the brew but Sandy and myself.

Kafirs, like all idlers, delight in any excuse for feasting, whether it be a birth, death, or marriage; but, more especially, these people love moonlight mirth. They have their harvest-homes, after their fashion, and at these times offer their first-fruits to their Chiefs, and dance from night till morning; sing, indeed, they cannot, but they howl, and leap, and shout, not to speak of eating like Asphogels, at these seasons.

Tois was first and foremost in the great "honey brew." Every one now knew that he had got a sufficient number of bullocks together to offer in exchange for Sanna, though how he had come by them not even Sanna herself cared to inquire.

Conky, too, had a hand in preparing the mead—the same luscious drink, by-the-bye, as the ancient Britons delighted in; not that Conky laboured as severely as most of the women of her age, but they were not jealous of her, she was so kindly and sweet tempered.

Meanwhile, the bed of the river continued in

the same dry state, now and then the thunder muttered beyond the hills, and at night clouds veiled the face of the young moon, but floated away again, leaving her in quiet possession of the heavens, Empress of the Stars.

“Sandy,” said I, when the brew was in full work, “I begin to think this Matabela is the very man the soldiers were speaking about when we halted at Bugle Ford. Don’t you recollect their mentioning a Chief who got drunk last year with his councillors? and their laughing about old Gaika sending a message to the Governor to ask pardon for the vagabond, on the score of his having threatened war when he did not know what he was talking about, because he had had too much honey beer?”

“I mind it well—I mind it well!” cried Sandy, jumping up and beginning to dance; then checking himself, lest any scouts should be watching us, down he sat on the grass beside me.

“Paul,” whispered he, peering up into my face with a look half serious half comical: “I say, Paul, *we’ll* no drink much o’ the brew, lad!”

Tired with her morning’s work, Conky sat at

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noon in the shade, in front of her hut, when Sandy and I went up to her, as we often did, with some wild fruits or a tiny tortoise for her youngest child. We found the child thirsty, and rather feverish; there was no milk to be got, for some cows had strayed; and the lazy Kafirs, intent on the prospects of the honey feast, had neglected to milk the others; so the poor little thing was wearying for clear water, and there was nothing for it but what looked like tea, but was mere puddle.

At this moment Ithlamba, who had just returned from "walking to and fro upon the earth" after mischief, came up, and while he was engaged in conversation with Leah, I slipped away, and in another minute was back with my sling of alum concealed in my hand. Unobserved, I contrived to lean over the calabash held by Conky, and making, as she believed, some kind of incantation over it, I drew it from her, having dipped my "charm" into it, and kept it there awhile; then I hid the mysterious thing in the small pocket of my waistband, and calling to Sanna, bid her tell Conky I had cleared the water, as she would see.

Ithlamba, who while talking had seen me busied so strangely, looked half credulous, but thoroughly annoyed. I began to feel I had been imprudent in exciting his jealousy in my wish to please Conky. We had little doubt that the sorcerer hated us, and was now only waiting for further tidings from the colony before he decided on advising Matabela what to do with us. Sanna told us that Tois was soon going to set off for Pato's kraal, where he was to meet her father, and much would depend, we knew, on the instructions he brought from the wily Pato, Chief of the Tslambies, or Islamites. While waiting the result of my "charm," Sandy began to sing.

It was a soft air from the braes of Argyleshire, very sad and expressive. It took me back with a rather sorrowful spirit to that morning when I had bidden farewell to Effie, as she sat with the lamb in her arms, and Brin beside her.

The Kafirs are peculiarly impressionable while under the influence of music, especially such a tender and melancholy strain as that which fell from the young Highlander's lips. Ithlamba

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fixed his eyes upon him, and listened with breathless attention; then old Leah crept up, and when the last verse was finished, we saw tears stealing down her face. Ithlamba uttered something in a whisper, and Sanna translated it.

“Such music,” he said, “caused his heart to feel heavy, and made him think of his mother.”

Others had gathered round—Sanna, and Seo, and some of the children; all were subdued for the moment, Seo gazing into Sandy's blue eyes with a look of earnest wonder. Two or three old Kafirs had also drawn near, and were uttering their opinion in very friendly terms.

While all this was going on, I reached a bowl from beside Conky, and, to her amazement and delight, poured from the calabash a draught of clear, bright water; this done, and while the group of savages drew round the vessel to inspect the contents, I emptied the dregs, which had sunk to the bottom of the calabash, into a hole; then rising walked away, followed by Sandy, and on reaching Nehemiah's hut and finding it empty, deposited the “charm” in a hiding-place far up in the straw roof of our dwelling.

That night Nehemiah and his family found another retreat, whether from fear of me or from any desire to watch us from some secret nook, I know not. We slept by turns till daylight.

But ere I lay down, I imparted some of the thoughts which had caused me so much pain on hearing Sandy's mountain song, to my dearly loved companion. Friendship needs but a week in the wilderness to weave her silver chain, while in great cities it hath no more strength than those gay tissues which I have described as produced by the spider, and spangled by dews that the sun absorbs.

"Sandy, lad," said I, "only think of that horrid Savage thinking of his mother!"

"Whiles!" said the gilly, in his dry way.

"I ought to have thought more about mine, Sandy."

"Aye!" was the answer I got.

"Sandy," I continued, after musing for many minutes over old memories in India, when my mother used to tell me fairy tales—"Sandy, I recollect a moral my poor father always used to add to mother's story about the babes in the wood."

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“Aye?” was Sandy’s note of interrogation.

“I remember when she could not coax me into bed on those hot nights in India, when the fire-flies were glancing about, and I unwilling to be shut up, how she used to take me on her lap and begin telling me that story, and how whenever she came to that part where the robins came and sang a dirge over the children after they had covered them up with leaves, my father used to look up from his meditations—for he was a thoughtful man—and say, ‘Well, Paul, and what do you think might have saved the children from such a dreadful death?’ on which I answered one night as my mother had taught me, ‘God could have saved them, father.’ ‘Aye, Paul,’ he replied, ‘God could have saved them, but they had never been taught to pray. They did not know God.’ Sandy, let us say our prayers; and God will help us out of this strait, I do verily believe.”

“Aye!” was Sandy’s answer, and straightway we “said our prayers.”

That term, “said our prayers,” is certainly peculiarly descriptive of the mode of appeal to Heaven which too many of us employ. To

pray is a different thing. Grace alone helps us in this; fear, it is true, dictates the words of a prayer, but where the spirit is wanting, of what avail is it? It is the mere offspring of terror, and the Wicked One employs it as his agent. He rejoices above all things in self-deception, for he knows that when the scales once fall from our eyes, *he* can "have no more dominion over us."

So we "*said* our prayers," and, poor blind things as we were, felt satisfied. Since that night I have often thought of God's mercy to us who deserved it so little, and scarce knew how to seek it; but even as the father beheld his lost Prodigal *while he was yet a great way off*, and ran to *meet him*, so I believe God's pity was extended to us in the wilderness. We neither knew the way nor the life then; I trust we do now.

Sanna told us next morning that the brew could not go on for want of more honey. Several lads went off bee-hunting, and Tois departed in search of game. Still the clouds held off, except at night.

Next morning the preparations for the feast

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continued; in the evening, the bee-hunters came into the kraal singing, and Tois's messengers were seen racing along the cliffs, for it is a fine thing to be in first with good news from a sporting expedition.

After all Matabela's shuffling we could no longer doubt that, however he might have wavered in his plans about us two poor wanderers, he had finally made up his mind, at all hazards, to detain us now. If war broke out, he knew he could keep us as hostages, or till a ransom was paid for us; if peace was decided on, as he pretended to hope in the best spirit in the world, he let us know through Sanna, that he was sure the Amaglezi would desire an opportunity of making him a present in return for his hospitality to their brothers. He had not an idea, of course, of our sending him an acknowledgment of his so-called hospitality!

He added, that Klipspringer always visited him at this season, on his way to the towns; if there was peace, Klipspringer would come; but if "the word had gone forth to kill," no traders would move through the country; so that if we ventured to proceed, the Gaikhas would surely

destroy us on our way, if we fell into their hands. He was Gaikha's dog; how could he help it!

And how could we gainsay, especially through an interpreter, anything so plausibly set before us! We could only wish the cunning Chief had sent us away long before, and so we told Sanna; but she replied by saying, if war came, we would be safer where we were "than in the bush;" and she was right, for Kafirs will not kill, upon a pretext, the guests who ask shelter of them. They are like the Arabs in this. I doubt, though, if Ithlamba or Leah would have been reproved for despatching us secretly. Our consolation and hope rested on feeling that, like cattle, we were more valuable alive than dead.

In a word, from the moment that we had fallen into Matabela's hands, the Chief had only thought what bargain he could best make before he consented to part with us.

It had also become clear to us, from the observations we made, that in spite of preparations for festivity, those for war were not neglected.

Sandy and I had made a hole in the thatch of our hut, through which we watched the proceed-

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ings of the Kafirs, and though we could seldom look out by day, we distinctly ascertained one night that a number of people were gathered round a pack ox. I could hear the creature panting and sighing, as if after a long journey, and we felt assured its burden was gunpowder. Just at dawn we saw the load carried into a hut, which Tois had told us stood over a store of corn, but which was nothing less than a receptacle for ammunition. Sandy and I had often been struck with the sort of mysterious watchfulness over this same hut, even during the day-time two sentinels ever keeping ward before the door; what attracted us at first was the care taken to prevent any fires being lit near it when the wind set from a certain quarter.

Early one morning, too, on going to bathe in the stream, we had come suddenly upon Seo and some other older lads, all busied in casting bullets in a curious kind of clay mould that put one in mind of a mouse-trap without the wires. On seeing us they had pushed it under a heap of rushes, and of course we affected blindness on the occasion.

The feast of honey beer was looked forward

to with all the greater glee because the unhappy Croppy had forfeited an ox, which was to be killed on the occasion, so there would be good store of beef and game. Croppy was lucky to have escaped with his life, for the present, Leah having informed against him for having a dried snake-skin in his possession, with which she declared he had bewitched Conky's baby girl. I took such alarm at this, having no mind to give Matabela an excuse for keeping us prisoners, or perhaps torturing us to death, that I handed over my alum "charm" to Conky, and taught her its use, to her intense delight, suffering her, however, to believe that it was inexhaustible. I liked her, and Sanna, and indeed all the women of the kraal except old Leah. There was no doubt she detested our race, but she had a more kindly feeling for Sandy than me.

At length all was announced as ready for the feast. The barber of the kraal turned out Matabela with a freshly-curled head; the Chief's body was newly anointed with red clay and well greased, and his leopard-skin kaross was hung on more jauntily than usual. A coronet of brass adorned his heavy brow, strings of scarlet beads

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encircled his throat, and numerous bracelets of ivory and brass almost covered his arms and clanked about his ankles. In his right hand he carried our rifle, his favourite toy, and in his left a barbed assegai.

Conky's leathern bodice and head-dress glittered with beads, and a daughter of Leah's made her appearance in the assembly, for the first time, as a marriageable maiden, at which period a good deal of coquetry and care are displayed in the costume of a Kafir girl. Her cloak of *braded* leather with its pendant strap is then adopted for the first time. The strap* reaching from the neck to the bottom of the garment was studded with buttons, sewn on with much pretension to taste by the workwoman of the tribe, who on this occasion was Sanna. She and the girl having been in service together, she took quite a pleasure in her task, and turned out a fashionable Kafir damsel. The girl had sparkling eyes, splendid teeth, a slim form, and beautiful hands and feet. As Matabela sur-

* This strap is no doubt an appendage adopted as the marriageable Jewish maidens assumed the girdle.

veyed the maiden complacently, I saw poor Conky quail, but her being a Tambookie was a certain guarantee against her being murdered in cold blood.

Before they seated themselves down to the feast an incident occurred which put the Chief's affection for his child, if not for his wife, to the test.

Conky having performed her part in the arrangements for the day, withdrew on one side till summoned by her lord and master to the great spread in a shady thicket. She lay near a bush on the side of the valley, fast asleep, with her baby girl on her arm. Matabela rising, drew near, intending to rouse her, when I, who had gone in that direction with Sandy, saw the Kafir's dark eye dilate with horror, while he started back in an attitude of dismay and doubt. Lo, behold! just before him there was a Cobra Capella, a hooded snake, rearing its head above the grass within a few yards of Conky's feet. But though its crest was erect, and its eye fixed, it remained motionless; then, in the silence that fell on us as we stared in terror on the reptile, we distinguished the murmur of Sandy Hunter's

Gaelic song. He was not far off, under a mimosa bush; and I confess that my fears were for him at this instant, rather than for Conky.

While the snake was thus erect, fascinated, charmed—call it what you will—with the melody that flowed so harmoniously close by, Matabela raised my rifle. I could see every muscle of his face working, but his hand was steady as a rock. Calmly he took his aim, and in half a minute he brought down the snake—it was shot in the back. This once broken, it was helpless. While the savage Chief was exulting in the sight of the creature writhing in its impotent agony, Conky sprang to her feet. The noise of the shot had awakened her; and when she saw the rifle, she was as much surprised at its “speaking” as I had been. The crafty Chief had evidently practised at a mark since he had become possessed of my weapon; and doubtless the bullets I had seen casting were for his special use.

When Conky saw the snake, and comprehended that Matabela had destroyed it to save her, joy shone in her luminous eyes. She held up her baby to its father, who smiled grimly at

it, and then the two walked away by themselves; the Kafir boys hastening to despatch the Cobra, which they carried off in triumph. Sandy came up the slope at the sound of the shot, and in time to be "in at the death." When I told him the part his song had had in the business, he was highly delighted, and to the gratification of Conky he sang her child to sleep, for the poor little creature had been wofully startled by the shot so close to its ear.

Leah's daughter, who had been absent a year, as far as Kafir reckoning could be understood, was accompanied by her father, who had also been in service at a missionary station. Whether he had any news or not, he was determined not to impart anything disagreeable before the feast. Leah and he took no great notice of each other, but they were both interested in the girl's first appearance, doubtless reckoning in their hearts how many bullocks she would fetch, with a milch cow or two thrown into the scale, to weigh against her actively knit frame, so fitted for hoeing, and building, and carrying heavy burdens!

The ox had been killed, and half eaten, when

we were told that Nona was descending the opposite hill. Crossing the ford, she mounted the plateau on which the hamlet stood, and rejoicing apparently in renewed health, she walked towards a group among whom Sanna was seated, and took her place beside a fire with the rest. A young Kafir then handed her a piece of honey-comb; and as soon as the steaks on the fire were ready, she came in for her share.

We stared at her in great surprise, but soon learned from Sanna that it was quite a common thing for those who had been sick, to return to the kraal as soon as they recovered, nobody thinking it necessary to congratulate, or in any way notice them.

“But why not let them lie here and be nursed?” I asked Sanna.

“They might die,” said she.

“Well, and what then?” I asked.

“Ah! you stupid; you not remember what I tell you about the hut burning?”

The more I saw of the very best Kafirs, the more convinced was I that the instincts of brutes were more compassionate than theirs!

But where was poor Nona's baby?

Ah! where, indeed?

By night-fall the next day, what with tough beef and honey beer, Matabela and his people were half tipsy, but, unluckily for us, awake enough to be suspicious and quarrelsome. Old Leah too was in one of her declaiming, prophetic moods, and Ithlamba restless and ill-humoured.

Sandy and I retired to our mat, pretending to be overcome with what we had taken, but keenly alive to all that was going on. As for Sanna she was in the van of chorus-singers, or rather shouters, and Conky stood in the middle of a great ring of dancing warriors, with an assegai in her hand, sing-songing about "the great Chief Matabela and his son Seo, who was to be a warrior," and "lead the tribes against the white men, and drive them into the sea." This is the burden of such declamations.

It was not until the midnight succeeding these scenes, that the elder Kafirs fell into a state of stupefaction and snored round the fires, hot as was the weather. The boys continued their merry dances, we could see them in the moonlight, but the women were fairly exhausted, and had retired

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into their huts. While the boys and young men, headed by Tois, danced and performed strange antics, and uttered wonderful imitations of wild beasts, the creatures of the wilderness, infuriated apparently at such mockery, came to the edge of the river and howled out their wrathful remonstrances.

We meantime lay waiting the dawn, not certain for an instant but what Ithlamba, or Leah, or even Matabela, might crawl into our retreat with muffled movements; but by degrees all became hushed.

“Hark!” whispered Sandy in the silence; “I hear the rain in the wind; it is coming at last!”

I heard it too.

It was yet dark when we were startled by an intruder.

The movements of the visitor were so stealthy, that I laid my hand involuntarily on the knob kierrie I always kept near me.

Sandy drew out an assegai, and we laid about us at random.

All at once a blow fell on a moving form, and the next minute a cry from human lips betrayed

a savage visitant; a glimmer of light through the low aperture now disclosed what had all the appearance of a wolf, but in another instant we heard the hiss of a serpent.

It really was terrific, and I wonder how we had the courage to start forward as we did. Ere, however, we could use our arms, we perceived the enemy retreating, and having effected his departure, he began to mock us by laughing like a hyæna, some of his comrades outside joining in chorus, at which the wolves going home, after prowling, set up a varied howl which made the cliffs over the river echo dismally.

Our breakfast that morning was a slice of raw pumpkin. Men and women were stupid or asleep, or keeping up the festival by smoking dagha. In vain the cattle lowed in the kraal, in vain the gallant cocks of Kafirland flapped their wings and crowed, nobody answered them, and by the time the sun was over our heads, he was so clouded that we could not see him.

The day passed on heavily. It behoved us, however, to be cautious, so we pretended to be as much overcome as the rest, and threw ourselves down under the willows.

But no one came near us, and at sunset we heard the wind sighing through the grass, and thunder rumbling up the course of the river.

When the moon rose, we were still at our post, whence we could hear the least stir in the kraal; but, oh, happy hour! the only sounds we could distinguish were the uneasy, though distant, cries of prowling beasts of prey, and the murmur of waters trickling over the great blocks at the drift.

By-and-bye the waters began to plash from stone to stone. We waited till the moon had gone down, then, with careful footsteps, and holding our very breath to listen, we crept down the bank.

The waters were fast accumulating; the wind blew in our faces, it whistled through the fissures of the cliffs opposite.

We grasped each our weapon; I my knob kierrie, a gift of Seo's; Sandy his assegai, the memento of Sanna.

We reached the drift.

We could hear the Tyumie waters moaning now far up, but they were well on their way to the ocean.

Now a guana, the large species of water

lizard, scuffled out of the sedges, and sought shelter in a nook under the bank; and a bird, probably a kingfisher, flew into my face, terrified at the impending rush of the elements. A colony of orioles flourished in a weeping-willow close by, and the poor affrighted things, swinging to and fro in their aerial village, set up a clatter that alarmed us, lest they should disturb other creatures at hand, and so startle our neighbours from their slumbers.

Hand in hand we sprang over the drift. The loose stones went rattling down the river!

Again we listened, but could distinguish no human sounds.

And now we stooped low, dragged away a great piece of rock from a tiny recess, and thence drew forth our concealed treasures—pocket compass, burning-glass, and a clasp-knife.

While we were replacing the stone to destroy all trace of our route—for we intended that Matabela and his people should believe we had been drowned while bathing—the torrent came thundering down, and the river began to fill at an extraordinarily rapid rate.

The wind blew in terrific blasts as we mounted the cliffs, the trees bent and creaked, and a lurid streak rent the sky in twain. Then the very heavens seemed to crack, emitting vivid flashes of lightning which fanned the distant mountain peaks with flame.

The thunder rattled as if it would awake the world—how it echoed along the margin of the foaming river! By the time we had mounted the top of the krantz, we saw that the kraal was all astir. The lightning illuminated it; now our absence must soon become known; but, thank God! the river continued to rage and swell; it burst its bonds—it was free, and so were we! An impassable gulf separated us from the arch-deceiver, Matabela.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORM IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE rising of the river was a signal mercy, and gave us courage. But for the sudden springing up of this gulf between the Kafirs and ourselves, we could not have depended for safety on the hiding-place we had chosen for the night.

Even with our short experience of the colony, we had learned to be no longer in deadly fear of wild beasts. Lions seldom venture near a kraal, and our ideas of tigers had already been much modified by the sight of the spotted panther skins, sometimes brought home from a distance by young Kafirs. Unless driven by hunger, animals do not attack man; and as for wolves and hyænas, they are much more afraid of us than folks imagine.

Our plan for the moment was to make for the hut in which Nona had found a nightly refuge. We had ascertained its direction casually from Sanna; our only care was to make sure of some

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additional provision, all we dared carry with us being some parched corn and a few strips of dried meat.

The moon shed us just light enough to proceed ; but ere we started, we inspected a nook in the cliffs where Seo had once found a lair of coneys ; happily for us, we discovered one fast asleep. The poor little wretch was lame, and had doubtless been unable to escape with his companions, whom we heard scuffling away in alarm at our approach, among the stones loosened by the rain from the cliff, and rattling down upon us, much to our inconvenience.

Sandy was grieved to knock the helpless creature on the head, yet what were we to do ?

He was despatched as mercifully as possible, but we carried him off to cook when need came, and a fire could be made.

And now, after another look at the rapid stream, on we tramped, barefooted, and with trousers tucked above our knees. Our clothes, though weather-stained, were still in good condition, only our hats looked a little battered ; but our spirits rose as we advanced, albeit the way was heavy from the rains.

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On reaching Nona's hut we found it was no longer weather-proof, for the storm had beaten it in, and the ground was saturated with wet. By-and-bye the rain began to abate, and we found shelter on the lee side of the hut till morning, for we were overpowered with fatigue. As usual, we slept by turns. Exercise had warmed our limbs, and in some measure dried our clothes upon us, but the weather was still unpromising for rest.

Sandy could always sleep, and as I was of a more excitable temperament, he usually yielded to my desire that I should keep the first watch.

Having covered him up as well as I could with such of the thatch from the hut as was dry, I walked about to keep myself awake, and gathered some sticks for a fire, which, but for the peculiar shrub I have before mentioned, I could never have lighted. It grew here in abundance. Tired out at last, I was gradually falling into a fox's sleep beside my companion, when we were both startled by a noise in the hut, as of something scratching the earth, and breathing heavily.

"It is a beast," at length whispered Sandy.

And sure enough a wolf began to whine.

He went on, scratch, scratch, sbratch; but though we could see into the hut, we could not make out what he was about. He was a horrid looking brute, of a dirty drab colour, with irregular dark spots upon him; he had long brown ears, and a black muzzle; sharp fangs of teeth were visible as he growled, and his great eyes glared horribly in the shade.

At last, on getting accustomed to the dim atmosphere of the hut, we distinctly saw, as the beast scattered the earth about, a little child's hand and arm emerging from the soil. The wolf was just about seizing the limbs between his black jaws, when, on the impulse of the moment, Sandy and I jumped up.

The brute must have been desperately hungry, for he growled and proceeded with his ghoulis work; it was clearly not wise to stay where we were without considering how we were to defend ourselves against such a foe.

There was a friendly tree at hand; into this I clambered to make sure that no one was near before I allowed my fire, as a first preliminary, to blaze up. Not a creature was visible. In

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the hollow of the tree, as luck would have it, I discovered a deserted wasp's nest; so, with this in my hand, I quietly descended from my perch, and after again taking a survey of the enemy, set fire to the nest, and while the wolf was intent on his detestable occupation, I suddenly cast my grenade blazing into his face, at which he was so terrified, that with a horrid yell he bounded out—and we rushed in.

It being now bright daylight, we discovered the dead body of a poor Kafir baby. This, of course, was Nona's infant. It looked thin and wasted, and the horrid wolf had sadly torn its little limbs in digging it up. Whether Nona had buried it alive or not when she had no more sustenance to give it, we never knew; but such a disposal of an infant was, I am sorry to say, then, and in later years, very common among Kafir mothers!

We laid the little corpse in a deserted wolf-hole not far off, and covered it over with earth and stones before we thought of cooking our rabbit. Under such circumstances, we had little appetite for a meal, but we were fairly worn out, and refreshment was indispensable.

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Before we began the repast we again reconnoitred the country from the tree. Still not a living creature was to be seen, and the total absence of cattle was the best guarantee for our safety from Kafirs. Not that these people would have injured us, for they are not cold-blooded murderers without prospect of gain; whereas if anything is to be got by it, they care not to outrage the nearest ties of blood; but we had no mind to be detained again on our road, against our will.

Sandy skinned the rabbit, laid it on the bright embers of our fire, and turned it scientifically about till it was done; then dividing it with the assegai into two fair portions, he handed mine to me at the point of his weapon.

We needed no salt to flavour our breakfast. When we had finished, after slaking our thirst at a pool, we proceeded to frame a snug shelter for ourselves with the thatch of the hut; and this time, lying down side by side, we fell into the profoundest sleep we had known for weeks; on awaking, the afternoon sun was shining gloriously overhead; and once more consulting my compass, we set forth in a north-easterly direc-

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tion, trusting to our wits for food. We had not fairly begun to look to Providence for everything—to “see God in all things.”

Dipping soon into a bushy valley, we made as much way as we could before nightfall. We were sorry to perceive clouds gathering again, and, alas! signs of another tempest, now far from welcome. Sandy was fast overcoming his horror of thunder and lightning, but the prospect of it in this lonely valley was not cheering, especially as we should need food. Our biltongue and parched corn we considered it wisest to keep by us as long as possible, for fear of absolute necessity.

Halting near a clump of speck boom, we discovered a goat; a stray beast, probably, from Nona's old friends, or some thieves' gang. She looked at us, as she lay with her head leaning against a stone, with lack-lustre eyes, and on going up to her, we found her foot swollen from a large thorn. Under her was a little kid.

The poor thing submitted patiently to my operation of taking out the thorn with my tweezers, and was so tame after it, that I am sure she was grateful. Having brought with us

a calabash from Nona's hut, we made no scruple of robbing the kid's mother of a little milk; hungry as we were, we would not kill the young one; and as if to reward us for our forbearance, Providence sent us an ostrich's egg for supper. It took some time to bake, in the ashes of a fire we made without loss of time; but, fortunately, the storm held off till we had eaten our repast, and found, while searching for kei apples, on which we regaled deliciously, a charming bower of rest in a copse: it was strewed with double-jees,* it is true, but we gathered a heap of leaves and made a famous nest, into which the goat and kid followed us when the wind came whistling up the valley.

Sandy lay down, and was soon dreaming of his old home. I heard the names of Kilgarry and Angus, and Colin, the Laird's head keepers; and the boy smiled in his sleep; then he sat up, slumbering still, but very busy and excited in his dreams.

“ There he is, Angus, there! there! where the

* Double-jee, or as the Hottentots call it, a two-penny piece: it is a kind of burr that sticks to one's clothes, as ticks do to an animal.

light's glinting doon; spear him, laddie; spear him; my certie! but yon's a braw fish! Eh, Paul," cried he, opening his blue eyes, and bursting into a laugh, "are ye no sleeping yet? I was dreaming o' fine clear water, an' a bright night, wi' the moon rising abune the hills, and making spears, as ye ken we used to ca' them, i' the loch; and Kilgarry and the lads and I in the boat, an' a ten pund saumon no far off!"

"A pleasant dream, Sandy," said I.

"Aye! just," answered the boy, and fell back sound asleep again.

I followed his example, and was only awoke some hours after by the loud patter of rain-drops on the broad leaves of the tree over our heads. Soon it came rattling down in earnest.

Then the tempest "came up." The stoutest heart must have quailed at the roar and flash of heaven's artillery as it rattled through the valley. It seemed as if it must uproot our place of shelter, and scatter it in fragments towards the four quarters of the earth. The poor goat was evidently used to the companionship of man, for it nestled close to us, the kid creeping up with a terrified bleat. Thus huddled together, we

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listened to the clamour of the elements in dread silence, expecting each moment the crash of a thunderbolt.

We called loudly on God.

Alas! it was only fear that made us cry to Him!

Truly awful it was to witness what looked like the wrath of God pouring itself out on our heads in that vast wilderness: it seemed to say—"I am the Lord! Who shall stand in the presence of the Almighty God of Jacob!"

He who careth for the sparrow had mercy on our benighted souls, and awakened us to a sense of His omnipotence. Often since that awful night—for the storm raged on till morning—have I, when reading of Moses in the burning bush, travelled on wandering thoughts, and with grateful heart, to the copse in the desert of Kafirland, where "His lightnings shone upon the ground" while "the earth trembled and was afraid."

It was daylight before the elements spent their fury; and even then broad flashes of lightning seemed to fan the edge of the horizon all round us. The ground about was dripping wet, and we were in a deplorable condition. In this

melancholy plight—wet, weary, and dismayed—we were obliged to remain till after sunrise, when, with our garments sticking to our poor shivering bodies, we left the coppice and continued our route.

The poor goat trotted after us, but the kid could not follow. The former stood for a minute looking at us, and then, with a farewell cry, turned back to her little one, which was wailing within the bush. We were sorry to leave the companions who had shared the dangers of the night with us.

We had plenty of water to-day, for by noon we came to a large vley with fine willows growing beside it; here, too, were some remains of a garden, and the outline of a former Missionary station.

So now we knew we could not be very far from Klipspringer's; and having found among the weeds of the ruined Missionary garden some fine pumpkins and water melons, we reposed ourselves on a green bank, enjoyed our fare,—toasting the pumpkin in slices at a fire,—and then clambered into a tree to sleep, as we thought, in peace.

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Out darted a great snake from the branches! He was a harmless fellow—I believe, what is called the *boom slang*, or tree serpent; however, we thought it best to despatch him, which cost us some trouble, for we were sorely tired. After an hour's repose, we descended to the river, bathed, dried our clothes in the hot sun while we rested in the long grass, keeping a careful look-out for snakes, and again refreshed ourselves with a water melon.

It was pleasant, indeed, after such toil, to lie quietly on the bank of the river, watching an aerial colony of orioles, as the willow-trees from which their nests depended swung their boughs to and fro over the waters.

How admirably were these nests disposed! Though the wind tossed them about, not one touched the other; the busy, happy tenants of them chattering together in neighbourly fashion, the old birds bringing in provisions, and the young ones fluttering about delighted with their own shadows reflected in the stream.

As we were regarding this agreeable scene, we

were surprised by an unusual sound ; there came, borne to us on the breeze, the clear and solemn note of a church bell.

Boom! boom! boom! Ah! how strange it sounded in the desert! I had not heard anything like it since I had looked down from the head of the brae on good Mr. Macleod's little kirk in the Argyleshire valley. Sandy and I started up forthwith, and mounted the ridge bounding the ruined garden. Not a dwelling was visible. Light puffs of smoke on the opposite bank of the stream showed the site of a Kafir kraal or bivouac, but no cattle were out, which we were not ill pleased to see.

Still we heard the bell; measured and slow, and musical as if silver were mingled with the metal that rang. Unable to solve the mystery, and as certain as we could be that the sounds proceeded from no building whatever, we sat in somewhat dismayed silence, while the bell continued for at least half an hour to toll.

We made up our minds, notwithstanding this strange incident, to remain where we were till we had recruited our strength. There were plenty of porcupines about, and quantities of peaches

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in the Missionary garden. In the evening we looked about for porcupine holes.

It was not easy to get the game up without dogs, but laying our ears close to a suspicious bit of ground, having one his knob kierrie and the other the assegai, we soon heard the little gentleman scuttling about within; and before I could raise the assegai, lo! he peeped out.

Up went all his bristles. We had a good view of each other in the moonlight. I made a dash at him, wary Sandy laying by with his knob kierrie till I had impaled the animal; but in an instant the beast retreated backwards, for he had no time to turn. I made a sudden dart with the assegai—it snapped, leaving the greater part of the staff in my hand. Here was a pretty business! The brute might be killed, but my weapon might go to his grave with him. I put my hand down the hole in desperation, and got wounded for my pains, for every quill in my adversary's body was extended like a *chevaux-de-frize*. But I would not lose the assegai blade, and I was sure the poor wounded wretch was a good deal hurt, since, though he held out, he either had no spirit or no strength to retreat,

so down went my hand again, and after being frightfully torn in the struggle, I found the creature relax its powers, and on tugging at the weapon, I discovered that the beast had received it in its throat. I drew the game forth at the point of the spear.

The porcupine tasted like the most delicate pork; and while we despatched an excellent broil, we set the joints to roast. Then, so soon as we had digested the plentiful repast, having replenished our stores with some meelies from the Mission-house garden, we again consulted the compass, and set forward for Klipspringer's.

My hand was very sore, though; and as soon as I found some of the healing grass which Tois had used for my foot, I bound up the wounds.

And now quite a noble park lay before us. On the right sang the river: though it wound away nearly a mile off, we could hear the murmur of its flow; in front rose a lovely landscape. Groves and grassy slopes indicated the rich fertility of the land, and flowers bloomed beneath our feet in profusion. Here it was plain was plenty of game, and as we mounted

higher and we soon found a magnificent mountain: Gaika's Peak towering

At last made up and advanced cool.

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higher and higher, keeping our course due north, we soon found ourselves on a ridge commanding a magnificent extent of country; the Amatola mountains giving dignity to the landscape, Gaika's Kop, named after the truculent chief, towering above all.

At last, we perceived cattle kraals; so we made up our minds to rest all the afternoon, and advance during the night, when it would be cool.

We dined in style. Sandy and I had amused ourselves, on our last bivouac, by shaping out a rude wooden knife and fork a piece, exchanging our articles of workmanship as keepsakes. I have mine still, and use them in my salad bowl of good Staffordshire ware! I have preserved the ostrich's egg, too, or rather the half of it, for we divided the trophy between us, in memory of that long and weary march. I have not had it set in silver; I like it best as it is, an unadorned relic of my boyish adventures in that grand wilderness where I was first permitted to hear the voice of God; answering it then in the spirit of fear—now I strive to pray in thankfulness, acknowledging His bounty in bedew-

ing me with grace amid the perils that surrounded me.

We selected for our roosting-place on this afternoon a high yellow-wood tree. This is the common timber of South Africa, and a fine material it is for all manner of uses. From this we could see the banks and cliffs of the Tyumie stream, while all the landscape was in a glow with the rays of the sun, still hanging in the heavens, high above the western hills.

Waking as usual before Sandy, I crept down a bank to the river. Under a cliff I discovered a tiny cave that was perfectly dry, and thought it would be no bad place to broil our meelies, and so went and brought Sandy to it.

It would have made a fine dwelling for a hermit. The front was shrouded from observation by all sorts of drooping plants: at the back a great fissure let in light and air, but was concealed from observation by a sloping bank, above which again rose a screen of foliage, rocks, and creepers, mingled with gigantic ferns; but the most curious feature in the nook was a rude painting, in coloured ochres, executed on the

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face or scarp of a mass of granite. I had read of bushmen's drawings in the country, and here, sure enough, was a work of art by some of these pigmies.

It told a hunting story. Here was a fat eiland, like a stalled ox—for the cunning bushmen take care only to hunt when the game is too well fed to run easily—there a graceful buck, more agile, but in famous condition. A queer-looking thing, intended for a man, but strongly resembling a baboon, was shying a knob kierrie at the eiland's head, while an arrow in the animal's side, and the blood gushing from the wound, showed that he would fall an easy prey. In another corner a hartebeest was making off with three fellows at his heels, and arrows were flying about in all directions, while stray hunters tossed their arms over their heads apparently with a view to intimidate the game.

Some weeks afterwards I had an opportunity of procuring a fac-simile of this curious sketch, and I would fain present it for the edification of such readers as may like to inform themselves on such primitive works of art.

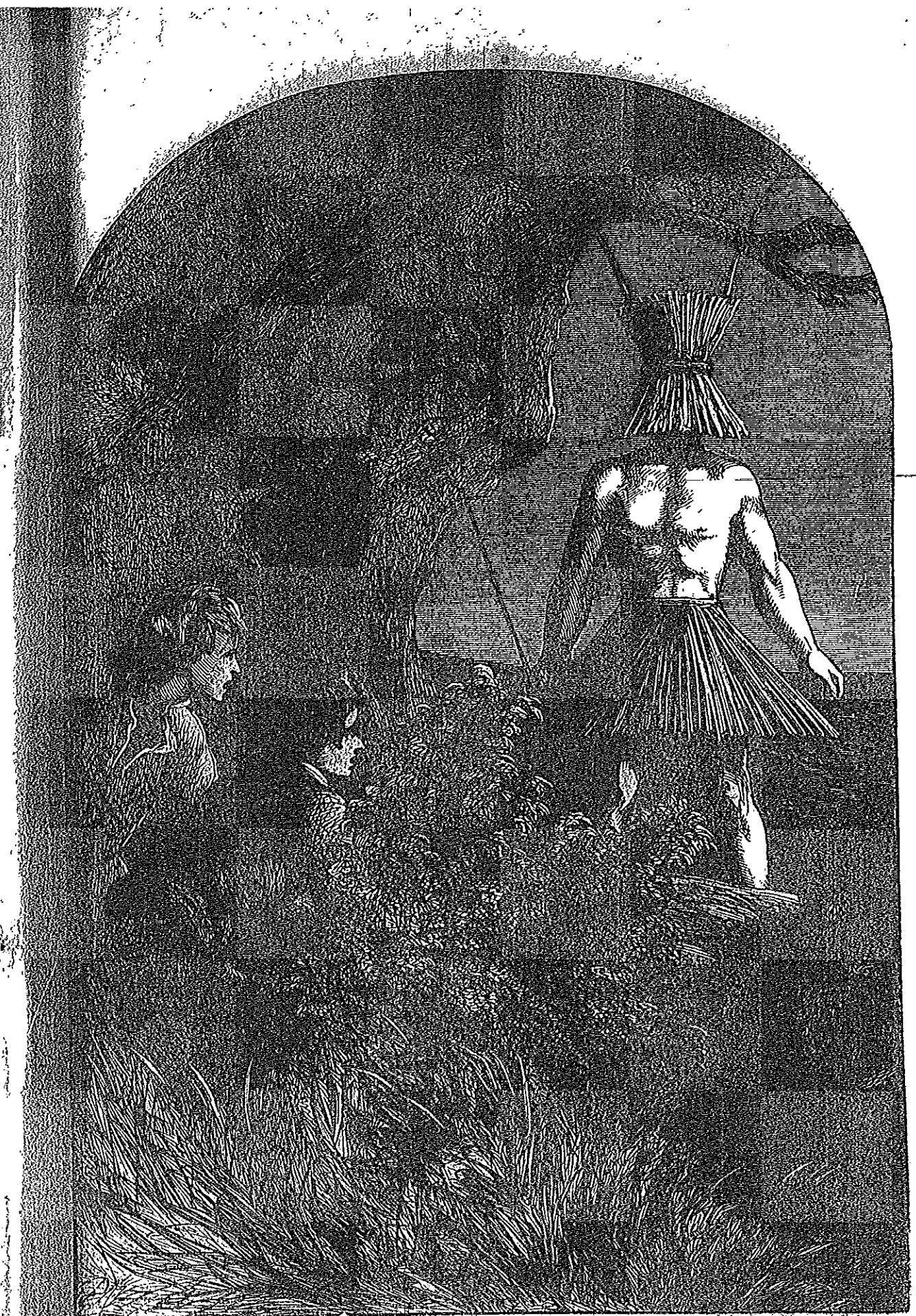
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stayed there till the moon rose, when just as she began to shimmer on the river, we were attracted by a noise, a kind of snorting and plashing, in the middle of the waters—these having much subsided since the morning.

On looking out we got a sight which is not often vouchsafed to travellers. A great hippopotamus had risen from the sedges on the opposite margin, and was about to move across with two cubs on her back. In she plunged, dipping down with the brutes clinging to her, while she revelled in her bath. Every now and then she would lift her head above water, and take a survey: we were laughing at her gambols, when all of a sudden she appeared startled by something she saw, and down she dived. We, ever on our guard, took the hint, and darted to our cave.

Gliding upwards from this recess, we raised our heads amid the ferns and lichen, and looked out. The brilliant moon illuminated the landscape, and we could distinctly trace every bush and hollow of the turfy valley stretching to our right. While gazing down it, we were amazed in the silence of the night to see a ghostly form



emerge from a tuft of trees, and then slowly advance up the ridge facing our retreat.

But what appeared most strange was that this figure was as white as stone; indeed, it more resembled an animated statue than a human being; and yet there were the well-formed legs advancing with measured but ghostly tread, arms well poised, the right one carrying an assegai; a broad chest and rounded throat were surmounted by a head: but either this was strangely crowned or singularly shaped, for whether it was the nature of the beast, or whether the thing borne upon the brow was a species of helmet, it was not easy to tell. Round its waist it had a kind of kilt of some material that rustled in moving; feathers, or something like them, waved from the anklets, and two tall horns, bending and nodding from the head, and resembling the antennæ of a beetle, added to its marvellous appearance. At the top of the ridge it paused. There it stood, marked against the moonlight sky, white and defined, and very still. By-and-bye the head was bent in an attitude of listening; all was hushed, and after remaining motionless for some

moments, the creature turned, retraced its course down the green slope, within some twenty yards of our hiding-place, and disappeared in the impervious depths of the grove whence it had stepped out into the light.

Instead of alarming us out of all power of action, this incident only strengthened our resolution to proceed; but we determined to take our way under the shadow of the cliffs up the bank of the stream, albeit such a course would be more circuitous. In truth, we longed for our anchorage, and chose the most certain mode of reaching it.

As the trader's station lay on our side the river, and very near it, we knew we could not lose our way; but we crept on very cautiously, for there were more wild animals here than further down the country; and truth to tell, we were weakened by fatigue and poor living, and consequently not quite so dauntless.

Numerous tortoises were about our moonlit path, and the guanacs glided in and out of the rushy pools, and the frogs croaked, and the crickets sang, and, afar across the river, we heard the bitter laughter of hyænas. At dawn

the monkeys jeered at us from the cliffs, and a big baboon, watching his opportunity, hurled a stone at us, which fell beyond our beat, and splashed down near a sea-cow in the sedges, on which the latter rose and went flop into the river. Out, too, came the golden cuckoos, and the kingfisher turned up his bright eye and plumed his radiant feathers on the stones, dipping his beak occasionally into the river, and bringing up therefrom a young yellow-fish for his breakfast. The *koornvreeters*, or corn-eating sparrows, too, were jabbering round us in flocks; and soon we met the *schaapwagtertye* (the little shepherd), a creature often in attendance on the sheep; and when Sandy and I saw a tall heron rise from the sedges, we saluted it, in memory of its brethren among the reedy nooks of our old trysting-place on the Highland loch.

Every step showed us some new beauty in this wonderful and pleasant land. The laurel and the myrtle, the double jessamine, and all the varieties of geranium, especially that which emits from its glossy leaf the odour of the apple, and which I have never seen cultivated in England, flourished here as in a garden. A

grove of acacias waving above formed a home for innumerable birds; and butterflies with jewelled wings fluttered about in hundreds.

We came at last to the bottom of a steep krantz, or bluff of rock, jutting abruptly out. Approaching this cautiously, we lay down and peered round its angle, for here the river curved suddenly to the left, and a little further up grew wider, whence it came foaming down over a natural flight of steps worn in the bed of the stream.

Voices were echoing loudly and merrily, and some gentle-looking cows were lazily wending their way across the basin into which the torrent fell, diverging into two streams, parted by a green islet; on this some Kafir girls, perfectly nude and streaming with wet, were dancing gaily after a morning bath—not a very common pastime with these damsels! Strange dusky naiads they looked, and at sight of them Sandy and I drew behind the rock and held our short council of war.

In the midst of our consultation we heard, to our great surprise, the crack of a gun and the ping of a bullet, and next a clear English voice,

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ringing a loud view halloo from the top of the cliff; then some one called, "Hardy, Paul Hardy, is that you? and is that the little chap, Sandy Hunter, with you?"

Sandy was half hidden by a great stone, but he at once made himself visible to the speaker above, whoever he was; and as soon as our eyes recovered from the strain with which we had gazed on the pastoral scene enacting up the river, we discovered a jolly English countenance peering over the rocks, and doubted not it was some one sent in search of us by Klipspringer, who must long have been expecting us. It proved to be the Trader himself.

CHAPTER XII.

KLIPSPRINGER.

My poor mother had found means of communicating with Peter Lane—this was Klipspringer's name—and in a letter, full of trouble, had implored him to look out for us, which he had been doing for a fortnight. It was to Klipspringer's place Mr. Masterman had directed us, because our companions, the emigrants, were bound for his part of the country. It lay out of our road to Mr. Hall's at Glen Lion, to whom we had been recommended for employment; but the Glen was thirty miles off, and not easy of access without guides, or, in the unsettled state of the colony, without escort. The emigrants had gone back to Graham's Town with no good report of Sandy and myself, whom they blamed for running away, as they chose to term our adventurous exploit. My mother's terror and anxiety may be imagined, particularly as my letter from the out-post had never reached her. However, we

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were safe at last, and on our replying satisfactorily to Klipspringer's interrogations from the height, he cast himself over and came down at a wonderful rate, swinging from rock to rock by monkey ropes* and tangled brushwood. The Kafirs in the river, seeing him descending, began to laugh and clap their hands, crying, "Klip! Klip! Izapa! Izapa! Klip! Klip!"—"Come on! Come on!" and as he gave another view halloo, the girls imitated him, waking up the echoes with their shrill mirth. In another minute he dropped down in front of us two poor wanderers.

In spite of his thoroughly English face, he presented a strange figure. On his head he wore a broad-brimmed hat covered with white cloth, and bored with holes to let in the air; his jacket was of blue linen, but a waistcoat fronted with leopard-skin protected his chest from damp; leather crackers (trousers) encased his legs, his feet being shod with strong boots of Cape leather. Across his shoulders were

* The stems of a creeper, by which the monkeys climb from tree to tree and crag to crag in the wilderness.

slung his shot-belt and powder-horn, while a cat's skin depending at one side, and a havresac at the other, garnished as well as completed his costume. On his arm he carried a long roer, a Boer's gun, which he had managed with great dexterity in his somewhat perilous descent; and a wreath of jessamine was wound round his hat, as much for use against flies as ornament. After shaking hands with us, and taking a survey of our wearied forms, he said, good-naturedly—"Well, upon my faith, you are a nice pair to have left your friends in the lurch, and treked on without a guide. However, least said soonest mended; here you are, and I will let them know you're safe. By Shuluga,* as the Kafirs say, you look a little the worse for wear. And now, where do you hail from last?"

"We will tell you that on the road," said I, "if you will take us to your station; and, in the mean time, what news of my mother?"

"She was well enough," said Klipspringer, "in health, but deucedly frightened about your running away from your party; yon," turning

* The spirit of the dead.

to me, "yon brown fellow is of course Paul Hardy, and the little chap is Sandy Hunter?"

"Aye," answered Sandy.

"My mother has been misinformed about our running away," said I; and then I told him of our comrades halting in alarm at the report of war, of our march from post to post, and our detention and escape from Matabela—all as concisely as possible—not forgetting to exhibit my pocket compass as my best friend, except Sandy, in the wilderness.

"Right or wrong," observed Klipspringer, laying his great fist on my shoulder, and looking from me to my companion, "you are a pair of bold lads, and no bad material for the sort of colonists we want in this country. You are bound, I am told, for Hall's farm, at Glen Lion; you can't get there for some days, for many reasons:—no escort, Kafirs grumbling, and ready to be up and doing any moment; but I can send in word to Mrs. Hardy that her precious young vagabond is safe, and that you are both game for anything. Now follow me."

"I hope you wont make game of us, Mr. Lane," said I, as we began the ascent of the cliff.

"Humph! I take it that though that is a poor joke, it is the first you've made since you have been in Kafirland," he replied. "I had a mind to try if you would flinch at the ping of my bit of lead, but I am sure it only stirred your blood up a bit; and now here you are on my territory; so look down and bid farewell for the present to the women below. They have been watching you, and are highly pleased at your way of scrambling up the cliff; see, they are jumping and singing after their own fashion, in honour of my visitors."

They gave us a parting shout, which we responded to by waving our hands, and then we turned to look at the territory before us.

It was a noble expanse, indeed, stretching towards a splendid range of mountains. In the shadow of the largest, lay the Trader's station.

"Before we set off homewards," observed our new friend, "I dare say you lads will have no objection to join me at breakfast. Hullo! you Juli!"

No answer was returned, so Klipspringer took a whistle from his breast-pocket, and sounded a summons.

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Straightway there rose out of the grass, not far from us, a little broad-shouldered fellow, half Hottentot, half Bushman, with a head too large for his body, and miniature hands and feet. Under his bare brow there twinkled a bright little pair of eyes; and through his wide lips, as he grinned, shone beautiful teeth; but the thing in the middle of his face could scarcely be called a nose, and a slight cast in one eye gave the quaintest possible expression to his square-cut countenance. His dress consisted of a sheepskin jacket, the mangled remains of a checked shirt, and an old cocked hat with the flaps turned down, a wide ostrich feather wound about the crown serving as a fan to keep off the flies.

He had lain down to sleep, but not before he had spread his master's breakfast in a pretty bower at hand, beside which a fine half-bred dog, one of the Trader's "scratch-pack," kept watch. A few paces to leeward Juli had lit a fire, on the clear embers of which he now threw some steaks from a large eiland, whose carcass lay near. Great flaps of the meat were hanging about the bushes to dry; and within but a few

yards sat the harpies of the desert, three or four enormous black vultures, calmly awaiting our departure to begin their feast on the remains of ours. These are the scavengers of South Africa, and so pursue their calling unmolested.

You may suppose we were well pleased with our repast, especially with the additional flavour of salt, to say nothing of a loaf of white bread, and a tin mug apiece of milk, with a dash of Cape brandy in it.

Klipspringer had on this very morning almost given us up in the fear of our having been drowned, torn to pieces by wild beasts, or killed by lightning, when Juli's keen eyes discovered us half a mile off, stealing along under the cliffs. Instantly directing his master to our whereabouts, he set about making preparations for a substantial welcome, and then, Hottentot fashion, flung himself down to rest.

Having refreshed ourselves, and discovered a kind-hearted and interested listener in Klipspringer, we related our adventures more fully, not forgetting the mysterious incident of the tolling bell and the apparition which had succeeded it.

“As for the bell,” said the trader, “we shall hear it again before long, and I will take an opportunity of showing you where the ghost came from. Now, Juli, look to the beef here, and pack up the traps when all is ready. Are you lads dead beat, or have you a mind to get along with me?”

We hesitated not to accompany him. We did so rejoice to be once more in fellowship with the white man.

Truly thankful we were when we reached the trading station, which was nothing more than a large hut, fenced round with prickly pear bushes.

In this compound, as I called it, from my Indian associations, there was room for dogs, cattle, poultry, wood, a patch of vegetable garden, and other appliances for a small farm; not that Klipspringer did much in agriculture or grazing, but such things as we saw were necessary at this distance from the towns.

Several Kafirs, men, women, and children, were gathered at the gate of the fence, which, however, they had neither unfastened nor climbed over. Beside Klipspringer's own empty wagon we perceived another of enormous

dimensions. This belonged to a Dutchman, a huge creature, some seventeen stone weight, who in capacious white trousers, a duffle jacket, and large straw hat, sat on the box of the vehicle, whip in hand, and his fourteen oxen ready harnessed for the journey.

He was in no good humour, that was clear. He had halted at the station for the night, and had, as a matter of course, lost his two best bullocks. They had been stolen, or had strayed, and were now many miles away.

As the Trader came up with the usual salutation, "Good morrow, bass (master)," the said "bass" vouchsafed no reply beyond a sulky nod of his head, expressing no curiosity or interest at our unlooked-for appearance, though the Kafirs drew round us immediately, making their remarks, and wondering where we could have dropped from.

Bidding us sit down on the grass outside, Klipspringer sent all the Kafir men kind away, except a little brat who was modelling in clay. He had produced a span of bullocks, by no means badly executed, an eiland or two, and some dogs, and was now completing the group

with a miniature copy of Juli, or of a baboon, it was hard to say which. A pumpkin had been carved into something very like a wagon, wheels and all, and a long rush with a string at the end made the whip. The child was now eyeing the Boer, probably intending to take the likeness of the unshapely mass, but the costume doubtless puzzled him; whereupon, having some talent in that line myself, I sat down beside him, and soon worked up a figure not unlike the Dutchman's, to the intense delight of little Eno, as the Kafir child was called.

While thus occupied, Klipspringer continued jabbering Dutch in a good-humoured voice within the depths of his hut, the Boer grunting in reply, from time to time. He had come to make purchases, and did not like the detention, still less the loss of his oxen. He would not enter the hut, but now sat on the tressell boom of the wagon, with the box open, gaping for its freight, and his great leathern purse in hand, while he waited, with a kind of surly patience, to pay for his goods when they should be brought out. In strong contrast to him, his

young fore-louper (the boy who led the oxen), sat calmly gazing at us, and smoking a long clay pipe given him by the good-natured Trader.

When the latter brought out the bale of goods, the Boer had it opened, and examined the contents carefully: there were pieces of *voerchitz* (a coarse Manchester print), bright handkerchiefs, a roll of orange ribbon, and a bundle of stockings, &c., &c. Klipspringer was evidently extolling his wares—he spoke Dutch—but the Boer only growled as he packed them into the box.

At sight of the wearing apparel, some Kafir girls gathered round and would try and peer into the box, which seemed already as full as it could hold. Klipspringer, seeing the old fellow was annoyed, called the girls away, and gave them some tobacco, while he went back for the rest of the purchases.

In the mean time the Dutchman panted and puffed over his belongings, and being in a hurry to be off, resolved to try the quickest means of stowing them away. Closing the lid of the wagon-box, he called the fore-louper to the head of the train of oxen, then seating himself on the

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box, he strove by his weight to press it down; this not answering immediately, he re-opened it and sat bodily down on the bale of *voerchitz* at the top. All, however, was not so firmly packed below as it looked, and the fore-louper, whether by accident or design, just then touching a wheeler's ear with his whip, the beast moved, the rest following his example, thus shaking the wagon; on which the old Boer lost his balance, tumbled back, and got planted so firmly in the box, that he could not rise, but dived deeper and deeper, till his heels were far above his head; finally, he got jammed in so tightly—and the more so because of his kicking and sprawling in his ungainly position—that what with laughing and trying to release him, Sandy and I, who had rushed to the rescue, lost all power, and in vain tried to aid him, while the women kept up an incessant din by screaming with the excitement of the fun.

The noise frightened the oxen, and off they set at a trot, turning sharply to the left, the Dutchman's legs and arms working into all sorts of contortions, and the fore-louper jumping about and screeching in front of the wagon, affecting

to try and stop his team, but evidently enjoying the joke, as indeed we all did immensely. Klip-springer, on hearing the tumult, hurried out of his hut, and ran down the hill after the oxen, which he soon stopped, and then shouted to me for an axe which he happened to have given into my charge at his own gate.

He made no more ado than to cleave the angle of the wagon-box in twain, and so released the prisoner; who, between his wrath and the awkwardness, to say nothing of the danger, of his position, had narrowly escaped a fit of apoplexy. With our assistance the damage was soon repaired, and the remainder of the goods stowed more conveniently away.

The Boer and the Trader then took a parting cup together, as they balanced accounts from the leathern purse which the Dutchman had kept firmly clutched through all difficulties; and having obtained a promise that the truant or stolen oxen should be searched for and forwarded on, the old fellow departed, the fore-louper grinning, but receiving a smart cut from the long wagon whip for his impudence.

The Dutchman was a cross-grained old fellow,

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that was clear, so we did not pity him. He offered us no thanks for the part we had taken in his behalf. On the contrary, in the range of his whip he managed to give both Sandy and myself a sly cut; but what disgusted us most was his gratuitous ill-nature in sweeping off poor Eno's models. The little Savage looked up in troubled wonder, as he saw his pumpkin-wagon cleft in twain, and all his beasties scattered far and wide. A white boy would have cried; the little Savage uttered a yell of defiance, and then, in the spirit of philosophy which characterizes his countrymen, he gathered his belongings together again, and began to repair the damage so ruthlessly done.

Truly we rejoiced for the next two days in the safe repose which the hospitality of Klipspringer afforded us, but first I addressed a letter to my mother, thanking her for sundry little matters she had requested the Trader to provide us with, and for which the good soul would take no payment, and praying her forgiveness for all that had passed, promising, by God's help—that expression made her very happy—to pursue my way with Sandy to Glen

Lion, where Mr. Hall was likely to have plenty for us to do. I also pointed out the advantage that I had had from Sandy's companionship, and in reply, my mother sent him a kind message. My letter found its way through a friendly missionary to whom Klipspringer sent it, but the answer was, like royal Charlie, "lang a coming."

CHAPTER XIII.

MYSTERIES SOLVED.

KLIPSPRINGER took to us; but he was too true a friend to let us eat the bread of idleness.

On the evening of our arrival, he told us that in a couple of days he should be off to the towns to invest his money and learn the news; while he was speaking, Juli came in with the dried provision and a fine pauw—the buzzard of the Cape—and with this a couple of bucks, so “now,” as Cobbett says in his “Cottage Economy,” “the house was full of meat!”

All next day was given to supplying the demands of Klipspringer’s Kafir customers, for civilization had brought its needs into the wilderness, and while the men smoked their tobacco and the women chattered over their snuff, the astute Trader, who spoke their language like his own, drew from them all he wanted to know.

“I shall have time, maybe, to do a little business yet, my lads,” he said. “While I am away, I

shall leave you and Juli here, but I shall not tie you by the legs. You may do me a good turn if you have a mind. Juli will show you where there is gum to be got; and as you seem to know something of arms, you shall have a double-barrelled rifle a-piece, and bring me in a buck or two. I have to find a hundred skins against the month of April, when Vanderhout, the boer before named, will be passing by on his road to Graham's Town. I shall lock up my cabin. You will be better without having any charge of that; it will be quite safe," he continued, seeing us look surprised; "these fellows like me well enough; I am not up to what our Teachers here call points of doctrine, but I keep my word to my neighbours, and do to them as I'd have them do to me, and they understand that sort of logic better than all the preaching, 'specially as preaching and practice don't always go together.

"You lads will have to house yourselves; Juli will show you how to do that. You must mind what he tells you, for though at the first going off he may be a little jealous and sulky, if you humour his pride—for that is the tender point with a Totty—you will all get on

famously. Now to supper; and be thankful for a full meal, a clean mat, and a dry shelter, and, though last not least, a settler's welcome!"

"Aye," said Sandy, whose reserve pleased Klipspringer, because he saw that the young Scot's eyes were everywhere, and his hands as busy as his tongue was still.

Next day we unpacked the clean linen my poor mother had sent for us. She had not forgotten to help Sandy in this matter. Then submitting ourselves to Juli, we contrived, with two new mats and some poles, to erect a very tolerable shelter within the area of the station. I undertook the care of the goats. Klipspringer was far too wise to keep any beasts but his goats, and a span of fourteen oxen for his wagon, with one or two to carry burdens. He was quite of Sandy's opinion that to do so was like preserving mice for cats. While Sandy gathered wood, and in other ways busied himself for the benefit of the household, Juli acted as shopman for the first time in his life, which put him into famous good humour, and the Trader prepared for his trek.

The Kafirs had gone to their sunset meal. I

sat milking, and Sandy oiling a gun-lock beside me, Klipspringer looking on, when we distinguished the solemn toll of a bell at no great distance.

Sandy and I looked at each other, and then into Lane's face.

"Look yonder," said the Trader, pointing to the shoulder of an opposite hill.

We saw two oxen descending under the guidance of a little Kafir boy. Eno was bringing in Vanderhout's stray beasts. They were footsore and stopped at times; then the little chap would whistle like a bird, and the creatures would flourish their tails and follow cheerfully.

"Not up there," said Lane; "look below, just where the sun touches the edge of the mountain range. Hark!"

And the clear tones of the bell came floating over the pasture lands, and across the river.

"You English lads never get your eyesight till you have been in this country a year at least," said Lane, or, as I prefer to call him, Klipspringer; "do you see nothing on the tip of that great bit of white rock there?"

"A bird!" cried Sandy.

"Yes, a bird, perched on the edge of the stone," said I, still wondering.

"Listen again"—and the bell tolled twice.

"It is the bell-bird," observed the trader. "I believe that fellow knows me; for oftentimes, at sunset, I see him sitting there and sounding his note, which I like well to hear. I was used to a village church, when I was a boy, and I think of my old parish where I was born, and my fathers before me, when I hear my friend yonder. I call that range of hills Longridge, in remembrance of the poor old place at home; and whenever I am called upon, I will give something towards building a prayer-house in memory of it. Some Boer's farms lie the other side of that hill. It is a grand country; I wish I could see it planted with corn and beans, and such things, like the valley I remember in Somersetshire."

He left us, and moved a few yards down the slope, where he seemed to watch the progress of Eno and the cattle; but when the bell-bird ceased its note, his reverie ended; for he turned, passed us by, and retired within his hut.

When Eno brought up the oxen, Klipspringer came out, with a cheerful countenance, and, giving his orders about driving them to Vanderhout's at dawn, he rejoined us; and then we reminded him of his promise to explain the meaning of the apparition we had seen on our journey.

"Well," said he, "I will meet you beyond the Groene Kloof to-morrow afternoon, for I shall be at work all the morning, and so will you. I dare say I shall be able to show you a few more such apparitions, in broad daylight. That is right, Sandy; scour out the tins, lad; and Juli will bring you an earthen pan, Hardy, for the milk—we make a little cheese here sometimes, against the rainy season, when it is bad work hunting, and provisions get low, along of the rivers rising, and the wagons being in a fix on the wrong side of them. I brought the fashion of cheese-making from Somersetshire with me."

The sight of the earthenware pan was pleasant to our English eyes; and when we had set out our dairy in a sort of beehive, raised on stilts, where such stores were kept out of harm's way,

Juli announced that supper was ready—and, indeed, so were we!

We were beforehand with Klipspringer next day at the Groene Kloof. As we drew near the end of the glen, we distinguished a noise like the beating of a drum, and the usual monotonous wail of a Kafir chorus, accompanied by the shrill voices of young women and the quiver of assegais. In due time, the Trader joined us, and bidding us follow, he mounted a low ridge of earth, from the top of which we beheld a curious scene.

In the greenest spot of an extensive and finely-wooded valley were assembled groups of Kafirs. On the left stood a clump of the older men; on the right, a crowd of women—some very ancient; and while the former chaunted a kind of war-song, but not one of that violent character which rouses the fighting men of the land to fury, the women beat with their sticks on an enormous drum, formed by stretching a hide on some staves driven into the ground. At some distance from these were several younger women, with assegais in their hands, which they shook at intervals, while they pitched their

voices to a high treble, joining in with their shrill upper notes when the drum was loudest.

The performance by this singular orchestra was evidently in honour of several extraordinary looking beings, resembling that white and silent figure which, in stepping from the grove into the moonlit solitude of our path through the wilderness, had so startled Sandy and myself. Three of these young lads, as we discovered them to be, were now beginning to dance. At first, they moved to a slow and stately measure, standing on one foot, and raising the other in operatic style, or marching a few paces with their arms uplifted in response to the swell of the chorus; then the foremost leaped high in the air, the other two following the antics of the strange fogleman, a "forest of spears" ringing in applause at their feats, and the valley echoing with the shrill tones of Kafir girls. Next, the dancers whirled about like so many dervishes, and when fairly spent, they withdrew into a neighbouring bush. As the war-song rose on the air, Klipspringer translated to us such words as he could catch, and which were all suggestive of war and triumph.

Soon three or four more fellows, dressed like those who had retired, stepped into the area, and were welcomed with a loud murmur of applause. These, Klipspringer said, were the sons of Chiefs; and, in spite of their grotesque gear, which gave them a resemblance to monster grasshoppers or locusts, we could perceive that they were finely made, and as active as spring-bucks.

They went through the same movements as the rest, and were succeeded in their turn by others. This curious ceremony, Klipspringer said, would continue for the next month; it was connected with the inauguration of the young lads of sixteen, or thereabouts, to the honourable position of warriors. Now they were to be admitted to the privileges of men; and instead of assisting their grandames in herding cattle, they would be allowed to hunt, and fight, and forage, wherever they could, for oxen or cows, wherewith to buy wives.

We never witnessed this curious exhibition but once, nor has every visitor to the colony an opportunity of seeing it. It takes place only at stated periods, and is accompanied by various rites and ceremonies, which prove that many

laws among these curious people have originated in the Mosaic dispensation.

At the mouth of the Groene Kloof, we found Klipspringer's horse, Stormberg, Juli having caught and knee-haltered him, preparatory to having him ready for his master's journey at daybreak next morning.

Stormberg was a good sized mountain pony, with the mark of a wolf-bite in his shoulder. This proved his bravery, and, consequently, increased his value; for it is not every horse that has the nerve to face and fight a wolf. Though not graceful, he was strong, compact, and clever looking; and when brought out for the trek, was in high glee at the prospect of travel; he knew well enough, by the reim fastened at his head-stall, that he and his master were bound on a journey together; and when the saddle-bags were flung across him, and Klipspringer's tiger-skin sabretash buckled to the saddle-flap, he capered with such glee that some would have found it difficult to manage him, especially when he bent his back in an arch, and curvetted on all fours, like a goat; "bucking" they call this

at the Cape—and an ugly manoeuvre it is for such as are not used to it.

But Klipspringer sat him like a rock, and gave him a smart cut on his shoulder, which Stormberg took in good part, for he only shook his head and neighed good-humouredly, cut a few more capers, and then stood champing his bit and pawing the earth with the air of a proud war-horse.

“Take care of yourselves, boys,” said Klipspringer; “gather me in a sack of gum, and bring in as many bucks as you can.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” replied Sandy and I, delighted at the prospect before us.

“Juli, I leave you in charge,” continued his master, “and don’t meddle with the lions till I come home. You know that sort of thing won’t do, if I am not by; there’s nothing a lion likes better than a warm Hottentot for supper.”

“Ya, bass,” was Juli’s reply. He well knew that his master said what was only too true.

And now Klipspringer’s gun was in the leathern socket, and his havresac well stored with biltongue and biscuit slung at his back,

He carried pistols this time in his belt, for he had no faith in the people of that old lynx, Pāto, he said; but, as a counterpoise to this, he was provided with certain presents, such as Kafirs delight in—tobacco, beads, snuff, &c.; a small “pocket-pistol” containing half a pint of brandy completing his equipment.

We watched his career along the plain, admiring his horsemanship for some way, and then turned into the little domain, to our occupations.

There was one special good reason for closing the Trader's hut; namely, that little was left to be disposed of; for Lane, on hearing rumours of war, had wisely deferred making further investments. A few skins lately brought in remained to be piled, and the bags had to be repaired for collecting gum. There was wood to be chopped, the roof of the dwelling to be re-thatched, for which the rushes stood ready; and some gaps in the fence to be filled up. In short, there was enough, but not too much to do; by sunset the goats were milked, and the oxen brought in; then we had supper. After which, Juli told us, while mending the sacks, such a wonderful series of

glad to get into the shade of an acacia grove, where we fell in with a gang of Hottentot women, squatted amidst some bundles of sheepskins—these last so filthy that we did not wonder afterwards when we heard of English Traders to whom they were consigned, grumbling at the state in which they received them. Sandy and I profited by our experience, and when we——

But we have enough on our hands for the present, so must not anticipate the sequel of our narrative.

The women were very inferior to those we had seen near the towns, and had but little covering on them. They were cooking after their fashion—toasting locusts on a stick before a fire, and boiling some roots in an iron pot. We gave them some snuff for a few wild onions, which proved very palatable, but declined joining their feast of great grasshoppers.

As we crossed a sandy pathway, Juli pointed out the fresh footprint of a lion. “To-morrow,” said he, “we come again for more gum. We no meddle with lion; but if lion meddle with us, what must we do? Klipspringer want buckskins, too; Eno’s father must come with us.

We don't go after lion, you know," continued the Totty, apologetically, "lion come after us!" We laughed, and then hoisting little Eno on "Moonshine's" back, proceeded to Klipspringer's.

Our Kafir friends were awaiting us, and soon off we set for the Groene Kloof, where, on a bank of earth, Klipspringer had raised a mat covered with a skin, on which he had chalked in coloured ochres, the rings of a target, with a grotesque eye in the centre which had never yet been damaged. We could not help remarking that all the bullet-marks hitherto made in this target were too high; it was clear the Kafirs were no great shots, though they were all armed with Birmingham muskets; and, to say truth, we had no mind to give them an opportunity of improving their practice.

We therefore began the sport by throwing the assegai; but I caught a glimpse of such an expression on an old Kafir's face, who evidently saw that we could do better in that sort of practice than we cared to admit—for we had learned how to use the weapon at Matabela's kraal—that we thought it best to take to our

fire-arms honestly; these were two excellent rifles lent us by Klipspringer. Making Juli interpreter, we cast lots who should begin.

The lot fell on the old man, who excused his deficiency in skill by reminding us that when he was a child there were no guns in Kafirland. He did better than we expected, and when it came to my turn, third—I, in a nervous desire to surprise them, hit two inches below the bull's-eye.

Still they cried, "Good! good!" for they seldom got so near it themselves.

Sandy being the youngest of the party, I affected a certain reserve about him, and made a point of his firing last. His rifle looked unwieldy for him, and the canny Scot put on such an air of deference towards me, and of hesitation as to his own capabilities, that I verily believe they looked upon his admission into the circle as a concession.

I could see Juli guessed our secret, though he affected indifference; while the Kafirs, who, though cruel to their own people, and ferocious in fight, have a natural code of politeness among themselves, formed into a semicircle, I standing on the right, and Juli on the left.

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The spot was picturesque enough: a little platform, carpeted with turf and embroidered with gladiolas, tufts of the pale lilac agapanthus,* and bunches of the scarlet monkey-foot, and screened from sun and wind by flowering shrubs. Women were gathered on a hill behind us, and clapped their hands or laughed aloud at success, or *vice versa*.

The air with which the little Highland gilly stepped into the semicircle, the style in which he raised his rifle, and the keen look he gave to the rude target before him, were worthy of his teachers, Kilgarry's gamekeepers, and drew forth a murmur of approbation from the knowing spectators; in another moment it rose into a shout, as the bullet, whizzing through the still air, struck the centre of the rings, and piercing the bull's-eye, remained embedded in the bank.

But next, the Kafirs consulted together, and expressed their belief that the boy's success was accidental. Not a whit disturbed, Sandy bid them draw a dark line above the rings; but while

* The bushmen poison their arrows with a juice exuding from the root of this lily. The plant is common enough in England, and known by the name of plumbago.

they were deliberating on who was to do this, lo, a cobra capella, disturbed by the hubbub raised round his retreat, lifted his head from a cleft of a rock immediately over the target; and erecting his hood, put his forked tongue out at us in a manner unmistakably impertinent.

“I’ll just teach him better manners than to keep his hoodie on in company,” said Sandy; and as Juli translated the words, whiz went the other barrel of the lad’s rifle, and the snake disappeared.

Away sprang the brave little fellow over the sward and up the bank, and I after him. The Kafirs uttered not a word, till they saw Sandy on the top of the rock with the headless reptile in his hand, while I waved my feathered hat in the air, and yelled “Hurrah!” in true British style.

The entertainment closed with a shooting match between Eno’s father, Duchani, and myself, in which I succeeded in beating him every time. To say truth, I believe the Kafir has too much of the spirit of a warrior to be jealous in such matters; but be this as it may, I got up a little rivalry about throwing the assegai before we broke up the party, in which, though I beat

Juli, I admitted the superiority of Duchani, for I had no mind to make enemies of such neighbours, especially in Klipspringer's absence.

That night we raised our hut to more suitable dimensions, and set everything to rights about the Trader's station. Juli harped upon the lion's footprint all the evening, and tested our mettle by saying "he was not afraid to go out for more gum next day, though the lion might fall in our trek."

We had been in our nests and asleep some hours, when we were awoke by the barking of the dogs, which Juli had brought within the fence that they might be ready in the morning for the expedition against bucks, after gathering the gum. Juli's voice, and a cut or two from his sambok, soon reduced them to submission, and we were about to lie down again, when we heard, evidently at a considerable distance, a prolonged cry, the sound of a high, clear note.

Either the hills were full of echoes or other voices answered; up we jumped, and nearly stumbled over Juli on the ground with his ear bent low; the night was dark as pitch, but from time to time gleams of summer lightning flashed

upon the hills to the north-west, and at one moment I was able to discern a figure that looked gigantic against the sky, perched on the edge of the hill, where the bell bird was wont to come.

Then we again heard the cry loud and clear—presently footsteps approached the station, and the dogs began to bark and yell.

Then Duchani called to Juli, and said, "It is the voice of the Gaikas from the hill-tops; behold, they have risen up, and run and prepare themselves for war! The land is about to learn heavy things—the word goeth forth to kill. When shall Klipspringer's face be turned this way?"

"The sun must set twice before he will be here," said Juli.

"There may yet be time," replied Duchani; "the Gaikas have not left the hills, and are arming themselves for battle: it is well! the lads may abide patiently till the master's return."

He glided off, and Juli told us we need have no dread of an attack, or of treachery from our neighbours, whose policy made them peaceably disposed, at least for the present. Duchani

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was a second-rate chief, like Matabela, but his warriors were mostly very young, or old men; all, too, had much cattle; and though they had arms, they had no horses. Their true interests lay in peace just now, and what was more, they knew it. Our difficulties were considerably lightened before long, for the sun was scarcely up ere Klipspringer galloped across the plain with Stormberg in a foam.

He brought capital news from a Missionary station. It was true that the war-cry was sounding through the land, but the water-houses, as the Kafirs then called ships, had sailed in with many hundred red men to Cape Town. The Gaikas did not know this yet, and "by the time we are ready for them," said the Trader, "they will be up, and all their cattle over the Kei. We have a week before us yet, lads; so the best thing we can do will be to pack and trek. Hall's party may meet us half way, and we can form a lāger till the troops come up. Duchani's people will see, for their own sakes, that my station is left unharmed, for they have no mind to go without tobacco and snuff when war is over."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAGER.

KLIPSPRINGER, albeit a sportsman, did things in business fashion. He always kept his wagon in good order, and a certain store of provisions ready for emergencies. Still we wondered what he would do about powder, for there was no more in his hut than filled our horns. We were very soon satisfied, however, on this important point.

All that day was passed in packing the cumbersome vehicle for the trek, the skins bespoke by Vanderhout were now thrown in for our use, and the wagon-box was filled with bags of coffee, biscuits, and such like luxuries of life, not forgetting tobacco for the Trader himself, and any stray friend or Kafir beggars. Neither Sandy nor I had learned to smoke, and Klipspringer, our true friend, would not encourage us to try. I bless him for it to this day.

Three rifles were slung along the inside of

the wagon, and the Trader did not forget to provide a change of coarse linen for all. Added to what I have mentioned were some poultry in a coop, besides a pickaxe, spade, carpenter's tools, and sundry other such useful articles.

I was glad to learn that Graham's Town was likely to be safe from Kafir irruption,—so goes the expression, which Klipspringer always wrote “eruption,”—and my mind thus at ease, (for I knew my mother would be satisfied at hearing we had reached the Trader, whose name was much respected,) I looked forward with zest to the trek before us; indeed, had there been a sure prospect of war, neither Sandy nor I would have flinched from joining any burgher force had we been allowed. Klipspringer knew this, and plumed himself, we found, among the Kafirs, on “the pluck of his *kleine batjes* (little jackets)”.

Surprised at his confidence in these people, we asked him how he could so trust them.

“Trust them!” cried he, “not I; but they know which side their bread is buttered, and *who butters it!* They have begun to taste the sweets of earning money, like that rascal Mata-bela, and won't go to war unless driven to it.

When they do, my lads, you and I and Juli may look out. They'll take the Hottentot first, though, won't they, Juli, like the lions—eh?"

"Ya, bass," responded Juli, with a grin; and then we told the Trader about the lion's footprint.

"Well," said he, "if we fall in with him on our road between this and Vanderhout's, where I mean to push for, we will give him a taste of lead; but do you boys mind what you are about. Halloa! who have we here? What, Tois?"

Yes! there was the young bridegroom, for he and Sanna were married; he seemed astonished to see Sandy and me; but whether he had believed in our death by drowning or not, we could not discover. He had come to learn the news; and hearing that "the sea was spitting up red men faster than usual," soon departed for Matabela's kraal.

"Ah!" said Klipspringer that night, when we saw the Amatola mountains glittering with signal fires, "I take it old Gaika will find him-

self on the wrong side the river before long; but his people are restless, and want a little fun, and they will get it when the *roed batjes* (red jackets) come."

At daybreak next morning, Juli mounted the wagon-box, cracking his long whip in style. We started on foot with a lot of dogs about us, and our rifles over our shoulders, while Klipspringer led the party on Stormberg, fully accoutred.

We outspanned in a retired nook near one of those coves I have so often had occasion to describe. Into one of these Klipspringer led us, taking with him the pick-axe and handing me the spade, Sandy carrying a bag.

Pushing away a lot of brushwood, the Trader began to work at a large flat stone, on raising which he bade me dig, and began to work again himself. It was here he kept his ammunition, and having taken out a good supply, he stowed it at the back of the wagon under a tarpaulin.

And now we began to observe the signs of the times. We had taken up our position at the edge of a valley, whence we could see a vast

range of mountains, down the steep pathways of which we soon observed several colonists riding. It was quite a patriarchal scene, for they were followed by their wagons, their "wives and their little ones," and such cattle as the Gaikas had not managed to steal from them. They came pouring into the valley amid the cracking of whips, the barking of dogs, the bellowing of oxen, and such a Babel of tongues as I had never heard before. Right glad, however, were we to see English faces, and hear the voices of the women of our own land; and when the tents were pitched, wagons drawn out in square, and picquets posted, we felt perfectly secure, and had a merry supper before we lay down to sleep. As it was not safe to proceed to Vanderhout's, Klipspringer made up his mind to join the lāger, as this kind of encampment is called—the cattle occupying the centre of it at night.

Mr. Hall, from Glen Lion, came with his tall sons, fine young fellows, two of them upwards of six feet high, and all so clever that nothing came amiss to them. Indeed, it was a saying that even their mother knew everything, from

Greek to horse-shoeing. Be this as it may, she was a sweet-looking woman, who shook hands in most friendly fashion with Sandy and me, and said she hoped to have us up at Llanina as soon as war's alarms were over. She had had letters from Mr. Nicholson, she added, about my mother; and as Hall was bent on turning his settlement into a colony, she promised us room for all, and plenty to do.

We went hunting next day, with no more dread of Kafirs than gave zest to the expedition. Sandy and I laughed heartily at Juli, who, in spite of the warm weather, was wrapped up in an old blanket; but he had the laugh against us that evening, when at sunset, after watching all day in vain, Septimus Hall and one of his brothers announced that a lion had been seen in the neighbourhood; and before we had time to take up a good position, behold the king of beasts stalked majestically out of a clump of bush. I confess that my heart leaped in my breast at such a sight. He came forth looking about him with a lordly air, and seeing Juli flying, made a spring after the Totty, whom, to our horror, he seized by the blanket. Juli did

not drop his garment at once, but wriggled about for a minute like an eel, which gave us time to seek shelter behind a rock with Klipspringer. The Halls, who were well armed, screening themselves close behind some huge ant-heaps.

We soon saw what Juli was about. The wary fellow having given time to his friends to make ready for the attack, slipped out of his covering, and, while the lion in his impotent rage tossed the empty blanket about, the Totty ran off like mad. The beast's attention thus diverted, he offered an easy conquest to the riflemen. A ball from Septimus brought him to his knees with a broken leg, and then Klipspringer's unerring bullet put an end to his pain and despair.

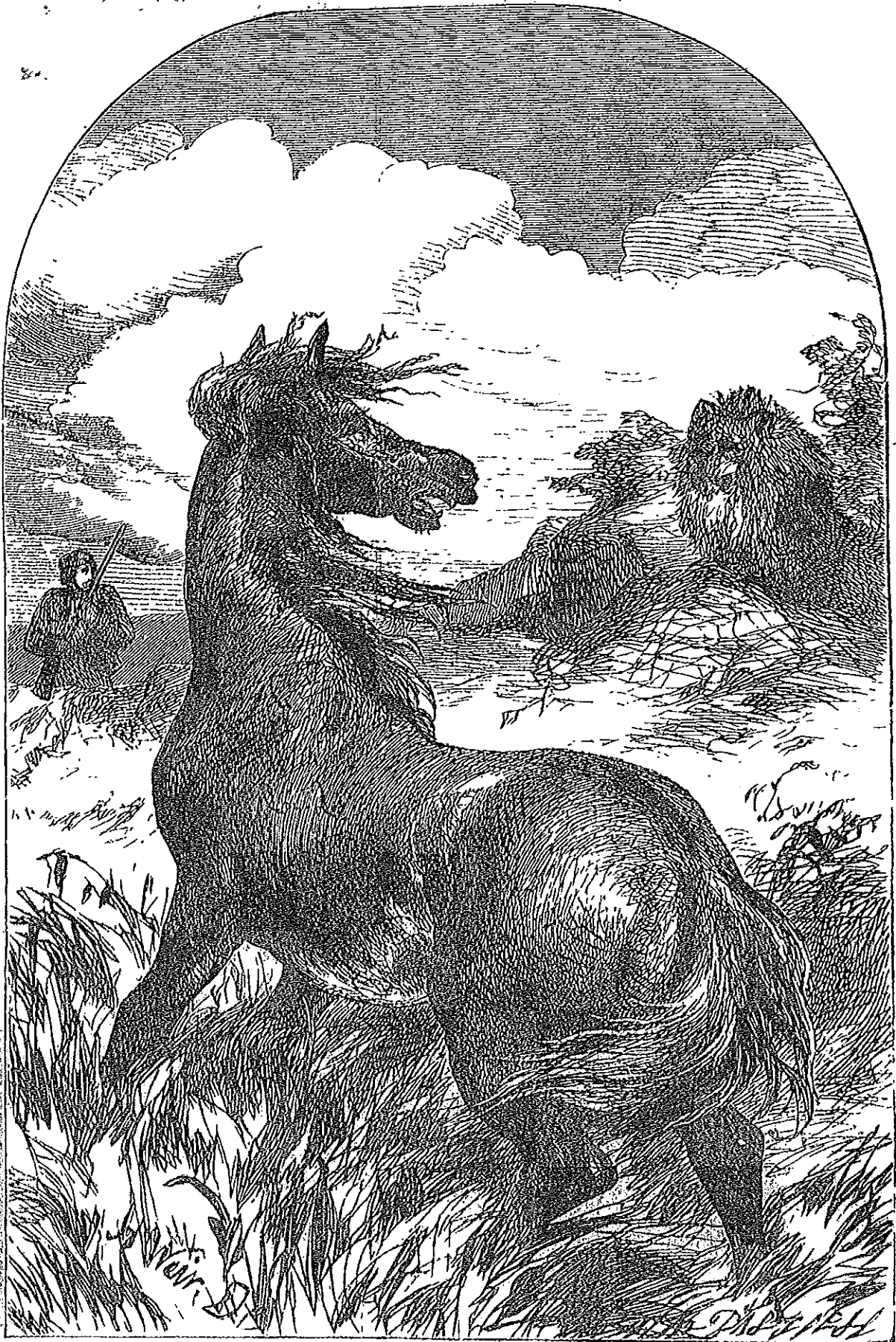
He was motionless when we went up to him. He had struggled desperately with the agonies of death, and his noble mane was all dabbled with blood and dust. I turned away my head at the sight, at which Juli, who had returned to examine his foe, laughed; while Sandy, accustomed to the chase, delighted our sporting friends with his enthusiasm: they insisted on initiating me in the process of skinning the

majestic brute, who was a superb specimen of a male lion, but would not consent to daub my face with blood, as the Totty proposed, by way of inauguration.

I had seen smaller game killed in the highlands of Argyleshire, but not even the death of a stag on the Kilgarry property could have ever affected me, I think, like the fall of this lordly creature. The accessories of the fact, too, strengthened the impressions of the incident. The wild magnificence of the plateau on which we stood, with its vast amphitheatre of hills rising beyond into mountain peaks that pierced the clouds; the murmuring flow of the river, and the rugged aspect of the krantzes that bounded it; the dead stillness that otherwise pervaded the place, and the strange scene presented by our group in the foreground, to which was soon added some of our old acquaintances, the great black vultures, who walked round us as tame as sheep till our business was ended; and as we moved off, closing round the quarry for their feast, others hovering above, waiting their turn; all these accessories, I say, made a strikingly impressive picture. Juli in

front, carrying the skin with the air of a conqueror, we returned to the lāger in triumph, and Sandy and I longing for an opportunity to distinguish ourselves in such noble sport; we both soon had the desired chance. Klipspringer and the two young Halls, Septimus and Octavius, took us out the very next day. So earnest were we in the sport, that Juli, Sandy, and I got far in advance of the rest, when on reaching the plateau, we perceived a stray horse. Juli putting me on my mettle to exert my ingenuity in catching the beast, I set off with the reim with which we usually provided ourselves for such occasions; but lo, just as I was within twenty yards of the animal, he browsing away on the long grass, and either not seeing me, or pretending not to do so, out dashed a lion from a wooded bank leading from the river.

He was a small and apparently a young beast, but of great courage. At one bound he sprang on the horse's back, the latter uttering a scream that I shall never forget as long as I live. As, however, the king of beasts was about to fasten his fangs "tooth and nail" in the horse's neck,



he perceived Juli and me. Sandy had flown back to warn the Halls of the enemy's proximity.

But the lion did not move one jot. Steadily surveying me, the foremost, from head to foot, his head erect, his mane bristling, and his eyes lit with amazement and anger, he kept his position, while the unhappy horse fell into a tremble, evidently paralysed into silence.

I felt that my case was desperate, for my friends could not possibly reach me before the lion could fly at me if he chose. In a moment I dropped the reim, swung my rifle, which fortunately I had not thrown down as I was on the point of doing, to my shoulder, and fired.

I aimed at his head, but only carried off the tip of his ear.

The wound, however, bled profusely, and the blood trickling into his near eye, half blinded him as he sprung from the horse, stumbled, fell, rose and shook himself, ere he prepared for a bound at me.

Meantime, with my rifle raised, I kept gradually backing. I own my heart beat, and my knees trembled, but eye and hands were tolerably steady.

Suddenly pausing, with my enemy at bay, I fired the other barrel, and this time wounded him, but not mortally.

I turned: Juli had thrown himself on the ground, not far off—the Halls and Sandy were not yet in sight. In another moment I perceived their heads rising from a cluster of stones and scrubs, but they were still some way distant.

I repented my imprudence bitterly; but in his pain, for his shoulder was hit, the lion's attention was diverted to Juli, who lay motionless as death.

I drew back, and retreated behind the first ant-heap.

While the others were advancing, I loaded again, but thought it wisest to pause for advice; for Juli's *ruse* evidently puzzled the beast, and if I fired without success, the consequences might be fatal.

Meantime, the Halls and Sandy moved stealthily from bush to bush in their advance, while the lion limped round and round the prostrate Totty, smelling now at his head, now at his hands, and next at his legs; at last, to our surprise—and indeed we could scarcely help laughing—

down squatted my lord on Juli's back, looking about him with an inquisitive air, as much as to say—"Where can those fellows be who were here just now, and who is our friend here? is he dead or alive?"

As soon as the rest came up, we let the royal animal know our whereabouts.

"Leave him to us," said Octavius Hall, authoritatively, but in a whisper, and bang went his barrel, and bang went his brother's.

The lion rolled over; the Totty got up streaming with perspiration and deluged in blood. We four then drew near; and when Sandy and I had been well scolded for our folly, we were permitted the task of skinning the beast.

"And as you fired the first shot," said Octavius Hall to me, "and, but for Sandy, we should not have been in at the lion's death, though we might at somebody else's, we will make you a joint present of the lion's skin, which will fetch a couple of sovereigns at Graham's Town. It is no bad omen that you should start as partners in the trade of Kafirland."

"And I," said Klipspringer, who had sprung down an opposite krantz and seized the frightened

horse, "I don't mind paying you ready money for your bargain on the spot!"

"Done, sir," said I. "Done," said Sandy. And both of us thanked the settlers in such hearty fashion that they saw we were truly grateful. Moreover, we expressed our regrets at our folly; but Klipspringer justly observed that such a lesson would never be lost on us, and so there was no need for further talk on the matter.

"Will the bass give *me* nothing?" asked Juli, looking ruefully at his leather crackers; "the lion, he done *me*, I think!"

We all promised to contribute to the refreshing of the Totty's wardrobe; and, considerably excited by our morning's adventure, we returned on our way.

Klipspringer, after this, wisely husbanded the ammunition, for we did not know how long we might be detained at the lāger; nor, indeed, were we sure that we might not be called out in haste by the Field Cornet of the district; the good Trader therefore advised that we should all lie by for the present, and not move unnecessarily beyond certain limits of the valley.

Neither Sandy nor I could sleep that night; and for many a night after, lions would come into our dreams.

The Kafirs and the lions now took care to keep away from the läger; and Klipspringer having no choice but to halt with the rest, we for a time led a right pleasant life. A river ran through the valley; in it we discovered plenty of eels, and on its banks lots of porcupines.

Juli told us that whenever the tigers, or rather leopards—for there are no real tigers in South Africa—had a mind for sport, they would worry these little brutes as a cat does a mouse.

One day, from a snug niche in a rock, we saw a game of this kind, in which, however, the leopard got the worst of it, and went off licking her paws, from which little bristles had drawn plenty of blood!

One day, Sandy and I, clambering up a rock, found a vulture's nest, which we should have taken away, only there was a young one in it, wrapped carefully up in wool, while the mother and father were absent. He looked like a little jaundiced old man, with his bald head and red

eyes, that had such a bilious hue from the yellow rim round them.

Leaving Sandy examining the queer nestling, I hastened after Klipspringer and some of the young Halls, whom I found in fits of laughter at Juli. The Totty had been hunting for ostrich eggs; and having been very successful, had gathered more than he could easily carry; so, having taken off his best leather crackers—a present from Octavius Hall—he had tied them at the legs, and thus turned them into bags. Bearing them as he did, thus filled, and across his shoulders, they presented the ludicrous appearance of a man carrying a headless body turned upside down, with the legs spread wide apart.

He was advancing with a succession of broad grins, when we saw his countenance become suddenly affrighted, and on looking in the direction of his terrified gaze, conceive our horror on beholding Sandy tearing down the distant krantz like mad, with an enraged gnoo tossing his head at him from above. The creature did not see us; he soon sprang after the lad, who ran as a Highland gilly *can* run, but we knew the beast

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must overtake him, and our only hope was that the little fellow would elude his enemy till the latter got near enough for Sep Hall to shoot with the rifle he never parted from day or night.

It was a clear stage and no favour. Sandy flying with his hair streaming, the gnoo tossing his mane and bounding on, with his head at times bent to the earth like a bull's. Now he was within a few feet of the boy, and now the latter started on one side and the gnoo lost his ground—at one moment a clump of bush came in the way, Sandy sprang over it like a deer, but the beast followed and gained upon him after this—and now he was close on the lad, and we could see Sandy's face was very pale.

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“Down with you—down with you both!” cried Sep Hall to Juli and me, for we were unarmed, never dreaming of wild beasts so near the läger. Klipspringer had, meantime, sped off to the right, watching his opportunity to fire at the beast. Hall, as cool as a cucumber, but white as death, now raised his rifle, determined, if he could do nothing better, to let fly, and divert the gnoo's attention. We were thus disposed of, all intent on pursuer and pursued,

when, to our infinite amazement, Sandy disappeared from the face of the earth. There was no mistake; although an open area lay before us, the boy had vanished; and, blinded by rage and disappointment, the gnoo came bounding on and roaring with fury.

Bang went Klipspringer's gun on his right, and crack went Hall's rifle; but the undaunted beast rushed forward, the blood streaming from its mouth and side. It fell within a few paces of Juli and myself, panting but helpless, and as we jumped up, who to our delight should we see but Sandy, as pale as a spirit, rising from the depths of the earth. He had tumbled into an ant-eater's hole, the gnoo in its blind rage passing *over* him, the canny little Scot thinking it more prudent to lie hid until his enemy was disposed of; and though he was shaken by the race and the tumble, he had never lost his presence of mind.

"I'll no travel twenty yards frae hame without my rifle again. I'd like weel to hae a hand in dumbfounding a proud beastie like yon," said the young gilly, wiping his brow.

You may be sure that after this adventure,

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none of us went unarmed in our morning walks; we took care, also, not to go any great distance from the läger except in large parties.

It was about a fortnight after this that Klip-springer, having observed some puffs of smoke from different signal peaks on the hill boundaries, proposed that five or six of us should steal out at nightfall on a reconnoitring expedition.

We had been unable to learn anything positive on the subject of the war except through Tois, who came in friendly fashion to the läger, and who told us "the red men" had moved towards Pato's country, seawards. It behoved us, then, to be careful, lest the Gaikas should return to their old haunts without our knowledge.

Friendly as Tois was, the Halls and Klip-springer would not trust him further than necessary, so we waited till he went off before the rising of the young moon. In the mean time, a Fingo* scout was despatched from the läger;

* The Fingoes have a territory of their own, and often take service among the colonists. They were slaves to the Kafirs, whom they greatly resemble. They are said to be the remnant of eight great nations.

he was to await us on the edge of a hill commanding a view of the country on the other side—a curious mountain landmark, which Klipspringer had named Twee Duyvels Kop—two devils' heads. To our delight, Klipspringer did not object to Sandy and me being of the party.

So at midnight off we set. The Southern Cross stood out from the sky clear and defined, the Dog-star, Sirius, shone on us like a glory, and a few fleeting clouds sailing over the face of the moon favoured the stealthiness of our journey, which lay along the banks of the tributary stream watering the valley.

We had not far to go, but as caution was necessary, we took the road in silence, and with slow footsteps, now creeping under the shadow of the crags, now bending low in moving from rock to rock as the moonbeams pierced the clouds.

After a trek of a mile in this fashion, with Septimus Hall in advance, we came suddenly to a halt in the bend of the stream. Here a great stone formed a capital screen for our party; and as we drew together in a little knot, Septimus pointed his rifle towards an opposite crag, on

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which we perceived a Fingo scout had perched himself. His attitude puzzled us; but as the sky again cleared we had a perfect view of his tall form standing out from the rock, as sharply cut as though carved in stone, and quite as motionless. He was accoutred after the fashion of his tribe—arms and chest were perfectly bare, and only a girdle bound his waist—war plumes waved from his brow, an assegai was uplifted in his right hand, and in his left was his shield, now raised as if to guard himself from an enemy.

But where was this enemy?

In another minute a tall Kafir sprang from the other side the rock. He, too, wore plumes, the long feathers of the crane standing up from his head like horns; but he carried no shield, and by this we knew he was a Kafir. The war-club and the spear were his weapons, and as he confronted the foe he had climbed the rock to meet, he waved the kierrie, and with a sudden swing brought it round within, apparently, a hair's-breadth of our scout, for the figure on the ridge was he.

The Fingo evaded the blow by dodging his

head to one side, then raising his assegai he aimed at the Kafir, who in his turn drove his spear, not into his enemy's heart, as he expected, but into the uplifted shield.

Thus transfixed, a painter would have been struck at the attitude of these magnificent warriors, as at this moment, in mortal wrath, but in perfect silence, they paused for a few minutes; each studying how he should best find means to attack the other in some vital part. All this time we, too, maintained an utter silence, for we did not know but what some hundred Kafirs might be climbing the other side the hill.

When, however, Kafir and Fingo had made two or three ineffectual passes at each other, it became pretty clear that there were no spectators to the combat but ourselves; Septimus Hall therefore sprang over the rock to lead to the rescue, we following; but at this instant, the Fingo caught the Kafir off his guard, his foot on a loose stone; so casting aside his shield and holding his assegai near the point, he seized his enemy by the right arm, and concentrating all his energies, fairly swung him off the rock; then bending over the fallen man struck his

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weapon deep into his side ; and finally, with one thrust of his foot, sent him bleeding and helpless down the face of the hill, at the foot of which we found him as we crossed the drift and reached the spot.

The Fingo leaped down and stood sullenly over the Kafir, who, opening his eyes, fixed them, not on his conqueror, but on Klipspringer, with a glare which looked terrific in the moonlight. " Ah ! " said he, struggling to rise, while a gush of blood poured from his wounds over the stones, " have I found thee, oh, mine enemy ? " He gasped with rage, strove to lift his hand, which still clutched his spear in mortal convulsions, then sank back exhausted.

In five minutes all was over ; the Fingo knelt down and despoiled his enemy of such ornaments as he wore ; and, lo ! round his neck, strung among wolves' teeth and other charms, what should I discover but my lucky sixpence.

The Kafir scout was no other than Nehemiah, from Matabela's kraal, a well-known spy, who had often been denounced to the government by Klipspringer for treachery and thieving, and who was abhorred by the Fingoes for having assisted

in torturing many women and children of their nation in the last war.

Before returning to the lāger, Sep Hall and the Trader took a survey from the hilly ridge, and now being certain that Nehemiah had been prowling about alone as a spy, they determined on making an example of him as a warning to those who had sent him; so they dragged him to the apex of a craggy eminence, and there, setting him up against a rock with his arms spread wide apart and his face turned towards Twee Duyvels Kop, they left him for the vultures.

On our return to the lāger we heard the rattle of accoutrements, and found some steeds picqueted outside the square; a party of colonial soldiers had arrived, and brought the good news of a regiment being on the march up the banks of the Tyumie, which was to take up a position for encamping near our lāger.

CHAPTER XV.

GLEN LION.

WE passed three days in great suspense, fearing that the regiment alluded to might, while on the march, be ordered southwards. Our ammunition was not yet exhausted, but provisions were getting low; and if the movements of troops disturbed the Kafirs near the sea, the latter might turn up in our neighbourhood.

Many of our bullocks had been slain for consumption, and in the event of the young men of the lāger being suddenly summoned to join the burgher forces forming in the upper districts,—which, by the way, even Mr. Hall could hardly restrain them from volunteering to do at present,—it would be impossible to spare any men either for foraging or cutting wood, for it was, of course, always necessary to leave a sufficient guard over the women and children, and more especially cattle.

In this pause we were beginning to feel low-

spirited ; at night we dared not light a fire, nor sing songs as we had been wont, and I was glad that Sandy and I were among those told off to keep a look-out, which we always did by lying down a few paces apart, with our arms ready, and our heads turned towards a tangled pathway which led from a drift.

Sandy and I usually contrived to be on guard in company, and at midnight, when relieved, we took our sleep side by side, rising again at four, for the morning watch. Long ere this we were awake on this morning, and looking out before our turns for mounting sentry.

A drizzling mist hung over the earth like a damp veil clinging to a woman's face. We could not see many yards before us, and we dared not speak to each other for fear of Kafir scouts being within ear-shot. Sentries were posted all round the lāger, vigilant, but silent as death ; while within the square, the very cattle seemed afraid to move, and the dogs forebore to bark, though with erect heads they snuffed the air, while the horses pricked their ears and looked uneasily about them. The women and children were all asleep in the

wagons, the men of the mid-watch buried in profound repose: all the rest sat or lay with their loaded pieces on their arm.

Suddenly, in the dim light, I perceived a strange glow in Sandy's eyes; his cheek, though glazed with the mist, flushed crimson, his chest heaved, his rifle fell suddenly from his arm, and springing to his feet, he uttered a cry that roused the lāger from its deathlike quiet, and made every man start up, and swing his rifle to his shoulder.

"It is the pibroch! it is the pibroch! I ken it weel. I thought I heard it wailing ayont the hills an hour ago. Eh! Paul, lad, I'm like to greet, it minds me o' lang syne, and the bonnie mountain pathways by the loch;"* and to the amazement of the spectators, down sat the gilly in the midst of them, and burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

But now I too heard the distant wail of High-

* I think it necessary to remark here, that this incident, founded on one which occurred to the authoress in 1843, was related in these pages many months before the popular story of Jessie and the slogan of the 78th Highlanders at Lucknow got afloat.

land pipes; the others, unaccustomed to such sounds, could not for the moment make out what they were; every one, however, hurried towards the point whence the strange music proceeded, while the women and children, roused by the commotion, looked out from the wagons, and soon mingled with the throng of settlers, the dogs gathering round, but keeping sagaciously still till they understood what part they were to take.

I have not minutely described the valley in which the lāger lay, but by this time probably the reader understands that on the one side of it rose a plateau, or piece of table-land, on the other the steep cliffs which form the usual boundary of South African rivers, while a tributary stream from the larger one watered the centre of the valley, and almost wound round the green spot chosen for the lāger. Beyond, to the north-east, rose the mountain-ridges, the strongholds of the Kafirs. Many of these were finely wooded. Their singular shapes gave them an appearance different to any elevations I had ever seen. "Hills wi' their heads off," Sandy not unaptly called them.

From the great river a path led to the lāger: it was a wooded way, tortuous as the track of a snake, tangled here and there with underwood and prickly plants, and heavy of soil, especially after rain, and we had had copious showers during the night.

Every one now distinctly heard the wailing of the Highland pipes. Sandy and I could define the tune, but that was what no unpractised ear could do. There was, however, no doubt about the approach of a Scottish regiment; and as the mist lifted, and the brilliant sun streamed out upon the lāger, every face beamed with hope and excitement.

Sandy had risen and stood by me, but could not speak:—with eyes fixed, teeth set, head erect, his face now flushed, now pale, every nerve strained, and his chest panting, he presented a beautiful type of that love of country which is born with the Scottish peasant, and which we know so imbued the spirits of the Highland soldiers in former wars, that it was found necessary to proscribe the lovely air of “We’ll maybe return to Lochaber no more,” lest its effects should overpower them, as the “Ranz

des Vaches" had done the Swiss. And now the blast of the pibroch filled the valley, and we beheld the head of a column of soldiers at the opening of the defile.

A horseman led the way, and halted; then the pipes stopped—the pipers must have wanted breath sadly! By-and-bye the whole body emerged upon the open ground, and forming into a long line, stood motionless. Then we heard two or three low taps on a drum—how well I knew the sound! At the same instant a bugle called; next fell on our ear the roll of drums, then the shrill music of fifes broke through the balmy air, and the regiment was in motion, we all hastening to the little stream, to indicate the drift by which the men could cross.

They came on, dazzling us with their shining armour, for the sun revealed himself at the moment as if to give them welcome; and as they drew near and discovered our little crowd of settlers, they hurraed lustily, we responding "with a will," as soldiers say.

The commanding officer galloped forward to examine the drift, raised his hand to his cap in

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recognition of our loud and joyous salutation, and, before I had time to say a word, Sandy was down the bank and over the stream, hat in hand, shouting, "Kilgarry! Kilgarry!"

Yes, it was indeed Kilgarry in command of the — regiment. I was not long in following Sandy, you may be sure; and we two, one on each side of the Laird's bridle-rein, re-crossed the drift with him, we all joy, and he in great spirits at having so readily discovered the exact spot to which he had been directed to take up ground for his encampment, and relieve our party.

By noon the valley presented a stirring scene of life and motion. Wagons having crossed the lower drifts of the river, now came staggering on to the ground, laden with tents and camp equipages. In the afternoon a mounted escort rattled forward, in the midst of which we descried the Governor of the colony, and a lady in an English riding-habit. What a change of scene after the past few weeks!

Blessings on her bright face! the lady was the kindly creature who had dropped the half-crown into our gaping money-bag on the morning

of our first start in commercial enterprise in Southern Africa, and the beauty of the Clyde on the well-remembered regatta day. She rode up to Sandy and me, and leaning from her saddle, presented me with a letter from my mother; it gave me the happy news of her being well, and of peace being proclaimed through the land.

This last intelligence had not reached us, owing to our being in the immediate neighbourhood of the Gaikas, some of whom were "sitting still" in the mountains, sullenly awaiting the issue of their Chief's interview with the Governor, at a fort some fifteen miles from us; whence, after a pacific parley, the old General and his daughter, who attended him when permitted to do so on all occasions, had ridden that morning.

Hastening to a retreat within a friendly copse, I perused my mother's letter. She wrote in fear and trembling, for she had already learned that a Kafir peace might not last very long, and urged me either to return to her or to proceed to Mr. Hall's by the first opportunity. On the other hand, she admitted that Mrs. Hall had communicated with her on hearing from Mr. Nicholson, and made such proposals in relation to the

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matronship of a school at Glen Lion—always provided my mother could honourably withdraw herself from her present service, which she now found she could do—that every facility seemed offered for planting a roof-tree as settlers in the colony. The Halls had certainly taken a liking to Sandy and myself; more hands were wanted at their farm, Llanina; the little settlement of Glen Lion—so they had named “the Lion’s Kloof”—was gradually rising into importance, the land improving, the flocks and herds increasing, and, despite all the rumours of war, the whole territory had lately continued to thrive under Mr. Hall’s sons and sons-in-law. As the married children of the old settler had each had a goodly share of sons and daughters, the Glen was already fairly populated by members of one family. Some of them, as I have shown, were with us at the lāger.

Still I could see from certain expressions in my mother’s letter, that war’s alarms had sufficiently daunted her to make her inclined to draw me, if possible, back to her old plan of taking a situation in a merchant’s house in Graham’s Town. Had her own master and mistress not

been suddenly called to Cape Town by fresh mercantile arrangements, I might have yielded, against my inclinations, and I may add, convictions, to her importunities; but on opening my mind to Mr. Hall, Octavius and Septimus backing me up in my entreaties, he and his good wife dispatched such an epistle in reply as could not fail to induce my mother to try the mode of life proposed for her. The climate had already restored her health, and invigorated Jack's; the position of matron would enable her to keep her younger children with her and educate them at the same time; and Sandy and I had the promise of excellent wages—always provided we worked for them—the work, fortunately, being to our liking; for book-keeping and an entirely sedentary life suited neither of us.

“No more hunting and shooting for mere fun,” said old Hall; “you shall have enough of it if the larder gets low, which it may do if we find the murrain among us again; any ways, you shall always keep your hand in, I promise you, my lads; and if we've another war, as is not unlikely if they take away the *roed batjes*, you shall bag us a few Kafirs.”

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He laughed aloud as he spoke, and, attracted by his jolly look and honest port, up rode the Governor.

Mr. Hall took off his large hat and showed a head of brown hair but slightly touched with grey. It was a fine face, too, that looked up at the General's, as the latter said, "Mr. Hall, I'm sure, from the description I have had."

"Right, sir; I am much obliged to your Excellency," said Mr. Hall, as if in answer to the kind scrutiny bestowed on him.

"Your very name in command of this lāger has, I hear, kept this part of the country open," said the General; "but I desire, too, to pay my compliments to the mother of those fine young fellows."

He meant Septimus and Octavius Hall, the two stalwart young men, who stood near their father.

Septimus stepped back, soon reappearing with Mrs. Hall on his arm; and as pretty a picture did these lads and their young sisters, make with their comely parents, as one would desire to see in any country in the world.

Mrs. Hall's bright dark eyes beamed with

pleasure as the General proposed taking his daughter to visit Llanina, when he should proceed with his staff on a somewhat rugged journey into the Dutch settlements; in the mean time, it was arranged that part of Kilgarry's regiment should remain on their present bivouac, which was at once named Montrose's Post; from these head-quarters it would be advisable to patrol the country in search of stolen or secreted cattle, and disaffected Kafirs; and, as soon as quiet should be restored, a burgher force would replace the Highlanders until an officer of engineers should plan out the necessary buildings and defences for an advanced outpost of British troops.

Instead of our returning to Graham's Town at once, Mr. Hall begged Sandy and myself to accompany Klipspringer to Llanina. He mounted us for the journey on two smart little Cape horses—we had learned to ride at the lāger—his sons and one of his daughters being of the party; Klipspringer keeping, I observed, by the young maiden's rein. Mrs. Hall and another son and daughter and grandchildren travelling by wagon, with the rest of the cavalcade.

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On our way, who should we meet but Tois, Sanna, and Seo. Matabela had quarrelled with the two former, or rather with Tois, who had acquired much cattle; how he had come by it nobody cared to ask, though Klipspringer had strong suspicions about "a cow with a crumpled horn," missing from the lāger since the evening of Tois's visit; and Seo, half-frightened of his father in his drunken moods, had got away for a holiday among the Tambookies,—his mother's relatives,—joining Tois and Sanna "on the sly."

We were glad to see our old acquaintances again. Not a word did they say about Nehemiah, although doubtless he had forfeited his life as a spy of Matabela's. Mrs. Hall made Sanna a present of some bright handkerchiefs—always ready for such occasions—in remembrance of her kindness to my comrade and myself; and we promised her a voerchitz gown and some beads, which she did not forget to remind us of when we met again!

Before the lāger broke up, I wrote to my mother, pointing out the advantage of Mr. Hall's proposals—and Klipspringer backed me up by a line of persuasion, offering his assis-

tance in conveying her from Graham's Town, as soon as our friends should have made the necessary arrangements for her reception.

We were a very happy party. The weather was beautiful, albeit the rain came in with gusty showers in the morning; but by noon the sky would clear, the birds would spring from the boughs, and the breeze sweep over the long waving grass, carrying the richest perfume with it.

Juli was in high glee, driving Mrs. Hall's wagon, occasionally jumping off, like a mischievous lad as he was, to turn some unwary tortoise on its back, and leave the poor helpless thing topsy-turvy. Sandy and I caught him at this once or twice, and, to his infinite surprise, released the harmless things from their jeopardy. I don't know that he was incorrigibly cruel—the Hottentot is mild and inoffensive till roused—but he had an indomitable love of teasing, which he vented in impaling stray locusts, and otherwise worrying such creatures as came in his way.

Kilgarry—Major Montrose I must now call him—rode with us part of the way, listening with infinite interest to some of our late adven-

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ures. He bid us "good-bye" at the edge of a hill above the valley; and on looking back, ten minutes after, we saw him cantering towards his lines over the space which but a few hours before had been crowded with the wagons, cattle, and human occupants of the lāger.

We outspanned for the night, trekking on before sunrise. The usual shadowy mist hung over the hills, pierced here and there by the sun's hot rays, marking the peak of a mountain or the track of a stream. I, impatient to behold the land of promise, fastened my nag to a wagon, and left my party, determined to gain in advance the ridgy boundary of Glen Lion.

At one moment I came upon as striking a bit of animated nature as a painter might desire; for, turning the angle of a granite crag, an immense eagle presented himself to my gaze, and to my surprise did not rise at my approach, though he flapped his wing and made an effort to do so. A little apart, perched on a spray, swung a small brown dove, apparently fascinated by the sight of majesty in thralldom, as was explained by the broken wing of the royal bird. At the same instant, there jumped up on the

rock a gentle-looking coney, who looked up affrighted at finding himself in such a presence, but did not stir till I drew close to him.

While pondering what to do, for the eagle, albeit wounded, was too formidable a prey to seize single-handed, up rode my friend Klipspringer, who, with a reim always ready, secured the maimed bird; we carried it off to Mrs. Hall's wagon, where Juli extemporized a cage. Alas! it died ere long in captivity, fairly pining away, and refusing to be comforted by food or kindness.

Once more mounting my horse, I rode forward with Klipspringer and Sandy; and by the time we reached the top of the ridge, the sun shone down in all his glory, and "the valley lay smiling before me."

Northward, it opened out in vast and wooded plains, bounded by tremendous mountains; but just below the ridge on which we stood, it narrowed to a couple of miles. Here, on either side, rose sharp and serried cliffs, the natural fortifications of the settlement, some of these being sprinkled over with grass and bushes. A little farther on, the valley spread itself into ver-

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dant meads, adorned and sheltered by groves of acacias intermingled with the curious euphorbia and tall *geelhout* (fir) trees; the everlasting mimosa was here too, and the prickly pear, besides many superb forest trees. Through the centre of this sweet vale wandered a clear stream, with green banks for its margin, on either side of which fields and homesteads, gardens and cattle-folds gave life and character to a picture rendered more complete by a miniature chapel, lately erected on a turfy slope on the right of the location.

Just below our resting-place rose Llanina, the dwelling-house of the Halls. There was no mistaking its patriarchal air, though the building was but a few years old. Right and left in the rear it extended its well-stocked barns and granaries. Numerous coloured servants were occupied in the back premises, with horses and oxen. Great wagons were loading for the towns, flocks of poultry were scurrying towards an old Fingo woman, attracted by her basketful of corn, and on the broad *stoep*, or terrace, of the house, a troop of lovely English children were at play.

By-and-bye a Hottentot boy came out, looked

up at the ridge, and instantly descried our party. Darting back, he brought others out, and soon the whole settlement was astir like a hive of busy bees.

Sandy and I listened in silence to Klip-springer's description of Llanina and its dependencies, for such the other homesteads and cottages might be termed; and as the Trader turned to tell Mrs. Hall that the family would soon be all out to meet her, the young Highlander thus expressed his opinion on the scene before him.

"That's no' a bad substitute for a Hieland glen, Paul. The stream is nae sae wide as our bonnie lochs, but I'm thinking these haughs will no' be bad land for the pleugh. There'll be braw sport too out yonder, and the right o' way without asking onybody's will, when we get leave for a ploy. There's hands wanting here, I can see, for the bit bridge is falling to pieces, and yonder's a cottage that needs thatching, an"—but at this instant Klip-springer shouted to us to follow in the wake of the wagons, which had to wind along a precipitous pathway, ere turning into the settlement.

"Well, hearty old cade, " an sons have and the p Kafirs ha their teetl However daughter stead of women a

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“Well, lads,” cried out Mr. Hall, as the hale, hearty old settler galloped up to join the cavalcade, “and what think you of Glen Lion? My sons have done well, I think, to keep the buildings and the people together in all the row: but if the Kafirs had come, my boys could have shown them their teeth, and the rascals knew that well enough. However,” looking round him at his wife and daughters, “we were best at the lāger, instead of hampering the garrison here with more women and children than they could manage.”

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On approaching Llanina we found some of the people engaged in removing the defences, and throwing down the brick blinds from the lower windows. The *stoep* was fairly peopled by the young married folks of the family and their children; and the working population rushed out in flocks from the back premises, to bid their master welcome. The other members of the cavalcade belonged to the various homesteads that filled the upper part of the valley, and as their wagons filed off for the different dwellings, groups of cattle following, and young men and women cantering in advance, on horseback, the scene became one of intense interest. With

such a homestead and its occupants to back him, it will be wondered why Mr. Hall had quitted it; but like a thorough Cape settler, he had resolved not only to hold his own, but to protect the district; and as many of his neighbours, more lately come, and less used to the rumours of war than himself, had determined to desert their farms, he made up his mind, as he said, "to hold them in hand, while his gallant elder sons kept the glen!"

Amid all this stir and excitement, everything proceeded in orderly fashion. Mr. Hall assisted his wife from her wagon with an air becoming the lord of the manor. Round her drew her married children with their partners, and pushing past, diving under outstretched arms, and swinging from the *stoep*, crowded a tribe of lads and girls, anxious for the "first kiss from granny."

And a comely youthful granny she was, for she was under fifty, and, as all said, looked still younger than she really was.

What evidences of plenty were here! The vine clambering over the house was loaded with grapes, the trees weighed down with the fruits of

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the season, the quince hedges teeming with their burden. A pile of water melons was heaped up in one corner of the *stoep*, in another was a quantity of meelies for the poultry, and elsewhere a load of apples. Wagon-loads of oat-hay were passing to the stable-yard, to feed the jaded beasts just come in. Sheep, goats, and cattle were gathered on the slopes under the shadow of the tall crags, and the dogs looked as sleek as Mr. Hall himself.

Among all these evidences of industry, forethought, and plenty, I must not omit to note a miniature park of cotton trees, that by this time, *with encouragement from home*, might have been turned to good account; but there are many goodly and pleasant things in our Cape Colony which England has yet to understand, and be interested in, before she grows richer and wiser by them !

Soon every one went to work, except the old and very young, the Patriarch and his wife setting the example by assisting in the disposal of their baggage; and by three o'clock in the afternoon, when the sun's rays were hottest, though not overpowering, we were all seated in

a large cool apartment at as comfortable a meal as any hungry prince might desire.

It was a sweet calm hour, when Sandy and I withdrew to a little bower on the green margin of the river, and sat down with a fine musk melon between us, to eat our dessert.

Here Mr. Hall found us; and when we had closed our repast, the good man bid us follow him to the chapel.

Everybody from the settlement was there assembled; the bell that summoned them truly sounded to me like "the voice of God calling in the wilderness." Mr. Welsford, the Minister, opened the "thanksgiving" service by a prayer; next a psalm was read, a hymn sung, and then a few more words of thankfulness and praise closed the meeting.

The shades of evening were floating over the valley, when Mr. Hall called us to the *stoep*, on which he was seated with his wife and numerous family—Klipspringer making one of the group.

"Come hither, Paul Hardy and Sandy Hunter," the Patriarch said. "Have you a mind to cast your lot among us? and are you, Paul, willing to go to your mother and tell her, that

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if she wills it, there is a home for her here: yonder it stands?"

He pointed, as he spoke, to the pretty cottage that needed but slight repairs in the thatch.

"I fully believe she will come, sir," said I.

"Are you willing to work, my lads?" continued he.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"Aye," answered Sandy.

"And fight, if needs be?"—and he looked at Klipspringer.

And we replied affirmatively in one breath.

"Sit ye down among us, then," said Mr. Hall. And we did.

The unusual prevalence of rain during the season we had passed in South Africa had been a fortunate contingency for the colonists; it had kept the Kafirs in incertitude as to each other's proceedings, and confined many marauding spirits within limits—for Kafirs hate wet like the cats, whose feline propensities they possess. Not but what these people have some laws of honour; still, laws and principles are very different things!

Not to moralize, however, the people and the elements proclaimed a truce if not a peace; and one breezy morning in May, having left Sandy at Glen Lion to finish sundry matters necessary for my mother's comfort at "The Lindens," as our lowly thatched cottage was designated, I, in company with Klipspringer—he mounted on Stormberg, and I riding the identical horse that had been rescued from the lion's jaws on that memorable day when Juli escaped death by his clever ruse—set off for Graham's Town to meet my mother; and—after assisting her in purchasing such articles as Mr. Hall had named in a list of necessaries—to accompany her back to the beautiful settlement, where I was sure she would meet with kind friends, as well as occupation and a comfortable home.

Our ride lay through part of the country we had already travelled. Our old bivouac on the lāger ground had changed its aspect completely; tents dotted the plain, the red-coated sappers were measuring the length and breadth of a space for huts, and several *winkler's* booths had sprung up. Klipspringer took me into one of

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these, where everything was to be bought, from a musket to a candle.

"Here," said he, presenting me to his friend behind the counter, "is a fellow who will make his fortune, because he brings such goods to a place as he knows the place wants. Muskets for settlers, soap and candles, and tea and sugar, and smart ribbons for soldiers' wives; and—more's the pity!—Cape wine and brandy for drum-boys," he exclaimed, as he saw a lad, not so tall as myself, and perhaps not so old, toss off a measure of this horrible fire-water. "God help the boy!" added the Trader, as he watched the fair-haired stripling stagger out of the shed; "what is to become of him!"

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"And now, if you please, Mr. Jolly, we will go round to the store where you keep your corn, get a feed for ourselves and our nags, and be off again after three or four hours' sleep. If I were alone, I should push on; but this lad is not yet up to riding his fifty miles a-day."

We were off again at sunrise, and Klipspringer determined to take Matabela's kraal on his way. We passed Nona's deserted hut; our poor attempt to keep her dead baby decently buried

had failed : the little grave was empty, the stones scattered about—the wolves and jackals had evidently been there.

I showed Klipspringer the mouth of the glen into which Sandy and I had crept for shelter on the night of our escape, and as we descended the gorge leading from the krantz to the drift, we had a wide survey of the Chief's Great Place, the bushy plateau, the bend in the river, and the valley beyond. Everything looked as usual. Ithlamba was stalking about with a dark blanket flowing about him. Conky sitting amid a group of women with her child at her knee, and that detestable old crone, Leah, holding forth to a knot of indolent Kafirs.

When we came up to the kraal we found Matabela sound asleep, his three eldest wives fanning the flies from his face, on which the broad sun was shining.

“Drunken vagabond that he is,” cried Klipspringer, jumping from his horse, and bidding me follow as he walked up to the great Chief, and gave him an amicable kick ; “ he shall get up and give you back your rifle ;” and with that he shouted to the drowsy Kafir, who therewith sat

up, stared, rubbed his eyes, and finally rose to his feet with the identical rifle in his hand.

“Ma wo! Sa bono,” growled Matabela.

“Morrow,” replied Klipspringer, sullenly, adding something in Kafir, which being freely translated meant, “hand up that piece of property, old rascal, and get ready your horns and skins and karosses against I come this way again.”

Matabela affected not to know me again. Indeed, my appearance was much improved; combed hair, a well-washed face, and clean linen, produce a wonderful metamorphose in any one; and, in fact, I could hardly identify myself with the ill-cared-for, ragged imp who had fled the dread presence of the mighty Chief but a few weeks before; as for him, the haughty Matabela, there he stood, abject as a slave, calling himself “Klipspringer’s dog,” and begging to keep the rifle, which at my urgent request the Trader permitted him to do; and I gave the vagabond some snuff and tobacco, not from any interest I had in him, but because he bragged of having given me “room to sit,” for so he termed the detention of Sandy and myself.

N.B.—The original owner of the said rifle was well paid, by the exchange we had made for his piece.

Neither Sanna, Tois, nor Seo were at the kraal. Klipspringer presented Conky with some beads, and I promised her a gift from Graham's Town. As for old Leah, I pretended not to see her; and Ithlamba advancing after we had mounted our steeds, Klipspringer contrived to curvet about till the wizard got frightened of our horses' heels, albeit they were not shod, this being an expense the settler is spared in South Africa.

I was not accomplished in horsemanship, but I had nerve, and a "good hand" by nature; and if nature will not give this, rely on it, art never will.

So up and down the steep pathways, after leaving Matabela's kraal, did I follow my good friend Klipspringer, when he, halting for a drink of milk at a half-ruined wayside farm, which had been riddled by Kafir bullets, I rode on, invigorated rather than wearied with my journey, for I was delighted to find myself master of a really very good looking steed. Klipspringer had presented me with him when I had a good

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opportunity, which I profited by, of getting him into condition at Llanina.

When we were about ten miles from Graham's Town, I eagerly advanced in front of Klipspringer. The pass we had to descend was narrow, and flanked on either side by dense bush. On the right, concealed by the bush, was a precipice at least four hundred feet in depth; and after I had travelled on a few paces, great rocks frowned down upon me, and the dead stillness was awful; I even missed the buckma-kierrie's constant cry. My horse's feet sounded strangely loud on the hard dry road, for no rains had fallen for a month, and at intervals the distant chime of the bell-bird only made the solitude appear more profound. I pulled up my horse and looked back; the road turned abruptly at the foot of a long steep hill, and Klipspringer was not in sight. All at once I recognised, on the face of a great stone, what I had heard talked of by some soldiers as "the devil's foot-print." How the devil had ever got his cloven foot shod, no one ever asked; but, strange to say, the foot-print was that of a good strong shoe, with a sturdy heel to it, and for

what I know, it may be on the same spot to astonish travellers yet.* Certes, there it was on that May morning in Kafirland, staring me in the face; and what astonished me more was, that my horse would not go by it.

In vain I used my sambok, in vain I coaxed; he shivered all over, snorted, drew back, and at last, broke into a foam.

It is not a pleasant position to find one's self in — viz., with a terrified horse under you, a precipice within two inches of the animal's trembling heels on one side, and on the other a kind of devil's milestone. It was but one of those freaks of nature in which she delights sometimes to indulge for the purpose of puzzling mankind; but I confess that when I found my horse quivering and snorting under me, and resolutely bent on backing any way so that he might retire with his face to the enemy, I grew downright nervous, and again looked back to see if my companion had turned the angle of the great rock below.

* In a beautiful pass called the Ecça.

There was no sign of him.

Not a sound but the chime of the solitary bell-bird!

I had heard of animals being terrified at the invisible presence of some wandering spirit, but I did not believe in such things. I had never even been afraid of ghosts, as some children are, for my father and mother had always taken care to keep our minds free from such delusions; still, I did not know what to make of this incident, and my heart was beating, and the great drops pouring from my brow, when I heard the loud crack of a whip, which woke up the slumbering echoes; and turning round, I beheld Klipspringer's own wagon, Juli seated in front, and the Trader himself leading the way.

But this welcome sound did not re-assure my steed—he still snorted and trembled; and though Klipspringer called out, I could neither turn the animal nor move on.

Down then jumped little Juli, leaving the oxen to the care of the fore-louper, and rushing up the hill, he began to lay his long whip about him in fine style.

Back my horse retreated to the side of Klipspringer, and on went Juli till he came to the remarkable stone.

Down squatted the Totty opposite to it; but behold! on reaching the spot, neither horses nor oxen were at first willing to go by, the latter being most obtuse; the oxen submitted at last to be whipped on, but Klipspringer and I stuck fast, although we had dismounted for the purpose of blindfolding the horses, and so leading them forward. Then Juli and the fore-louper, losing their tempers, stopped the wagon and sprang up the bank, but soon came tumbling down, looking aghast; and before they had time to explain, a panther, with open jaws and flaming eyes, put her paw upon the devil's stepping-stone, and glared down upon us. It was well, indeed, for me, that the beast had remained quietly in her lair while I sat on horseback before it, without any human aid at hand. But the noise of the cavalcade alarmed her. In her despair and terror she jumped up, looked forth from her fortress—behind which she had concealed a litter of cubs, having been driven thither probably in distress, while Kafirland was restless and warlike

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—and then dropped back with a growl of rage and defiance.

We had no mind to disturb her, for her lair was not easy of access, and the little fore-louper had just cracked his whip and urged his oxen with a yell to proceed, when the ferocious beast again made her appearance at the top of the rock. This time she had a cub in her mouth; hesitating but a moment, she made a sudden spring, alighted for a second on the back of one of the oxen, and the next had sprung a yard high above the bush, and onward down the precipice. We could hear the branches of the euphorbia and mimosa bushes crackling as she went, and then all was still.

Then Klipspringer raised the rifle he carried in his hand, and fired into the lair which the beast had just deserted. There was no sign of any living thing.

So Juli and the fore-louper scrambled up to the devil's mile-stone, and in another minute reappeared with a pretty little female panther cub, no bigger than a cat. Juli made a pet of it for some time; but one day it got a taste of blood, and after that the ungrate-

ful little beast took to the bush again like a Kafir.

Before entering Graham's Town, Klipspringer sent forward his trading wagon, and rode with me a little out of his way, having a message for Major Montrose, from Llanina. Above the town is a green plateau, the parade-ground of the British troops in garrison. Here we found drawn up a fine battalion of Highlanders; the pipes were playing; and when they stopped, a band struck up. Ladies were loitering among the cottage gardens that bordered the plateau, and a knot of officers were gathered round Kilgarry.

"Perseverantia Victor!" thought I, looking up at the Laird in his martial dress, and mounted on a noble charger. It seemed ages since I had seen him as a gallant sailor on the Clyde and up the loch, and yet it was not so long ago!

As soon as his men were dismissed, he came up and shook hands with me, calling me "his old friend;" his greeting with Klipspringer was equally cordial, for he respected the brave, honest Colonist; and then he made me very happy by informing me that my mother and her children

were well. He had seen her only the evening before.

And I found my mother seated on the identical spot where I had left her, under the verandah, with the garden looking green and beautiful, though the Cape summer was over. Jack sat on one side of her with his book—he had grown taller, and stout in proportion, in this balmy, healthful clime; Marion was on the other, dressing a huge doll: all three wore a very different aspect from that of Portsmouth days. My mother's decent gown and modest cap were as unruffled as ever, her fair face round and comely, her soft eyes brighter than usual,—but I will not dwell on our meeting.

In three days we took leave of the good patrons of my family, who loaded us with gifts. The few pounds I had left with my mother after our first commercial transactions at Graham's Town were still untouched; the two sovereigns presented to Sandy and myself in our hunting expedition with Klipspringer and the Halls, purchased for us some excellent shoes made of Cape leather; and my kind friend, Mr. Hall, having advanced me some money, which I

longed to repay in steady labour, we were enabled to equip ourselves comfortably, and buy all that was necessary to begin house-keeping with at the Lindens.

By the time Klipspringer's wagon had discharged its freightage, and received another, we were all ready for the journey.

The back of the wagon was arranged to convey my mother and her younger children through the wilderness; and very cozy and comfortable the trio looked, I can assure you, under a weather-proof awning, and all their packages "stowed away snug," as a sailor would say, as at eight o'clock on a superb morning we topped the hill above Fort England, Klipspringer having business on this line of road, in returning. We paused to give the cattle breathing time after toiling up the steep.

Here for a while we bid adieu to the sight of a thriving town. The valley, once the abode of the idle Savage and his herds, was now dotted with buildings, pretty mansions, and great warehouses; a church marking the centre of the long irregular street, where Colonel Graham had hung his sword upon a tree on taking possession

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of the territory, in the name of the King of England.

And on the plain beyond the town was the sad *memento mori* that Time leaves everywhere. The burial-ground occupied a large space already, and yet there is but little sickness in this flourishing land.

The huts of the friendly Fingoes filled up the distant picture, while immediately below us lay the sunny parade-ground, already peopled with groups of soldiers, and their wives and children, among whom Hottentots and Fingoes were moving; the former with huge bundles of linen on their heads, going off to wash at the stream threading the valley, and the latter loaded with fire-wood for sale, or fruit, or vegetables, or milk. A curious addition to this scene was a trio of pet ostriches stalking about, their long necks craning above some of the soldiers, and their heads peering into the women's aprons, as they filled them from the Fingoes' stores of pumpkins and cabbages.

It took but a minute to change this busy and pleasant scene for one widely different.

Juli cracked his whip.

"Wait, wait but one minute!" cried my mother, and, at a signal from Klipspringer, the fore-louper stopped the oxen.

"I should like just once again to hear the bugle," said my mother.

And the soldiers' breakfast call sounded up the hills.

Then the soldier's widow bent her head low, and I am sure some tears fell, but she wiped them hastily away, and signed to Juli to go on; in another minute we were in the open country, the magnificent wilderness stretching out before us, solitary, vast, and still. Only the creaking of the wagon, the screech of the fore-louper, and the crack of Juli's tremendous lash, stirred the echoes from their depths, and when we halted, we could hear even the whirring of a bird's wing in the hush of the morning.

It was the evening of the sixth day before we turned the angle of the ridge which concealed Llanina and its dependencies from our view. I watched my mother's countenance, as the scene, glorified by the sunset, and teeming with life and joyous labour, met her astonished sight. She had no words to express her surprise and

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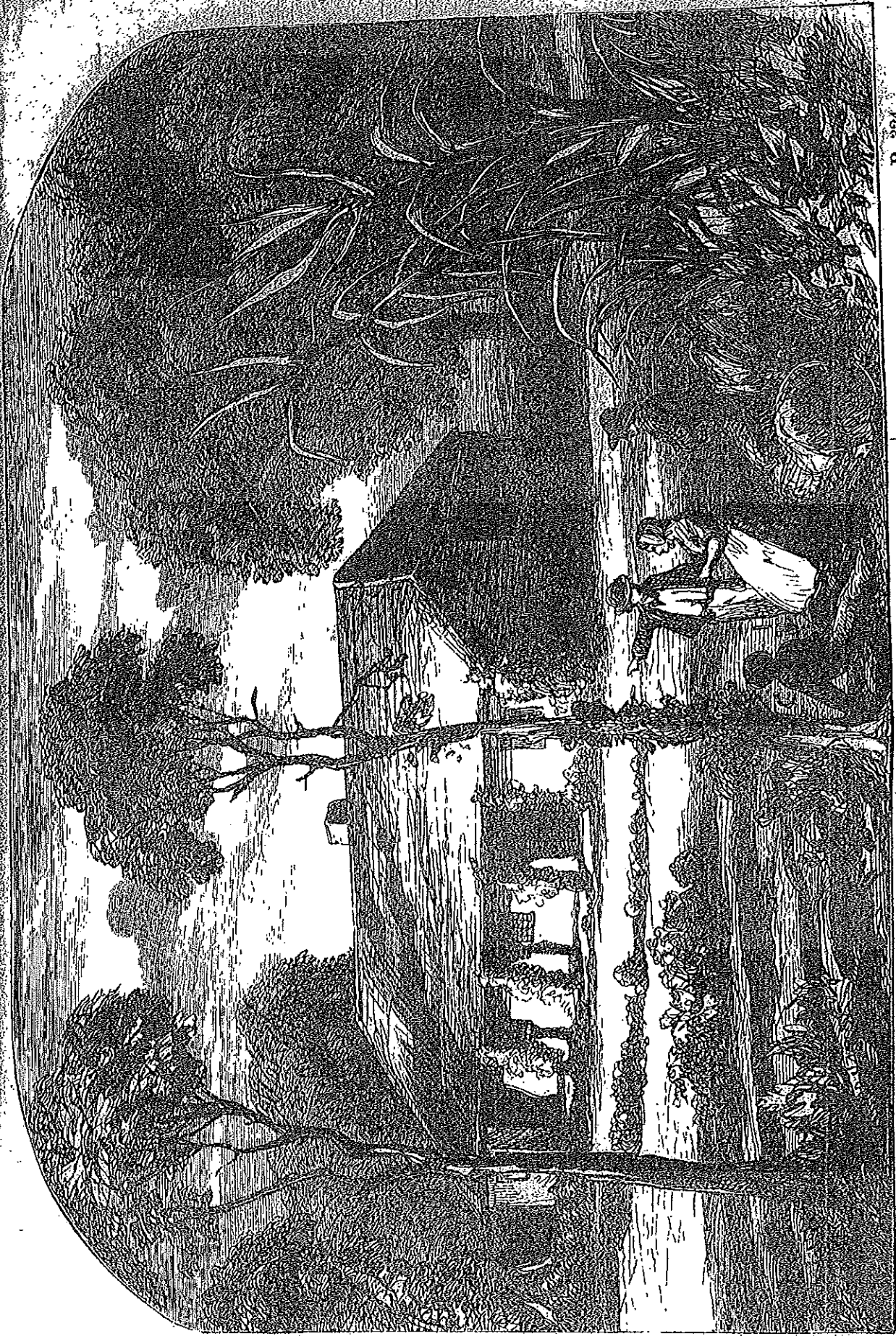
delight; no, not even when Mr. Hall and his eldest sons came forth to meet her; Mrs. Hall and her daughters, Mrs. Welsford and Mrs. Staunton, taking charge of Jack and Marion, who, tired but happy, strove in vain to keep awake, that they might see the beautiful new world on which they were entering, and listen to all that Sandy had to tell them about it.

Next day I found there was no need to try and bring about any extra cordiality between my mother and Sandy. All the members of the settlement, from Mrs. Hall to Juli, who was on a visit there with his master, were ready to do her service, but somehow or other the little gilly understood her wants best, and fetched and carried as tamely and kindly as if she had petted and trained him for the purpose all his life.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR FIRST HOME IN KAFIRLAND.

FROM the moment of my departure for Graham's Town, the lad had set about "making ready for Paul's mother." Rude enough his efforts would have been, but for the aid of Anne Welsford and Lucy Staunton. With wonderful expedition had the cottage been simply but comfortably furnished. A bedstead, table, and two chairs, made of the wood of the country, almost filled my mother's sleeping-room; a mattress, stuffed with a peculiarly soft grass, lay ready for her use. And this had been Sandy's special task. Off this room was a tiny cabin for Marion, containing a small stretcher-bedstead, and miniature linen-press for a good store of napery. This cabin and Jack's faced each other, and opened into the verandah, for Sandy held out against parting from me, so we "doubled up" together in the largest room of the cottage, looking to the rear, and within hail of the mud stable built



by Sandy for my horse, "the Gilly," so named after my dear chum.

A capital sentry was the Gilly; for when Sandy and I had to "patrol" the homestead, before Kafirland was settled into peace for a time, if either of us called to the other from the casement, the horse would whinny out, as much as to say, "Here I am, masters, keeping watch with you; all right!"

And at the least unusual stir he would set up such a cry as would rouse us all; and one morning at dawn, on answering this cry, we found an unhappy Kafir with a tremendous bruise on his shoulder, and another on his leg. The Gilly had kicked him down; and having got him there, made the stir which brought us to the rescue. He might have killed the vagabond, but the creature was too generous for that—he only kept him safe till we secured him. Mr. Hall shut the fellow up for a week, and then packed him off to his Chief, saying that next time he trespassed he would be sent into Graham's Town as a prisoner. As it was, he paid a forfeit of two cows to his Chief for being so clumsy as to be found out!

My mother had a pretty little sitting-room, too, with mats spread on the clay floor, and a white muslin curtain across the window. The door opened upon the verandah; and from this the glare was screened off by a thick veil of roses, fuchsias, jessamine, and convolvulus.

It had been Sandy's business, instructed by Sep and Octavius, to trim and prune this, and to clear the verandah of the cobwebs woven there by the great tarantulas. Like many another evil thing, these reptiles fled at sight of cleanliness and order. There was a swallow's nest under the thatch,* but the lady and her mate and family were all off now; their home was kept sacred, however, and in due time the pair came back; and what is more, one day Sep Hall got hold of one of the birds, tied a bit of bright red silk round his leg, and on the following year recognised the little fellow by the mark he had set on him, but it had chafed him sadly, and Anne Welsford had much ado to get

* The mason swallow (for an interesting description of this species see "The Library of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge"). Like the oriole bird, the mason swallow of the Cape inverts its nest, for fear of snakes.

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it off; so, although the experiment satisfied us, we should be sorry to see it tried by any of our readers.

But if there be tarantulas and snakes in South Africa, there are innumerable lovely and curious insects which flutter about in the sunshine, and give life to the scene, when, in the heat and burden of the day, all is still. Jack and Marion became naturalists and botanists, without knowing what such grand terms meant; and my mother at last had to restrain us all in so new an enterprise, for it did not suit the limits of the cottage to strew it with paper trays filled with butterflies and beetles; besides, as she justly observed, there was plenty to do before we took time for this.

We could not be contented, however, till we had seen the singular mantis beetle called the Hottentot god, of which I had read, when sitting with Sandy by the Highland loch. Every morning for a month did Sandy and I hunt among the leaves for this little creature, which is of a pale green, and delicately made. It has the strangest fashion of kneeling and putting up its hands, as Marion called them, in a praying attitude. We

heard that the Hottentots worshipped these creatures; but these people at Glen Lion were Christians—some by name, and some in spirit. Determined to try whether they venerated it or not, we called an old woman of the race into the garden, and on putting it into her hand, she began to laugh, and then ran off with it to show her friends, in such delight that it was evident they all considered the creature as ominous of good luck; and, on inquiry afterwards, we found it was so.

But Marion's pet beetles, which lived in a perfect bower of *dolichos* and roses, were no bigger than my thumb-nail, and of a hue more like agate than anything I can describe; with wings which, when folded back, formed themselves into a shield, pure and bright as real gold. We tried in vain to preserve this exquisite insect; but, alas! like other bright things which turn to dust and ashes when we would hoard them for profit or display, the gorgeous wings turned black under our experiments, the pearly agate hue faded to a dusky brown.*

* See Cuvier for this insect.

Benjamin Hall, the youngest son of the Llanina household, brought Jack and Marion some marvellous pets one morning. These were two cameleons. My mother could not be persuaded to look at them at first, and Marion screamed when one of the cold, clammy things fell by accident on her neck, and turned up its great projecting eye to her face; but when it crawled into her lap and assumed the tint of her pink gingham frock, her wonder overcame her dread. In time these strange things came to know her voice, and would lie on the window-frame watching her, with their eyes turning about, backwards or forwards, as they pleased, and shooting out their long tongues twelve inches from them at the unhappy flies which got within their reach, and which my humane little sister could not bear to see so destroyed. If she had had her way, we should have had no peace with these troublesome, idle things.

One morning I heard her in the verandah, shouting with pleasure, and on going out found Laurence Hall there, with an addition to the menagerie, which my mother, for her own

reasons, but with thanks, declined for the present. As far as one could judge, these were only two great turtle-shells, but as Laurence addressed "Sammy" and "Sally," and scattered some crumbs of bread on the path, the queer things put their heads out, and next, on his summons, crawled gravely after him. My mother had to yield this point to Jack and Marion soon afterwards, when Sammy marched up through the gate to the verandah step, with a tame kitten on his broad back, Sally slowly bringing up the rear, while Laurence's good-tempered smile beamed over a bush, which my mother at first thought must be the egg-plant that had blossomed in a night, but which proved an ingenious deception of the merry young settler and his brother, who had stuck a quantity of egg-shells on a shrub in order to astonish that sweet, simple widow Hardy.

Among Mrs. Hall's contributions to our new home in Kafirland was a large iron oven-pot; Mr. Staunton made us a present of a book-case, of his own manufacture, for he was a handy caket-maker; Mr. Welsford presented a Bible, and Bertram Hall and his wife some books,

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wherewith to fill the case. The younger members of this dear family thought of many things for a children's farm, such as a glorious Malay cock, with a wife in a plumage of rifle green, a brood of well-fledged chickens, a goat, and, in due season, when they had ascertained that my mother could manage and feed them, a pair of wee pigs.

In short, these good and earnest people proved by the welcome and help they gave us, not only how well pleased they were with us personally, but how thoroughly they estimated the testimonials Mr. Nicholson had forwarded them in favour of my mother. The short experience they had had of Sandy Hunter and myself satisfied them as to our capacity and spirit, and although Jack and Marion were but young to begin life as colonists, work was found for them when out of school; there their lessons were not heavy. Much learning, at least, much worldly learning, is not needed in Kafirland, but knowledge and intelligence are a fortune anywhere.

We delighted in our new home. Learning to farm under such kind men as the Halls is very different to being tasked by dour uncle Davids,

who have no more sympathy with the young than if they had never been young themselves. Besides Mr. Hall's interest in Glen Lion was as laird and farmer too, and at one time labourer: his sons worked as his deputies now. He and his wife still mourned in private the loss of two sons preceding Sep and Octavius, for Mrs. Hall was the mother of eleven children.

The territory, though not more lovely than many to be found in the west of Scotland, was so vast in comparison, and so strangely peopled; then its wonderful fertility afforded such magnificent returns, that husbandry was made comparatively easy; and its climate was superb, without so many of those drawbacks which weigh against the perfection of other southern lands. True, there were wild beasts and snakes; sometimes the rains were too abundant, sometimes the droughts tedious and destructive; and once in five or seven years a flight of locusts might curse the country; but the inhabitants of Glen Lion were hard-working, provident folks; the plough and the reaping-hook scared away the snakes, the whole settlement waged war against the advanced guard of locusts, wild beasts did not like the

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neighbourhood of such sporting characters; and, finally, at Llanina, the granaries were kept well stocked, the huge store-rooms teemed with plenty, from fine hams to barrels of biscuits, and in times of drought, Mr. Hall put every one under discipline as on board ship. He held that many difficulties in life may be overcome by being well armed beforehand.

But to return to my mother's first evening in our new home.

She was, indeed, taken by surprise at its aspect of preparation and comfort. Mrs. Hall had sent linen, smelling of magnolia flowers, for the beds, which were all made up, and the evening being chilly among these hills, a wood-fire blazed on the hearth of the sitting-room.

While almost overcome by such a reception, we were bidden to the board of our good friends at Llanina, where we had a plentiful supper, though my mother was too agitated to enjoy anything. Then we walked through the garden to our cottage home, whither Lucy Staunton and her sister Anne had early conducted Marion and Jack, who were already in their beds and sound asleep. Our beds, by-the-by, are worth noting

for their cheapness, simplicity, and cleanliness, being of good stout canvas, stuffed with loose straw; when our old friend Kilgarry saw them, he sold his hair mattress at once, and adopted "the settler's couch," as much more adapted to the habits of the soldier and the resources of the country.

The unloading of the wagon was deferred till next morning; and while Klipspringer and the younger Halls directed Sandy and Juli—for wise Sandy Hunter did not scorn to work with the Hottentot as long as he could be of service—Anne Welsford conducted my mother through the location, I following with Bertram Hall.

"Now stop, if you please," said Bertram, before we reached the centre of the vast gardens planted with so much that was lovely and yet so thoroughly useful—"Stop and see, Paul Hardy, what, under the blessings of Providence, industry can do. Take a good look, my lad, at the emigrant's home facing you."

The original dwelling of the Halls was clearly indicated by a long, low, but strong wall, pierced by a few irregular windows. From this now sprung a red brick mansion. Its solid

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frontage looked boldly into the valley, and a handsome terrace stretched from the door-way to the top of the original wall, forming the *stoep*, divided in the centre, where the wall had been parted for the purpose, by a flight of steps: the original dwelling had been turned into the numerous house-offices of Llanina; and as to the farm-yards and out-buildings, they presented the appearance of a barrack. The whole face of this fine mansion was now covered with a magnificent vine, and through the open windows came wafted the pleasant din of a busy family. Mrs. Hall was seated in the shady door-way, with a large basket of household work on a table beside her, and far within we could see Lucy Staunton and her husband, Mr. Welsford, and Mrs. Bertram, among a crowd of little students, the grand-children of the comely dame in the foreground.

“On that spot,” said Bertram Hall, pointing to the house, “my father raised his first abode in Kafirland—it was not such a one as you have, Mrs. Hardy,” turning to my mother, “it was only a low Kafir hut; across the stream here, which irrigates our land, my father’s first little

flock was driven by a Hottentot-herd-boy, whose mother's dread of Bushmen was painfully prophetic, for next day the sheep came back without their shepherd boy; the wild creatures of the bush, who had sat watching us from the hills for many a week, had come down and carried off the poor child. I never can forget his mother's wail, for she knew well enough that his captors would kill him—they are so spiteful to every one except their own race; but we comforted her as well as we could, and maintained her in ease and plenty all her life.

“You do not see us to advantage now,” he continued. “At Christmas time we were in great beauty at Llanina, but it was vexatious that we had not hands to reap the whole of our abundant harvest, or tend our increasing flocks and herds; you would have wondered at our piles of vegetables then; our green peas last year yielded more than ever I had known. The corn that grew to your right there—and we have planted the same again this year—gave back eighty fold. It was from seed taken from an Egyptian sarcophagus, in which a mummy had been buried. A friend of my father's sent it to him from home.

"We call England home, Mrs. Hardy, you see," said Bertram; "the emigrant, though he may be born here, loves his mother country, and often longs to see it. I must say," he added, smiling, "we are always glad to get back to the land of plenty, where there are neither hedges nor turnpikes, and where we might have peace, if men would only take heart and come among us, and turn their minds to husbandry. As to all the talk there is about 'no water'—in the first place, there is more said about it than is true; and, in the next, see what my father has done—" and he pointed with a beaming face to the shining water-courses silvering the green valley.

"Ah, Anne, I see I must give Mrs. Hardy up to you now. You are longing to show her the school-house—that is your hobby."

All round us as we walked were signs of abundance and occupation. The barns were full of labourers—such as they were! Fingo dawdlers and Hottentot idlers. There would have been a great lack of white working men but for the young Halls, and others of the settlement like them. The dairy-door was open, the pails were overflowing with milk. Minnie and Meggie Hall,

bright-haired girls, and like their mother, of the true Saxon race, were busy here separating the cream, and setting a merry-eyed Kafir woman to work at the churn; but she gave it up when Benjamin Hall entered, and took her share of work on himself. As we came out, we found her and her ancient mother grinding corn, their fashion, which is precisely the same as that described in the Bible; and although I have referred to this machine in my record of our doings at Matabela's kraal, a description of it cannot fail to be interesting.

Seated on the ground, they held between them two flat stones. In the centre of the uppermost one was a cavity for pouring in the corn, and at its side an upright wooden handle for moving the stone; while the women used their right hands in turning this stone—the first pushing it rapidly to the second, and the second on to the first, thus producing a rotatory motion—their left hands were employed in refilling the cavity as fast as the bran and flour escaped from the mill.

To the delight and amusement of the elder dame, I knelt down beside her, and went to work in her stead; but I astonished her still more

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when I let her know, through Bertram Hall, that the same kind of mill was in use far beyond her country, in the land of white men, as in Scotland and Ireland, where it is called a *quern*.*

“Quern!—quern!” She repeated the name several times, and used it afterwards; its resemblance to the word churn was a great puzzle, which she solved by saying that “*both meant grinding.*”

As we had not breakfasted, Mrs. Welsford hurried us on to the school—“her hobby,” as her brother called it.

There were many more signs of plenty on our short way to a low door in a wall; the odour of fresh-baked bread was very pleasant at this early time of day; the poultry were all clacking about, for the ground was strewn with their morning’s repast; and the meat for the use of the work-people was being cut up, and handed over to

* Originally *clogh vrone*, the stone of sorrow, or grinding stone. The use of the quern was forbidden at one time, as being against the interests of the millers, but the poor continued to grind corn in it some twenty years ago, and in remote districts do so now.

Kafirs, boys, Fingo and Hottentot labourers. It was quite an expedition to pass the outhouses where herdsmen stood waiting for their rations, and cattle feasted on green forage; while young settlers groomed pet horses, and women tended pigs and turkeys.

At length the door in the wall opened, and a hum of voices murmured through the breezy but warm, soft air.

Not then, but often since, has the scene realized in my mind, what we are taught about the enemy who smites, and the command to turn the cheek to the smiter.

I have already shown how rumours and threats of war had been rife, Kafir councils held round the fires, signal beacons seen flaming on the hills; the white man's life was still in very peril through the wilderness paths.

And what had the white man been doing at Llanina all the while?

Arming himself, it is true, "to keep his house;" but giving his time and his heart to the children of the smiter—teaching them practically that Word which they were too dark in soul to understand. Teaching them, too, by one

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of their own people, a Kafir woman, whom they had rescued from the valley of the shadow of death, and made a Christian of; for I verily believe Letitia *was* a Christian.

As we entered the long, low room, some twenty Kafir boys and girls of various ages, almost all fairly clothed, met our view—some reading, some studying their lessons, and others writing.

The centre of this group was Letitia.

“It is very wonderful, and so peaceful!” said my mother to Mrs. Welsford, after looking on this scene for a few minutes.

It was, indeed, the perfect repose of the school which struck my gentle-minded mother, and gave her *heart* for the future on this “first morning” of our sojourn at Glen Lion.

“And the parents of these children,” said Mrs. Welsford, “have been roaming through the land longing for war. Even some of their mothers have left us. These are the little ones of many tribes, and my father has given them food and shelter, and the teaching of the Lord, while their people have been wandering about with war in their hearts.”

Now some of the little pupils came forward, and standing round Letitia, who, though a dark damsel, had "a fair countenance," for it was candid and intelligent—they began to read the morning lesson.

Kafir children, when not at play, are as calm in manner as their warrior fathers. The tones of the teacher and her pupils were singularly musical, as they read the chapter, first in English, and then translated it into their own soft language, for the benefit of those who as yet had no *English*.

It was very strange, in this far land, to hear Letitia's question, and the answer she received. "Who was Jesus Christ?"

And a little Kafir boy lifted his dark eyes, and answered reverently, "He was the Son of God."

Then the teacher asked the question in the Kafir language, and the child replied again, and then all the others joined softly in the remarkable chorus—"He was the Son of God."

I saw my mother's face flush with emotion, and her eyes fill with tears.

"Paul," she whispered, laying her hand on

my shoulder, and looking tenderly and earnestly in my face, "this is truly the voice of God crying in the wilderness."

"Mother," I answered, for, like the good Duke of Ormond, of Irish history, my spirit was beginning to melt, "I thought of that before you said so; I have thought of this in the wilderness itself." And I went back to that solemn hour when Sandy and I, with the poor goat, had shrunk together within the coppice, from that voice calling to us amid the wail and tremor of the midnight tempest.

Then the children sang, or rather breathed a hymn, and when it was over we all went out of the place, very quiet but sanguine: my mother hopeful for God's blessing on her work; I for help and the future reward of honest labour; Mrs. Welsford and her brother for the strangers who had cast their lot among them. So they said in a few short but earnest words.

And now a cheerful voice called from the *stoep*. It was Mr. Staunton, who had been up and at work in his "shop" since dawn, summoning us to breakfast. We mounted the steps nimbly enough, for we were as ready for the

meal as it for us; and when we turned into the long eating-room, a famous repast lay outspread before as happy a party as one need see on a blithe morning, in the prime of a Kafirland autumn. Sandy had a huge soup plate of porridge before him, flanked on one side by a bowl of frothy milk, and on the other by a bannock and a hunch of honeycomb.

We laid in provisions for the morning's work, and in half an hour were out and at our business.

The first thing Mr. Hall gave me to do was to set a prickly pear hedge round my mother's little domain.

I began my labour by hacking away at a great rough fence, keeping my distance, though, for fear of the prickles; when I had got a sufficient quantity of cuttings, I cast them into a barrow and wheeled them off to the Lindens; and these being simply laid down in "just the place where the *hedge* ought to grow," they took root and flourished upward rapidly. Geraniums were added in due time, thus completing, as well as adorning, the screen.

The Lindens was a dwelling of wattle and

daub—dabble and what, my mother called it at first. It was thatched and whitewashed, and tree boles supported a wide verandah; the house had been put together for Mr. Welsford, when he married, but as soon as the chapel, of which he was the Wesleyan minister, was built, he provided a larger home for himself, his wife and olive branches. During war's alarms, the pretty cottage had fallen into decay; but it had been intended for the house of the school-matron, whenever a trusty person could be obtained for that office; and while I went for my mother it was made habitable.

Besides a superintendent for the Kafir school, a person like my mother was needed for the wants of the community of Glen Lion in general. The valley was tenanted now by many settlers, most of them connected by the ties of relationship or marriage with the Halls. Some forty children born in the Glen were springing up like blooming flowers in a sweet wilderness, and a school-room was in course of erection for these little creatures.

It had been decided that Letitia was to keep her place in the establishment to which she

already did such credit, and my mother was to lend her assistance periodically to the good work, while so many hours a day were to be given to the education of the white sons and daughters of the Glen.

No situation could have suited my mother better than this. Within a week she was settled into her occupations, and studying the Kafir language under Mr. Welsford. Ere long we had dark evenings in Glen Lion, fires blazing and lamps lit at six o'clock, so there were three hours for books and needlework between tea-time and supper. At nine, prayers brought many neighbours together; and at ten not a light, save the stars, and, at her seasons, the wondrous moon of Kafirland, twinkled in the valley.

The Southern Cross had become familiar to us at sea, but often when any stir brought Jack or myself to our window lest the Gilly should fall into Kafir hands, we would look up to the sky and repeat the words we had read in Humboldt's "Travels" to each other—"Midnight has passed—the Cross begins to bend." But we

liked our Glen better than we should have done Humboldt's wide Savannahs!

The school-house was to be a tolerably solid dwelling; and as soon as I had "fenced" the Lindens, I was permitted to use the carpenter's tools Mr. Nicholson had given me, and which had been carefully kept by my mother. True, I could only work in a small way with them, but by this means I learnt regular carpentering, and from that went to cabinet-making.

It was some time before Sandy could work as a mechanic: his efforts were not very successful, but he took a lesson in a peculiar kind of upholstery, which turned to great account in furnishing the Lindens. By the way, he had aided in repairing the thatch of the cottage; and under kind Mr. Staunton's superintendence, made the little bridge that led to it over the drift quite safe.

What I had at first taken to be cane-bottomed chairs and sofas at Llanina, turned out to be manufactures from *reims*, or thongs, interlaced like cane-work, but much stronger; so as soon as we became, what Jack called knowledge-

able enough, I made the chair-frames from some seasoned wood given me by Sep and Octavius, while Sandy's business was to prepare the hides, first by cleansing and then spreading them in the sun to dry. After this process, he patiently learned the intricate plait, setting it into the frames with a neatness and despatch which surprised us all, and so pleased Mr. Hall that he polished off the chairs for us with his own hands; and a proud day it was for Sandy and me, when we set our contribution in a shining row against the parlour wall of the little cottage. Before the year was out, we had added a sofa of the same materials. Jack helped to paint the window-frames, and Marion sewed the coarse calico together which formed the ceiling. Then the walls and ceiling were whitewashed; and some rush mats, which we had learned to weave, were spread on the floor. And when my mother had put up her neat print curtains over the casement, and set out our dinner of filleted mutton, stuffed with herbs, adding quince-pie, I can tell you that we enjoyed it all the more from eating it among these evidences of our own industry.

The little home in short was soon complete

within and without. My mother, by rising an hour earlier than was necessary for her school, eked out time to instruct Marion in farming; and though the green hen lost her first brood of chickens, my wee sister took pains to keep the nests clean when the next hot weather came, and was very careful about the purity of the water; the sick were dosed with garlic and oil, the young chicks had boiled rice, the elder ones dry; the pullets had lots of paddy (rice with the husk on) and meelies, and every morning we brought Marion fresh watercresses from a mountain-spring for her feathery family, and thus she contrived to rear a quantity of fine poultry.

As for the patriarchal cock, Sultan, he grew so conceited that he crowed from midnight to merry morn, holding his court under two Linden-trees, whence our cottage derived its pretty name.

As soon as our garden yielded cabbages and pumpkins, Meggie and Minnie Hall presented Marion and Jack with the promised pigs. There were lots of acorns to be had from a neighbouring clump of oaks, but the Glen Lion pigs were dainty, and liked peaches, of which

there were plenty, as soon as we had pruned the trees of our orchard, for our cottage stood on a deserted orchard ground. Our ducks had a fine play place in the shadow of the little bridge, where there never was any lack of water, for I have shown how attentive Mr. Hall was in irrigation, having, in unusual droughts, tanks and barrels to resort to. As peaches were the favourite food of these plumed gentry, we were truly delighted when spring advanced to see quite a show of blossoms in the orchard, and in the course of another season, my mother saw her small store-room well stocked with jams, made from our own garden-fruit, not to speak of preserved Cape gooseberries, prickly pears, and figs, which, by the way, make one of the best confections I know.

Marion had a busy hand in this ploy, under Mrs. Staunton's kind tuition.

At last we welcomed Klipspringer's merry, honest face again. Then we heard there was to be a wedding between him and Minnie Hall. Klipspringer was delighted with our progress as settlers, and amused at the collection crowded into Sandy Hunter's nest, for as soon as the lad

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he had completed his sedentary task of upholstery, he had taken a holiday and fitted up his den. Here there were bucks' horns of as many species as could be admitted within such space, Kafir ornaments and weapons, birds' eggs—found, not stolen, for Mr. Hall set his face against that—beetles, butterflies, and a stuffed secretary bird, and all these arranged with a precision and neatness only acquired of late.

Klipspringer brought Marion a pet Steinbok, and me a little Bush boy, whom he had rescued from some Gaika Kafirs; for Sandy he had a cat's-skin pouch, for Jack a new book, and for my mother a pair of *veldtschoons*, to wear in hot weather.

Nip, the Bush boy, was almost as wild as a young baboon. Marion's quince jam was the first thing that brought him to our door-step, and after that he became somewhat more humanized. I think a little expedient of my mother's went far towards taming him, in the course of time. It was this:—

Marion and Jack were one day eating dates, and on observing that they saved the stones very carefully, I asked them their reason for so

doing, to which they replied that they intended planting them as soon as they were "dead enough." I did not fancy they would grow; but Jack, in a sententious way, informed me that, according to some work from which he had heard Mr. Welsford read, "the vital principle" was not destroyed in dates by the process they underwent in preservation, and therefore, he argued, the seed would come to life under planting and cultivation—and so they did.

Now Master Nip. was very fond of watching our husbandry at the Lindens. My mother therefore determined to teach him a first and grand lesson of sowing and reaping. She began by making him plant a willow twig by the watercourse, but the way in which this sprung upwards did not astonish his eyes, accustomed to see such indolent tillage and quick returns among the Kafirs; my mother, therefore, set apart a tiny bit of ground, in the centre of which she made Nip plant a *dead* peach-stone, taking care to see him follow her directions in watering it. Day by day she would lead him there, till at last a little leaf appeared, then it unfolded; it rose higher, a stem was added, another leaf appeared,

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and one sunny week it grew a whole inch taller. I dare say poor Nip at first thought it was magic, but my mother's tender watchfulness over him and his tree had its influence at last. As she sowed, so she has reaped, and the Bush boy—for I love to anticipate what is good to tell—is now clothed and in his right mind!

On the evening before Klipspringer's return homewards, we—*i. e.*, the Hardy family—accompanied the good Trader and his bride elect to the Welsfords' to drink tea. Pleasant was the walk to their cottage beneath the quince hedges, where the pathways, powdered with iron ore, glittered in the moonbeams; pleasant the rest under the orange-boughs, whence we could hear our old friend the jackall, and Nip mocking him from a hollow up the hills; pleasant the breeze that met us on the little wooden bridge dividing Elanina from the Lindens and the Minister's house; and when we got there, Mr. Welsford gave us our choice of books to take home, out of his lending library of eleven hundred volumes, for he had been chary of supplying us before, because, he said, "he had no mind to give us boys a holiday until we had earned it!"

The interior of the Minister's home was as dainty, in a smaller way, as Llanina. All the furniture was of the wood of the country. Mr. Welsford showed us his turning-lathe, which had beautified his bookcases, and many other interesting things. After this I began to save up money to buy a lathe, but had to wait many a day for it, for during our first year of apprenticeship, as I may call it, at Glen Lion, we were to be remunerated in kind—that is to say, by the good tutelage of the clever and experienced Patriarch of Llanina and his sons. Our off hours were our own, but our working time was Mr. Hall's.

We could not help observing, among other things, the exquisite beauty of Mrs. Welsford's sheep-skin mats, excelling in whiteness any we had yet seen, and very different to the filthy skins we had first met with in the acacia grove. These mats, she told us, were the produce of the Glen Lion flocks, and were a wedding present from her father, whose fleeces, from being the best packed and cleaned in the Cape colony, were always bespoken for England; while others, especially those from Dutch

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Mr. Klipspringer departed in the morning, but had not before he had joined in the family prayer, including that for the traveller, always offered on such occasions.

CHAPTER XVII.

FANNY DEAN.

IN the second year of our sojourn in Kafirland we had a most glorious summer. Our patch of "mummy corn" yielded more than had yet been known. Being peace time, Kafir labourers were employed in the reaping fields; but they and the Fingoes were but poor creatures at work, they were so lazy, besides wanting the "bone and muscle" of white men.

One morning there came to our valley a set of jolly soldiers of Kilgarry's regiment; for, so ill off was the colony for husbandmen, and, indeed, for thatchers, brickmakers, and all mechanics, that whenever men were to be spared from the garrisons, Mr. Hall was glad to get "the loan" of some; who, in their turn, were well pleased to exchange their duty for his labour, famous wages, and abundant rations.

From one of these soldiers we heard of our old friend, Fanny Dean. She wrote to my

mother, informing her that she was engaged to be married to the bearer of her letter, who was saving all his earnings to purchase his discharge, and become a settler hereafter in the colony.

In conclusion, she said that she and Ned Darley had been acquainted before, "but for that part of her story," she added, "she would rather not put it on paper; though no one that heard it would, she thought, think the worse of her." Her chief object in writing at present was to ask if a useful active servant was wanted at Glen Lion. She had learned a great deal from a kind mistress at Fort Beaufort, and felt quite equal to a place of trust. Her good friends were leaving the colony, and she had no mind to stay in a town, especially when better wages were to be got at Mr. Hall's, who was known and respected all through the colony. If Mrs. Hall would only try her for a year, Ned Darley might, on being discharged, marry and take service with her. Ned was handy, and strong, and honest. He was ready to tell my mother everything; and as soon as Mrs. Hall knew "the story," she could judge for herself about taking Fanny into her service.

Ned Darley told "the story," and a strange one it was; but not the less true, as I can vouch for. It was as follows:—

Fanny Dean had the misfortune to be the sole child of a drunken father, and a silly, sickly mother; and the only friends she had in the world were some humble, compassionate neighbours, a widow and her son.

Now this widow was, as the world has it, inferior in birth to Mrs. Dean, because the latter happened to be a petty lawyer's daughter, married to a dissipated man, who was too idle to farm the little property left him by his father; while the former came of humble, honest parents, and kept a small draper's shop in the same village. In the widow's poor parlour Fanny Dean was always welcome; but one day a rude stop was put to the happy pastime she enjoyed, when her father, more than half tipsy, reeled through the shop, burst open the glass-door of the parlour, and dragging poor Fanny out, there and then forbid her ever again entering the place. The bad man had a grudge against the widow, because he could not pay the bill long due, "though there need have been no quarrel

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about that," Ned Darley said. Be this as it may, all intercourse was forbidden. Soon after this Mrs. Dean died, and the unfortunate Fanny was left to the mercy of her wretched father.

He brought a dreadful step-mother into the disorderly house within a month after his first wife's death; then Fanny would steal away from her unhappy home, and meet the widow's son; but though Mrs. Darley would often send and take her food, she thought it wisest not to receive the forlorn creature in her own abode.

Then Fanny Dean, who had a desperate though not unkindly spirit of her own, came to the resolution of running away.

She did not tell the widow this, but asked Ned's help in the scheme.

The village in which these people lived was not far from a great commercial town, where large ships came up the river, and anchored close to the quays. Poor Fanny, left at times to run wild, had spent many an hour in the fishing-boats that set out to sea from her native place. She was never so happy as when off the land, beyond the reach of her father; and now it seemed to her as if her best chance of escape

from trouble was to get on board ship in disguise as a cabin-boy. She was nearly fourteen, tall and slight for her age, with hair closely cropped, for she cared little for personal vanities; and when her boy playmate had provided her with a suit of his clothes, no one would have recognised her as poor Fanny Dean. She looked quite a smart active lad.

It was a cold, wet evening, when, having received a severe blow from her father, in one of his ungovernable moods, she slipped out at the back door of the house, through the ill-tended garden, and on to the shore; and skimming along a bank, with the sleet beating into her face, she turned up a narrow lane, leading to the open street, and found her best friend, as she called the good-hearted lad, waiting for her with a bundle. There was a shed close by, which served her as a dressing-room in her need, and in a few minutes out she came in boy's attire; then the lad took her girl's clothes from her and hid them. In a few minutes they were on the road to D——.

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in the sky, the scud flitted over it so rapidly that it was only at intervals they could distinguish the tall masts tapering from the dark hulls of the vessels, where here and there a lantern glimmered, making the "darkness visible." Through the mist came the sounds of men at a capstan, getting up the anchor—

"Cheerily, my men, with a yo heave ho!
Cheerily, lads, and off we go!"

So they sang, while a fiddle played merrily, and persons passed to and fro in a hurry, the captain shouting to take away the gang-board, for he would wait no longer for the steward or the boy.

"The steward is here, sir," cried a voice from a half-lighted warehouse; "I'll be out in two minutes, but I can't find George."

"Never mind George; I won't wait," shouted the captain, stepping on the quay. "Holloa, my lads, neither of you are George, are you?"

"No, sir," said the taller of the two, who knew the captain by sight and by reputation as a good man.

"And who are you, and who is this?" laying his hand on the shorter of the two figures.

"It's my chum, sir, Willie Dean," replied Ned, evading an answer about himself; "he wants to go to sea, and will take your cabin-boy's place if he is not to be found. I'll answer for Dean, sir; he don't look stout, but he is as handy as I am, sir," and the speaker reminded the captain of his having been on board a gentleman's yacht one day when the said captain was sailing her.

In a word, what with her short jacket and wide trousers—it was Ned's Sunday suit—"and she *would* leave a gold pencil-case of her mother's in exchange for it," added the narrator—her lithe appearance, cropped head, and somewhat weather-beaten features, neither the captain nor the steward believed her to be aught but what she represented herself, not even when they talked to her by the cabin light; the cruel mark of the blow on the temple, coupled with the tears that flooded her cheeks, and the promises of good service which fell from her lips, decided the captain, and at any rate, he said, "he would try her."

The two old playmates bade a sorrowful farewell to one another, the boy promising to take to the sea when his mother could spare him—

which meant when she was dead, poor soul! for her health had long been failing; and as the Donna Maria, a Portuguese trader, was to return to D—— within the year, the chance of meeting again seemed neither distant nor uncertain.

To get away beyond reach of loud curses and heavy blows was the chief object of poor Fanny's desperate step.

Her old playmate was left an orphan within a month of her departure; the contents of the widow's shop and the few outstanding bills brought him a little money, and by assisting warehousemen at D——, he contrived to earn a tolerable subsistence.

But winter came, and with it no Donna Maria. Work was slack, the times hard and dear, and it was difficult to live.

Two years passed away.

The Donna Maria never came back.

She had been wrecked off the coast of Portugal, and the crew saved. In due time Fanny Dean, whose secret had never been discovered— or if discovered, not betrayed, for the steward died after the wreck from fatigue and exposure, and the poor captain had been nursed through a

fever by Fanny, and finally went into hospital, insane,—Fanny, I say, again went to sea, got back to D——, made her way to the widow's shop, found it in other hands, and learned without making herself known that her old playmate had gone on board a ship, bound no one knew whither. She further learned that some large vessels had sailed from D—— for the Cape, and she resolved on seeking the only friend she possessed in the world in that colony. Her father was dead, her step-mother had left the village for the north of England. Thus friendless, but on the strength of some good testimonials given her after the wreck of the Donna Maria, she obtained a berth on board the Adventurer.

But the most singular incident of this true and eventful history of Fanny Dean is yet to come.

Anxious to make her way further up the country, more especially as the facts of her life made her an object of curiosity and gossip when she first took service, she obtained a temporary situation at Fort Beaufort, and one day was utterly amazed at hearing her name uttered by a young sentry of Kilgarry's regiment.

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Behold, her old playmate, Edward Darley, stood before her!

As soon as he was at liberty to speak, he heard all the poor girl's story, and related his own.

"And the end of it is," said Ned, "she is, please God, to be my wife, when we have earned money enough to keep house with."

"She shall come to us," said Mrs. Hall, "and I will give her twenty pounds a-year wages, and something to begin housekeeping with whenever you marry her, Darley. She may not, you know, be as wise as she thinks herself, but she is worth trying, and if she needs it, teaching."

So people plan—but God disposes.

As soon as the harvest was gathered in, Mr. Hall treated us to a merry-making in the English fashion; that is to say, we had roast beef and plum-pudding, and a dance in the barn; but the said barn would have been a costly ball-room at home, since the wild plants of the south which decorated it from the roof to the floor are with us rare exotics. Our musicians were Hottentot fiddlers.

Sep, Octavius, Laurence, Sandy, and I

accompanied the soldiers with our rifles part of the way from Llanina to Klipspringer's, where they had leave to halt and assist him in thatching the new dwelling he had built; and not very far from Glen Lion, we met with an unexpected sporting adventure. We settlers!—having been so long in the colony, Sandy and I prided ourselves on the name—were armed, not merely for sport, but defence, for the Kafirs were not only restless in their kraals, but had spirited away some of the Llanina cattle, leaving poor Nip sadly bruised near the vley, where he had led the beasts to drink. The soldiers, too, carried their arms, and we were all ripe for a fray, though we never said a word on the subject before quitting the Glen.

Some three miles beyond our valley rose an abrupt hill, crowned with a diadem of rock, which, when the sun shone on it from a particular point in the heavens, assumed the perfect appearance of a lion in repose. By crossing this hill, we could cut off a great angle in the road to Klipspringer's, and as it was easier of ascent from our side than from the Trader's,

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those going from Llanina always chose this route in fine weather.

We were at the end of the Cape summer, but the season was very different to what it had been during our detention, at the same season, at Matabela's kraal; the showers refreshed the thirsty ground, and caused the trees and herbage to spring into vigorous life; the sky would be cloudless for days, the air was breezy, the rivers limpid and flowing, the vast wilderness teemed with life and beauty.

We were a party of nine, including Nip. We lads had a holiday, and the soldiers were as merry as soldiers usually are with money in both pockets. Ned Darley, by the way, talked of putting his into the regimental savings-bank at head-quarters, instead of spending it at the canteen, and he kept his word.

This expedition was, it may well be believed, a great treat to Sandy and me, for it was our maiden foray.

We had no dogs. Nip was all-sufficient. Dogs after cattle are sadly in the way in Kafir-land.

It was past noon when we halted to take breath on the hill, under the shadow of a jutting rock. Here we lit a fire to boil our coffee and toast our *carbonatje* (mutton-steaks), and then leaving Laurence to rest longer, for he was not so strong as the rest of us, we made our way to the shoulder of the acclivity in order to reconnoitre the country.

Nip was the first to discover some of the missing cattle. He pointed to a green nook in the valley below; and, sure enough, there were three fine cows from Llanina, and two great oxen; some stranger beasts were among them, and the smoke of a Kafir's fire curled up from a bush.

Having taken note of the spot, we examined our weapons, and went back to dinner.

Octavius Hall's advice was to wait till the tall hill threw its shadow on the valley, when we should be enabled to descend, unobserved, into the bush, and pounce upon our property. Sep Hall had learned a new mode of calculating time—viz., by holding a straw between his finger and thumb, which, when it was reflected on the palm of the hand, indi-

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ated the hour with marvellous exactness, considering.

We found this method more correct than the Hottentot mode of measuring hands between the sun and the horizon, and I have often had recourse to it since. In South Africa, the strong light was a great assistance to this human chronometer.

Septimus afterwards showed me the work whence he had learned the useful secret—for a secret it is to the world in general.* It had come out of Mr. Bertram Hall's library, where all curious and valuable information that could be collected had a place on the shelves.

Restless Nip, munching a great piece of half-cooked mutton, crawled up the hill to feast his eyes upon his beloved herd, for a half-tamed Bushman grows to love the cattle he is accustomed to. We sat round the fire, the soldiers smoking, and we settlers listening to every stir on the air, and from time to time watching Nip's progress from crag to crag—and no easy matter

* An old book of "Extracts," entitled "Endless Amusement," well worth a boy's attention.

was it to distinguish him from the scrub or bush that tufted the hill—when we saw him throw up his arms in dismay, and suddenly turning, come toppling down like a ball of India-rubber.

“Him lion! him lion!” hoarsely murmured the boy, when he reached us by falling head over heels at the feet of our party.

“Lion! where?” asked Octavius.

“Daso! Daso!”—“there—there!” pointing upwards to the granite crown on the hill’s brow.

“Bathershin!” — “nonsense!” said Jem Butler, an Irish soldier, who had crossed the stony summit, on his way to the glen.

“Little Bavian! (monkey) that you are!” said Sep; “that is nothing but a stone.”

“Stonemake great eyes?—stone shake tail?—stone do so?”—and Nip gave a low growl, while his face looked jaundiced in its expression of dread.

“Nonsense, boy!” said Sep; “it is four o’clock,” and he again measured the dial with the shadow of a bit of stick; “we will climb the hill now, and you’ll see what has frightened you. I tell you it is nothing but a stone.”

“Four clocks!—ya!” replied Nip, looking

down into a bright bunch of Marvel of Peru, which at this hour precisely, folds its soft petals in Kafirland.

“The lad’s no fool,” remarked Octavius. “No Bushman is—it behoves us to be cautious. Recollect, boys,” turning to us, “what a nice mess we were in at the lāger, from being unprepared. Look to your arms, my lads, and don’t despise a warning, because it comes from Nip. My sister Anne, if she were here, would preach you a sermon about ‘small things,’ and quote the young Hebrew maid’s advice to Naaman. I’ll back Nip’s experience and gumption in the bush before the wit of any of our party, begging pardon of these gentlemen in her Majesty’s livery!”—and he laughed a saucy laugh.

Octavius *would* call the Queen’s uniform a livery, but no one took offence at him, he was so truly good-natured, and genuine, and single-minded.

He led the way with Nip, and made us keep silence. Sandy Hunter was as grave as the occasion required; Ned Darley and I laughed irreverently at the solemn looks of our advance-guard—one six feet, the other three feet, high!

Nevertheless, we settlers carried our rifles, and the soldiers their muskets steadily, and ere long we were glad enough we had done so.

The sun shone brightly on our side the hill, and lit up its granite head-piece superbly. By-and-bye, Sep remarked, in a whisper, "Sure enough, the rock does look bigger than usual—but that may be from the glow of the sun."

Suddenly, Octavius and Nip dropped down, and laid themselves flat on the ground. Nip had his bow with him, and a quiver full of arrows at his back. Octavius leant his elbow on a rock, and pointed his rifle.

Nip put an arrow in his bow.

As, by previous arrangement, we were bound to obey our fuglemen, we, too, cast our bodies down, after extending ourselves in skirmishing order; and a very pretty picture the manœuvre must have made at Llanina, whence Mr. Hall was watching us through a telescope; Mrs. Hall and her daughters and other sons being all too much occupied to be *spe-uning* spying at our party.

"Halloo!" cried Darley; "the rock is alive!"

"Silence!" muttered Septimus, who, as well

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as I, now discovered that what we had taken for a granite rock was a living animal.

But the only sign of life that we could descry was a very angry tail.

Next a mane became visible and erect.

And then his majesty arose.

He was a superb lion: his port was indescribably sublime, as from his elevation he gazed in awful silence upon us, as much as to say, "Who dares invade my throne? *I* am lord of this domain—advance at your peril!"

We might have withdrawn, and left the sovereignty of the mountain in possession of his lofty ground; but we were a large party, and a retreat would have been disgraceful, besides being far from characteristic of the pluck of the South African settler.

"My certie! he's a grand beast," whispered Sandy, after drawing a long breath.

And so he was.

For about half a minute, the lion turned his head towards the valley. The sun was shining there yet, and doubtless armed Kafirs were in sight; so, having made up his mind, he stood at bay, facing us.

Step by step we advanced, every piece pointed towards our noble and solitary foe. Had he been a young lion, Octavius Hall would have coolly calculated on "winging him," and trying to tame him afterwards; but by his colour and mane he was evidently a veteran.

Our number apparently went for nothing, as he stood gazing on us, for before we could fire, he might have sprung on any one whom it took his fancy to attack. If he was daunted at the sight of our party, he certainly scorned to show it in a hurry.

As we advanced, Nip, for his own reasons, dropped behind a block of stone. And now we were within range of the enemy.

"What a glorious fellow!" murmured Sep Hall; "it is a pity to kill him."

"It would be worse to maim him," replied Octavius, "so here goes." And then, while some three hundred yards from the animal, he fired, aiming direct at the lion's head; and at the same moment an arrow sped from the Bushman's bow.

The crack of the rifle, and the aspect of such fearful odds against him—for at sound of the

first piece bang went all the others—taught his majesty, as it seemed, that practical lesson which points to “discretion as the better part of valour;” and, although he disdained to fly, he slowly turned his back upon us, wheeled right shoulders forward, and disappeared. This was not to be borne. Up the hill-side we pressed, Nip springing out of his ambush and again joining Octavius in the advance.

At the top we halted; and now Octavius spoke. “Remember,” said he, “our errand is to re-capture my father’s cattle.”

“Sure, can’t we do both?” said Jem Butler.

“Let us hunt the lion, and fight for the cattle afterwards,” cried bold Ned Darley.

“I’ll take a look at our ground,” said the steady English Corporal Fanning, casting himself down and peering round the edge of the rocky apex into the valley. “The enemy are on the alert,” he observed. “Hark! there’s the whistle; the cattle are following the blackguards into the bush.”

“Black Guards, indeed!” said Octavius. “Down the hill after them, my lads! No use now to attempt a surprise; we shall have a tussle for it.”

"All your pieces loaded, boys?" said the Corporal.

"Ready, Corporal! ready!" was the answer.

"Forward, then."

And forward we went, Nip toppling down, head over heels, and from hand to hand, like the Cheshire lads on the posting roads of olden time.

In three minutes more we were on the edge of the valley. The river flowing calmly on its course, the butterflies and sprews glinting about, the whole scene breathing peace and repose, neither Kafirs nor cattle visible.

And now Septimus called a council of war. It was decided that Nip was to creep forward and reconnoitre.

He dived, on being bidden, into the bush.

"Paul," whispered Sandy, as we crouched together behind a block of granite, "do you mind reading about Roderick Dhu and his men?"

"To be sure," said I; "and this scene reminds one of him."

"Ay!" said Sandy; and we in a measure realized the picture—each rock giving up its armed man, as, three minutes after, at the inde-

scribable whistle of Nip, low but distinct, out sprang a fine cow from the clump of bush below. She was instantly followed by her calf.

Further on, we again heard the little Bush boy, but no more cattle came at his call; so, dividing our party, by leaving Laurence and two soldiers to guard what we had already got, the rest of us proceeded after "Advance Guard," as Ned Darley christened Master Nip.

We could hear the branches cracking in front of us, as the Kafirs hurried forward with their plunder, but "nothing could we see," till we reached an opening.

Just before us were three savages, Mr. Hall's cows and oxen, and some stray beasts not belonging to Glen Lion; but half a mile further on, in a lovely little prairie, we distinguished a large clump of Kafirs.

A strong bank divided them from us. To pursue the cattle down this would be to betray our numbers, and fight, if we were to fight, with great odds against us; besides, no one wanted to kill Kafirs, and thus give a decided pretext for a public quarrel. Stratagem was always the best plan on these occasions; so under Sep's

whispered orders we made a *détour* and fired across the opening of the pass.

Octavius having his instructions, began blazing away with his party, as if there had been a whole company of skirmishers instead of three men in support of us. My powers of imitation being very tolerable, I placed myself opposite Nip, and Sandy joining in, we three kept up such a chirruping whistle as made the beasts turn back in some bewilderment. One of them knew Sandy and me perfectly well—she was Mrs. Welsford's favourite "Mouse." My chum and I had often milked the creature; and as soon as she came near enough, we uttered a few accustomed notes—importations from Argyleshire—which she recognised, and which drew her to us forthwith.

In a word, the day was soon our own—the enemy made off, but not without sending a few assegais after us.

Among the beasts that followed our own cattle was one which cut a very queer figure; for she had by accident, or through the cruelty, perhaps, of some Bushman or other, lost at least two-thirds of her tail.

Nip consented to drive all that did not belong to us into the bush again, but this one, he said, we must keep; and, as one of our calves was missing, the Halls agreed to the detention.

Meanwhile, we resolved to take up a position near a vley, whence we could reconnoitre the valley, keeping the cattle close to us. The soldiers were to proceed by a longer, but more open route, at daylight next morning, bivouacking with us for the night at the foot of the hill, with a friendly bush at hand, and the open valley in front.

As we all had some stores in our havresacs, we made a tolerable supper, and before sunset had the satisfaction of seeing the Kafirs and their few remaining cattle ascend a winding track on a distant mountain, and finally disappear round an angle of it.

Then we lit a fire to keep off intruders, and while some smoked their pipes, others sang and told stories by turns till it was time to sleep; Nip meanwhile performing the part of our outlying picquet in the adjoining bush.

The chill of a grey, still dawn awoke us, and then we prepared to start on opposite routes.

Just, however, as we had shouldered our arms, the imp Nip jumped into the midst of our party with a yell of delight.

"Well now, Flibbertigibbet!" said Octavius, "what is up?"

"Him's dod," was the answer, with a grin.

"Who is dead?"

"Lion!"

"Lion! Where?"

"Him's broke."

"What *does* the creature mean?"

"Come," said Nip, spinning head over heels before us, for the Bush boy never walked except when mimicking some one.

He cleared a granite block at a bound, and we followed him to a lot of scattered rocks; there, with his fore legs broken by a fall, and quite dead, lay the lion sure enough.

Nip danced round the noble brute, screeching with glée, as he pointed to an arrow-head broken in the left side of the lion's deep chest.

"You scamp! you have been poisoning your arrows," cried Septimus, "although I forbade you."

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But Nip only danced about like a small ape, uttering sounds by no means human.

The despised arrow had done the work. The ill-starred lion, overcome with pain, had lost his footing in attempting to descend the hill, fractured his limbs in the fall, and finally died of a wound from a Bush boy's arrow.

Mrs. Welsford worked a fine moral out of this incident.

After assisting in skinning the lion, the soldiers went on their way, and Nip carried the lion skin to Llanina in triumph, but was peremptorily forbidden to poison any more arrows.

Before we entered the valley of Glen Lion, I had the great delight of discovering and shooting a Koodoo, one of the finest antelopes of South Africa. Nip, satisfied with his exploit, was far in advance of our party, when I, accustomed now to keep my eyes and ears wide open, descried what I at first fancied was a cow, feeding in a thorny brake, all unconscious of our proximity—be it remembered we had no dogs with us, and the way was not much frequented. Onward I hurried, and Sandy after me.

“What beast maun that be?” whispered he.

“A koodoo,” I replied; “Mr. Hall showed me one here the other day, through his glass.”

“Gude sake,” said Sandy, “it has no more tail than a Manx cat.” The stumpy tail and hind legs, by the way, were all that the lad could see.

At this moment the koodoo moved.

On pushed Sandy, and in his dread of losing sight of the animal, he attempted to seize it by the said tail, so disproportioned to its size: the koodoo resisted, and on hearing voices, was too much alarmed to turn to attack his enemy, but he kicked out at Sandy, who held manfully on to the little tail till the beast fairly dragged him over a mimosa bush, and then getting free, was about to speed forward, when I, having darted onward, came close alongside of the majestic creature, and, while his attention was engaged, shot him in the head. The ball lodging in the brain, he fell without a struggle.

I got due credit for my coolness and precision, and Sandy was heartily laughed at for his impulsive display, which, by the way, was not quite characteristic of the young Highlander: but the expedition had excited his

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spirits, and the mountain air, balmy with heather perfume, had set him "clean daft," he said; so he laughed as heartily as the rest, and then hurried forward to the Glen, taking charge of the strange heifer, and full of all the news of the short but eventful expedition.

Benjamin Hall met us, and was much amused at the hostage which Sandy drove before him in place of the missing calf.

In watching us from Llanina, Mr. Hall had not been more alarmed, at sight of our proceedings, than was usual on such occasions, and had quieted Mrs. Hall's trepidation with his usual tact; but on relating how the Kafirs had thrown their assegais at our party, he looked grave, and bid us, for the present, keep this circumstance from the knowledge of the younger members of the family, and others of the Glen.

Nip having exhibited his lion's skin, began to dance and shout afresh on making out the story of the koodoo, and of course joined the party who went with a light cart to bring the animal in.

It was, indeed, a noble prize; heavily built,

with an upright mane; the colour a pale grey, and marked across the back with bands of pure white; while a pair of symmetrical horns, spiral, twisted, and more than three feet in length, gave a regal look to the head. It was the first antelope of the size I had seen; but what I thought most of was, that this was the first occasion on which my mother had seen me in the character of a South African settler and sportsman.

Still she did not disappoint me when she turned away from the sight of the kingly antelope stretched out dead upon the turf under the linden trees; and Marion's cry of, "Oh, Paul! what a pity! how grand the creature must have looked, marching through the bush with those beautiful horns!" I loved my little feminine sister all the better for her sympathy with the dead antelope, rather than with the successful young sportsman.

She caught up her steinbok, and fled into the house affrighted.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

LLANINA.

BENJAMIN HALL had been christened after the ancient Patriarch's youngest and best-beloved son, but more fortunate than he, was the pet of his brothers and sisters, as well as of his mother, who might have been too indulgent, but for the strong sense and sound affection of the boy's father.

He was a merry lad, with a spice of mischief about him, which harmed none but such delinquents as deserved reprisals; he knew, for instance, where the old Fingo poultry-woman hid the eggs, and always possessed himself of the store; but he had a kind pity for Nip, though he proved a thief whenever he could get into the dairy. The old woman had been taught better, and affected a marvellous honesty; but the poor Bush boy was still an animal in his instincts.

The day after our expedition, as Jack and I

were watering our garden crops, we heard laughter behind the prickly pear hedge, and on going round, discovered Ben and Laurence Hall with a wonderful beast between them. It was some time before we made out that this was the clip-tailed heifer that had joined our rescued cattle, but so metamorphosed was she, that her own mother could not have known her.

The two lads had painted the creature in imitation of a zebra, but it was a zebra caricatured, with the face like the picture of a clown in a pantomime; and the brown streaks on the body were shaded off from the animal's white coat in the coarsest relief, showing no small skill in the artists.

The creature, all unconscious of her transformation, munched the oat hay spread before her with great satisfaction.

Nip was lying on the ground, watching the beast with comical interest. By what wonderful freemasonry he and Ben Hall managed to get on so admirably together, we were long in understanding. We could talk with him after a fashion, but Ben could make Nip do whatever he ordered, and these two had at this moment a

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scheme in their heads, which they did not impart even to Laurence.

We paraded the heifer in front of the *stoep* at Llanina, and with shouts of laughter the children ran out, a joyous group, to see the beast, and guess its name. Ben took care to lead it off, however, before his father saw it, and consigned it to Master Nip's care till further orders.

Next day a messenger arrived to say that Fanny Dean had reached Mr. Truman's Mission-house, lately erected near Klipspringer's, where Ned Darley had met her. She was to come to Llanina in the Trader's wagon, and Mr. Hall gave some of us a holiday to go and meet her, that, as Mrs. Hall said, "the creature might be made sure before-hand of her welcome."

Starting early in the morning, we came up with the wagon sooner than we expected, for Juli, who was driving, had, like all Totties, a certain foolhardiness about him that made him reckless of Kafirs, though as this was the road near which Nonzala's people had been so uncivil to us, we were armed and watchful; now Juli knew well enough they were not in a mood to be trusted, and had been duly cautioned.

We should scarcely have known our old friend Fanny again. She had grown a fine healthy young woman; her voice was softened down, and her complexion all the fairer from the indoor life she had led. She was glad enough, she said, to get out of the town "where dress was a trouble, because every one tried to be finer than her neighbour, and where there was no stirring without a bonnet."

We all sat down to a dinner of *carbonatje* together, at the side of the road overlooking the dell in which Nonzala's "Great Place" was situated.

While resting here for half an hour, that the oxen might have a mouthful of some of the sweetest pasturage in Kafirland, we noticed a sort of stir among some Kafirs on an opposite ridge which overlooked Nonzala's kraal; and, on mounting a hillock, we distinguished the whole hamlet in that sort of commotion which one observes in a hive of bees when some mysterious interloper disturbs the repose of the swarm; and after Sep had swept the scene with the glass he always slung across his shoulder preparatory to a trek, he burst into a hearty laugh.

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"Nip has driven down that heifer to the kraal," said he; "they have got it in the midst of them, and there is Nonzala stalking out of his hut, and all his councillors, and a witch doctor drawing near him, and the women and children are looking on amazed. Now, Juli, in with the oxen, and let us be off; for we don't know how these fellows may take the trick." It puts one in mind of what Jem Butler told us one day of a certain Irish lord.*

* Some three-and-twenty years ago a commercial traveller drove up in his gig to the lodge of a noble park in Ireland. The porter brought out the visitors' book. But *this* visitor, knowing that the hospitable gates of the domain were thrown open to friend and stranger alike, declined to trouble himself by compliance with the custom of inscribing his name, and, whipping his horse, dashed up to the stable yard, where he left his vehicle, and then walked off to stroll through the splendid chase. Meanwhile, "my lord," walking up to his stables, discovered the horse and gig, and hearing how the owner thereof had ignored his lordship's rules, he called for a bucket of whitewash, and then and there whitewashed the traveller's property—carriage, horse, and harness, from end to end. The commercial gentleman was of course as ill able to recognise the said property as Nonzala was to identify the heifer.

So saying, he handed the glass; then Octavius and Sandy got a peep, each in his turn helping brisk Fanny Dean to pack the stray mugs and tin plates, while Juli inspanned the willing oxen. As for Fanny, she enjoyed the excitement.

The patient things had just settled themselves into their wooden yokes and reim harness, when to Fanny's amazement, Nip darted out of the thicket, near the road, and with a screech that set one's teeth on edge, and provoked Sep Hall to box the little vagabond's ears, he jumped up beside Juli. He made such horrible faces at us after Sep's chastisement, which was not very heavy, that Fanny did not know what to make of him; but clouds began gathering in the sky, and the Bush boy's attention was drawn immediately to the signs overhead.

Like all his race, he had the greatest horror of a storm, so he kept sputtering angrily at the muttering thunder, and shook his small fist at the forked arrows playing overhead all the way to the Glen. When we got there he fled up the hill to his cave, where we could see him from

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the garden, as from time to time he came to the mouth of his den, and yelled at the elements.

At sight of the wagon and Fanny's intelligent face in its cottage bonnet, peeping from behind Juli's and Nip's ginger-coloured countenances, kind, comely Mrs. Hall came down the steps of her house to welcome the stranger, and we could soon see that all the family were agreeably surprised by the appearance of the "Sailor Girl," whose story had strangely interested them.

We were under shelter before the rain fell in good earnest.

On hearing that my mother was in the school-house, Fanny begged that I would take her thither at once.

As we entered the covered way connecting the buildings, Fanny could see my mother through the open door before we were observed ourselves. My mother made the centre of a very pretty picture, with Letitia at her side, waiting for the work she was preparing, and her class of dusky pupils seated near, responding to the questions put to them in the gentlest of voices. At one moment some one made a blunder; we saw my mother smile, and the smile

was followed by a ripple of childish laughter; then Letitia lifted her finger to call to order, and as she did so she discovered us. My mother came out into the pretty colonnade, all clustered over with the *dolichos*, and *canariensis*, and China roses, and stood there with Marion, waiting to welcome Fanny, who for the first time for many a day, she said, fell a crying at sight of the remembered faces.

"This is not like board-ship, is it, Fanny?" said Marion, gathering a great spray of roses, wet with the rain; "we are so happy here, and so will you be, you'll see. Oh, dear, I am quite sorry that the evening is wet. I want to show you our farm; yes, indeed, we have begun farming; and Jack and I have our share in it, haven't we, mother? Don't cry, Fanny; mother, don't let her cry!"

"It will do her good," said my mother, leading Fanny away; Letitia and the little tribe crowding to the door to see "the other white face" that had come into the Glen.

As I walked homeward across the garden, I could hear the pleasant din of the school-house, for the rain had ceased, and the wide window

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was open ; the faint echo of the evening hymn floated towards the linden trees, whence I could also see the poor benighted little savage at the edge of his cave. I went up to him to try and coax him down to his supper at our kitchen door, for nothing would then induce him to enter a human dwelling, but he only cried, "*t'guzeri, t'guzeri,*" the Bushman's curse, at the clouded sunset, and clenched his fist, and ground his teeth at every far-off roll of thunder, so I was fain to leave him there. He was not all alone, for Marion's pet steinbok sat at his feet looking up at him with lustrous kindly eyes. The creature loved the imp.

It was autumn time in Kafirland when honest Peter Lane came over to Glen Lion to marry pretty Minnie Hall, of Llanina. The garden flowers were dying out, but the wild plants of the hills and the river banks were almost more beautiful than their domesticated sisterhood.

Early on the wedding morning, the valley was astir with the hum of the busy, happy children of the settlement. They came up the Glen loaded with arums and heather and bright-tinted bulbs ; and they sang as they marched, with Ben

Hall at their head, while my mother and Marion and Letitia stood under the linden trees to see them all go by "decently and in order."

I hardly think that dear mother of mine knew herself fairly until she began to work in earnest in the valley where her destiny had called her; and I am sure Letitia had no definite idea of what she could do till her capacity was brought into full play by a loving, tender-hearted woman whose pleasure was in her work with her "little ones."

As the children streamed up the Glen, the Fingo herds from their huts chanted in chorus a wild harmonious melody. They were to keep holiday on the occasion, with a feast of two fine bullocks, given them by "their father," Mr. Hall. Kafirs and Fingoes always dub you "father" or "brother" when you give them a solid present!—After all, they only do as others do, in a different way.—The bridal path was thickly strewn with flowers; and when the wedding guests filed into the little chapel, it was tolerably filled, I can assure you.

At Klipspringer's express desire, a clergyman of the Church of England came—from a

hundred miles off, by-the-bye—to perform the marriage ceremony; and although my mother was a Scotchwoman by birth, and a Presbyterian by early education, she had of later years been so entirely accustomed to the Episcopalian service that I could see she was half overcome by the very first glimpse of his reverence's canonicals, or, as Juli called them unwittingly, the Teacher's white uniform.

Benjamin Hall having drilled the "infantry" of the Glen by ranging dark and fair along the pathway in such fashion as could not readily give offence to the settlers of Glen Lion, nor mark a rude line between God's children of different hemispheres, led an English cheer as Mr. and Mrs. Lane were seen emerging from the chapel doorway. The bride, only seventeen, looked a little tremulous, but so fair and pretty in her white attire, that a low murmur of approval met her at the gateway, where a few Fingo women and their children had seated themselves to watch the strange procession, for Minnie Hall's bridal was the first that had been held in the simple fane.

Thoughtful people must have been touched

at the sight of the Episcopalian minister in his white and flowing robes, marching side by side with Mr. Welsford, the Dissenter. The memory of it comes to me now, as I write; and I long for one form, as well as one faith. These things are not in our hands, but we see them on their way already.

The bridal repast was spread out in a grove of acacias; the day was lovely—there was not a puff of air to stir the folds of the snowy tablecloths or the leaves of the flowers blooming among the goodly viands. The butterflies came out to grace the occasion, and did not retire till the bride went to change her dress for her riding-habit.

Her mother and father left the feast with her; and at a signal given by Klipspringer, the four chums, Septimus, Octavius, Sandy, and Paul Hardy slipped away, and in an hour were carolling with the newly-married pair along their homeward road, pretty Minnie keeping shyly by Sep's side, till her husband turning sharply round, brought the colour to her face by saying in his loud cheery voice, "Now, my lads, there is only time for us to finish our journeys each

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way before dark, so give me my wife, and off with you to Llanina. Tell good Mother there that Minnie Lane has gone home with her husband, and thank her for sparing her to me."

So saying, he touched his willing horse with his sambok; Sep drew aside from his sister, who never turned her head, but in a faltering voice bid her brother say "God bless you to all at home;" and then husband and wife started off at a merry pace, Juli clattering after them with the bride's kit in two stout saddle-bags on a led horse.

During the ride, we had noticed some puffs of smoke from certain hill peaks, and so, probably, had Klipspringer, otherwise he might not have consented to our accompanying him as far as the open grounds, for he knew, he said, that "the best part of the wedding was to come at Llanina."

As we rode back, and the night shadows fell, these puffs changed into bright gleams of fire, and once we fancied we heard the war-cry of Kafirland on the crest of a distant mountain.

There was no moon, so we gave our horses their heads, leaving them to find the way;

when, lo! just as we came to that part whence Nonzala's dell could be overlooked in daylight, we heard a bold voice exclaim from the bush—

“Klipspringer has gathered a white rose from the Lion's Kloof, and we have let him carry her away in his bosom. We are Klipspringer's brothers, but the men of Llanina have not done well by us. Who are they, that they should mock Nonzala?” We knew by the haughty tone of the voice that it was Nonzala himself who spoke.

“Nonzala does the men of Llanina a great wrong,” replied Sep Hall, in the Kafir language. “What does he mean by mocking?”

“Who bewitched the heifer?” cried another voice from the dense dark bush.

“Ah! who bewitched the heifer?” repeated a chorus of invisible Kafirs beyond Nonzala.

“Ride, my lads,” whispered Sep; “ride for your lives. The vagabonds would not be so impudent if they had not determined on showing fight under this pretence. Who would have thought of Nip's harmless trick lighting a brand in the colony? but Nonzala only wants an excuse. However, ride we must.”

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We sped off silently into the darkness, and never drew rein till we entered our own snug valley, and saw the lights of Llanina, where many guests yet lingered, little prepared for the news we brought of signal-fires so near at hand.

My mother had gone home with the younger children. We found them seated so peacefully round the little table, spread with books and work, that I had not the heart to relate what had passed. Next day, however, every one was made aware of it, and the Reverend Mr. B—— was obliged to wait at Llanina till an escort could be provided for him on his journey back.

Mrs. Hall tried to console herself with Nonzala's remark, that "Klipspringer was his brother;" but we could see that at times she trembled for her white rose.

Mr. Hall, who was ill-pleased with Nip, and the part his youngest son had played in the trick on Nonzala, sent a messenger with a flag of truce to the Chief's kraal, asking him to come over for a parley, and sending him, by way of conciliation, a fine ox. Nonzala took the ox, and sent back "thanks to his father!"

but said "there was so much confusion among his people that he could not leave them." It was plain the savages were beginning their usual winter pranks, and desired to avail themselves of every excuse for quarrelling; so there was nothing for it but to put the settlement in a state of defence, and confining ourselves to the Glen, to take to our winter occupations. The garrison was well provisioned; there was no fear of the want of water, as we were told there had been before Mr. Hall had learned to cope with his dangerous neighbours; and finally, the chapel was turned into a citadel, into which the women and children could retire in case of an attack.

Forewarned is forearmed. Doubtless these determined measures, duly reported, of course, by Nonzala's scouts, checked the proceedings of the Gaikas near us; further south, the Islambies gave some trouble, but the Governor contrived to allay their discontent. Klipspringer and his white rose abided at their station, where the Trader strengthened his palisades, and within these he continued to shelter the Missionary's family at night; while his trusty neighbours, the Fingoes, serenaded the Kafirs so loudly with

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their martial songs, that the said Kafirs protested they were for peace, and came to the store to buy as usual; when the Trader, you may be sure, was most happy to supply their demands for everything. Of gunpowder, he took care to have none for sale.

Meanwhile, the schools progressed under my mother. Fanny Dean studied housekeeping with due diligence. Marion and Jack helped us in tending the "farm," as if there was no such thing as war in the world, though Sandy and I did occasional duty at the watch-posts: Nip's cave was our picquet-house, the urchin himself sleeping in the midst of the cattle kraal, whence he would come forth and yell at the least sign of danger. I am afraid he sometimes raised a false alarm.

Sometimes we spent our evenings in the large sitting-room at Llanina. Here, when it grew cold enough to enjoy lights and a blazing fire, Mr. Welsford would read aloud to us; while the women worked, Sandy and Jack plaited reims, and I resumed my old accomplishment of knitting, which I taught Marion and Letitia.

We were thus occupied one evening, only Mr.

Hall looking dozy in his great chair at the "ingle side," when Mr. Staunton called us to an upper room, to see a meteor in the sky. Up we all rushed, and there, sure enough, we beheld a great ball of light sailing slowly away over the Fingo huts, to the intense terror of the poor people below, till Mr. Welsford went out, and assured them that they need have no fear, as the flying star meant them no harm.

In fact, the meteor was a fire-balloon, constructed by Mr. Staunton, who told us next day of Montgolfier's, and other wonderful inventions. This incident set us all flying kites next, as fire-balloons were dear and dangerous toys.

The "flying star" not only startled the Kafirs in our neighbourhood, but sent the scouts through the land in a great state of excitement, and by the time reinforcements arrived from Cape Town, the Chiefs had promised "to be good children, and sit still!"

And so they did for a time, and then Klip-springer and his white rose came over, and Ned Darley got leave to visit Llanina to make arrangements for his wedding before the end of the year. He had planned that it should take

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place at Klipspringer's Mission station, in order to save time and expense.

Darley brought two comrades with him, each, like him, provided with their certificates of good conduct, and looking forward to their discharge. They were candidates for work in the Glen Lion settlement.

It was plain there would soon be no lack of hands at Llanina; where even spoilt Benjamin had found his way into the reaping-fields this year; and Laurence, like Jack, was grown stout and strong. So said Peter Lane, when he came to breakfast with us at the Lindens.

The place looked enchanting when Jack and I came from the garden, and found my mother and the Trader in close confab within the leafy screen of the verandah. Marion was in the midst of her cackling favourites; and Nip squatted in the sun, grinned amiably at Sandy, who was constructing a tiny "sea-wagon" for my sister, with a shapely hull and tapering spars, to be launched in the stream rippling below. One of Nip's first evidences of civilization was an attempt to imitate this in a pumpkin boat, with a tall reed for a mast, and a broad fern-leaf for

a sail. We had made Nip a kite, by the way, and the creature began to show signs of affection for us, and would now and then come down from his cave, and actually look at the coloured picture-books which my mother had had sent from England for her school.

But of all the importations that ever astonished the children of Glen Lion, I never shall forget the advent of the magic lanthorn!

"You see, Mrs. Hardy," said Klipspringer, as I came up, "I took a fancy to Paul and Sandy the very first morning I saw them, all battered and storm-beaten, under the krantz near my place. I had my plans in my head then, and Mr. Hall knew all about them, but I could not carry them out till I was married and done for! I am going to enlarge my station a year or two hence. I must go up the country after hides and horns, and feathers and ivory; but before then I intend to build a wayside inn, only a thatched house at first. The Bertram Halls go partners with us in this; I can get servants to begin with at the Mission station, but I *must* have your boys—your Paul and his comrade—if you please, within my palisades. Don't look

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scared. I am not come to you without Mr. Hall's permission: I know all that the lads can do—they have learned enough in the way of reading and writing and arithmetic for me, and, what is more, they can ride. I know they won't object to my offer, and," concluded Klipspringer, "it only remains for you to say if you can spare them—and when."

My mother was too unselfish, as well as too wise, to throw any obstacles in the way of our advancement. She had been thrifty and industrious, and had saved money—so had we—and the rumours of war increasing the demand for it, our earnings had been invested to great advantage, so that we had the means of equipping ourselves with many things necessary for our change of station. The young Halls "clubbed" to buy Sandy a horse, and for me some saddlery for a far trek, as Klipspringer had then the intention of taking me with him when he went beyond the Orange River, leaving Sandy "in charge of his wife and customers;" but, as I have said, "man proposes," &c. The distance between Llanina and Klipspringer's was but a sharp ride of thirty miles, so that we should

have many opportunities of seeing our dear patron's family and my own. Full of gratitude we were for the past, but our hopes were very strong for the future also; Klipspringer had been our first friend in Kafirland, and seemed to have a claim on us; and as Laurence and Ben Hall were now capable of taking our places, their father was glad to have us well provided for so near. In a word, our arrangements for the change were anything but sad.

Still I admired the Lindens more than any homestead in the glen, as I took a parting look at it. The garden had grown luxuriantly, and the out-buildings had increased under our own busy hands. Marion's cow, Dairy-maid, fed in a paddock in rear of the garden, and Marion herself, with her fair curls and English bloom, made a charming addition to the picture. The old Fingo Chief called her the sunbeam of the valley.

How happy she was in her new acquisition; but there came a cloud, as she sighed out, "Oh, dear! I hope the Kafirs will not steal my Dairy-maid. I wish there were no such people as Kafirs in the world. I am sure we could do very well without them."

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The day before our departure, Mr. and Mrs. Hall came over to the Lindens to bid us "God speed," and encourage my mother in her prospects. It was a well-timed visit; and before we parted for the night, Mr. Welsford joined us, and put up a prayer "for the children sojourning in a strange land."

My mother kissed me silently that night; I felt her tears upon my cheek.

"Keep up your heart, mother," said I; "I am not going far. If I ever grow rich, what do you think I will do?"

"What, my boy?"

"I will go back to Scotland and buy the Brae farm."

"If it is for sale," said my mother, with a smile, never believing me in earnest.

"Yes, mother, if it is for sale."

"And if God wills!"

Oh, those mother's counsels! those pearls and diamonds dropped from precious lips—dropped at our cradles, and there too often left. Ah! what would we not give for them near the grave, when no longer within our reach?

At this time I was always self-reliant in

prosperity, though ready to pray to God in trouble; and day by day I felt more and more assured of acquiring means to purchase the Brae farm, if it ever came into the market; from certain conversations formerly overheard by accident from my moss bed, and now recalled, I "reckoned" that my uncle would buy the farm if he could; but the more I saw of the energy, industry, and thought required in comparatively light labour on a South African homestead, the more convinced was I that Uncle David and his sons were not the men to work a property to advantage, even if it became their own.

And here I take leave to remark, that there is perhaps no greater spur to exertion in a lad of spirit and intelligence, than an unjust accusation. However hard my uncle or aunt might have been upon me for listlessness in the work they gave me to do, under their disorderly rule—however insolent, in their ignorant self-sufficiency, my cousins might have daily and hourly shown themselves, I should have forgiven and forgotten it all, under the good counsel of Mr. Macleod, to whom I often went for

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consolation; but to be accused as a thief,—of stealing a lamb for the sake of selling it again; then sneered at as a liar; and, finally, after such full justification of myself, received on sufferance rather than welcomed to my old position, I could not forgive; the bitter injustice of the accusation, and the callous disregard for my feelings which succeeded it, stung me to the quick, and stirred that spirit within me which might be for good or for evil—for eternal life or everlasting death.

And so, well was it for me and mine when my good angel sent Mr. Macleod to his garden gate that morning when I left the Brae, with a burning cheek and beating heart. He stopped me on my wayward career, sent me where occupation stilled the pulses of my vexed spirit, and set my brain at work on a better object than vengeance. But for this, into what pit might I not have been cast when Mr. Nicholson's letter reached my mother; and, though last, not least, what would have become of Sandy Hunter, had his lot not fallen with ours in the pleasant lines of Glen Lion! for my mother and her younger children, God would have cared for them!

These thoughts.—vague, it is true, but taking stronger shape daily—settled themselves by degrees into a purpose. I had formed no idea of quitting Llanina and its happy service, if service such labour amid good fellowship could be called; that would have been the height of ingratitude, as well as evil policy; but the moment Klipspringer spoke of an enterprise in trade—trade without the trammels and drudgery of town traffic—the vista seemed to open; I saw in the distance the sun shining on the broomy hills and steel bright lochs of Argyleshire; the cattle winding along the mountain paths; the sheep gathered in a group upon the knowe; and once in a dream I beheld Effie, far off but distinct in the light, with a lamb in her arms, and Brin beside her. She had grown tall, but her face was round and childish as of old, and her tangled hair hung about her white shoulders as usual, and her feet were bare; and for all she stood in the light, her countenance was wan, and her air listless. It was strange to wake from such a dream, and hear Nip shouting to the storm-clouds from his cave.

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CHAPTER XIX.

NED DARLEY.

It was as merry a party as need be that we met within three miles of Klipspringer's, on the eve of Fanny Dean's wedding-day. Some were to bivouac for the night on the road; but good Mr. Truman, the missionary, sent Sandy and myself forward to bring in the womenkind, for whom his wife managed to find accommodation. As yet, the "Thatched House" was incomplete, the abominable river having risen at an ill time, when the furniture was "on the wrong side of it." Mrs. Truman and Minnie had continued, notwithstanding, to make excellent preparations for the feast, in a long low room at the back of the buildings, and had covered the bare walls with flowers, our usual South African resource.

Ned Darley was to come as soon in the morning as he could. The thoughtful Klipspringer had sent a horse for him, and he and his best man, Sergeant Fanning, were to "ride

and tie." So he wrote in a loving note to Fanny, which she was proud enough to show.

Juli met us outside the palisades, tuning up a cracked fiddle; but a piper of the Tortoises,* on furlough, proceeding to Glen Lion to see his comrades and try his luck, Scotchman like, when he hears of other's success, quite put Juli's music down. The Totty took it very good-humouredly, flinging away his fiddle, and beginning to dance to *Tullochgorum*.

We would have shown my mother all over the premises that night, but she hurried us to bed as soon as supper was over, for we were all to be astir at daylight. Sandy and I slept as sound as tops on our heather couch, till the sunlight streamed in through the little casement of "the travellers' chamber."

We jumped up, arrayed ourselves in our new suits—proud enough, I can tell you, we were of our settlers' jackets, with their pockets, great and small—and stepped out into the garden, lately put in order by my chum and me.

Not a soul was stirring. Only the Gilly and Sandy's *Skimmel* tied up under a shed next

* The Kafirs thus nicknamed a Highland regiment, from the pattern of the plaid.

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our sleeping-room, heard our voices, and they whinnied till we went to them and led them to the river for their morning drink.

“Hark!” cried Sandy, as he put aside the luxuriant foliage that stopped our way to the brink of the stream.

We knew the sound well—the far-off murmur, but certain indication of a rising torrent.

And yet the sky was bright, and only a few clouds were visible, but these scudded rapidly along; and birds came flitting by, flying low, and uttering that sharp, uneasy note which we so well understood.

It was broad daylight, and Ned had not come.

There was a cleft in the high rocky bank opposite. Further off, wound the hilly road to the barracks, and along this we soon descried a solitary figure marching onwards. It was Sergeant Fanning. There was no mistaking his erect bearing and measured pace.

Then we knew that Darley must be near the river.

I broke a branch from a tree, and flung it into the stream just where he would have to cross. It was whirled round and round for a

minute in the eddy, and then carried out of sight with the speed of lightning.

Sandy and I looked at each other in dismay.

"We will wait for him here, Sandy," said I, "and warn him."

"Aye," answered Sandy, in a hoarse whisper.

The horses drew back and snorted as the tide swelled up the bank; and now the clouds began to gather blackness.

"Paul, there he is!" cried Sandy.

I looked, expecting to see Darley at the drift, but he was on the crest of a ridge to the right of it, apparently seeking the way. His horse was restless, doubtless understanding the aspect of the elements better than his rider.

We shouted aloud, but the wind carried our voices down the river; and Ned's loving eyes were fixed on the bank above us, where Fanny, as we afterwards discovered, stood watching for her bridegroom.

He saw her, waved his cap, and in answer, of course, to her signal, turned to find the ford. Fanny did not understand the signs of the weather as we did, neither could she hear the murmur of the distant waters from her elevated position.

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Sandy and I, standing in the deep shadow, were not discerned by Darley. In vain we shouted; he probably took our agitated voices for the cry of baboons, well known to infest that river, and when, on reaching the fording-place, he did recognise us, he answered with a smile, and plunged into the rapidly rising waters.

We could see he was taken by surprise at finding his horse saddle-deep at once, for he endeavoured to turn back. At this moment Fanny uttered a shrill scream; poor Ned looked up again and smiled, but this time the smile was a mere spasm.

And now only the horse's head was visible, and the rider strove to rise in his stirrups. Fanny's shrieks brought her friends to her side, and Sep and Octavius Hall rushed down the tangled pathway to us, our horses, meanwhile, requiring all our strength to keep them steady. Sep had a hatchet in his hand; with one stroke of his powerful arm he levelled a tall, slender tree, and cast it into the river; but, alas! the torrent swept it instantly away.

At this sight poor Darley raised his eyes to the bank with a look of despair, which reminded me of Sandy on the evening when I had rescued

him from the loch ; still the gallant horse, with eyes straining from their sockets, and distended nostrils, battled with the swelling current, and even breasted it midway. Still Darley clung to his saddle though almost submerged in the cruel river ; but in the fatal eddy the steed was swept from beneath the rider, and, released from his burden, rose and struck out towards us, and uttered a thrilling cry.

Then I saw a dark mass swimming round and round ; heard another dismal scream of agony ; heard it the next moment far below, and again, and again, till it was lost in the increasing roar of the surging river.

None could say they saw poor Ned Darley alive from the instant when his horse and he were severed by the foaming tide ; once he rose to the surface, but he was either dead or insensible ; for he made no sign, and his face was wan and convulsed. We had just time to observe this, ere the bridegroom of the morning, who but five minutes before had smiled on his bride, with sunlight shining on him, was whirled out of our sight.

We spent the wedding-day in seeking along

the tangled banks of the river for the young soldier's body, and found it clinging amid the boughs of the tree which Sep had cut down and swung into the river, hoping it might be the means of saving him.

Sep blamed himself for this manceuvre, saying it had done more harm than good. But Klipspringer comforted him by his assurance that nothing could have helped poor Ned in his strait. Fanny's only consolation in her agony was the discovery of her lover's corpse; and, alas! Mr. Truman's duty now was to fulfil the sad rites of death and burial over him whom he had thought to bless as a bridegroom.

His comrades could not cross the stream to see him laid in his grave under a geelhout-tree, but in course of time they erected a stone to his memory, on which they told the sad story of his death. After this the Governor's daughter, Miss Arabin, wrote herself to Fanny Dean, and offered her a home with her, but when the letter came the poor girl was in bed with brain fever at the Mission station. Mrs. Hall would fain have had her back to Llanina, but it was long before she was able to leave her room.

I did not see her for many months after the fatal incident, which I have endeavoured to describe precisely as it occurred. She did not perceive me, though I was near her lover's grave, assisting in erecting the head-stone. She was standing at an open window, and looked more like a spirit than a living woman; for she was dressed all in white, with the snowy curtains of the little casement waving about her, giving a ghastly look to her colourless face, out of which the large solemn eyes gazed upon the softly murmuring stream, whose waters had engulfed her hopes for life.

I could scarcely believe that this sad, earnest-looking woman was the same being whom I had seen as a sailor lad on board the "Adventurer," climbing into the shrouds, or attired in the loose Sunday garb which becomes a seaman so well, and which certainly disguised as well as suited her completely.

An expedition up the country with Klip-springer was deferred in consequence of the deplorable event, which well-nigh deprived Fanny of her senses for life, and so shocked poor Mrs. Lane as to lay her up for a month.

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work is a fine thing to soften sorrow. Sandy and I were quite capable of renovating Klip-springer's tenement; and when we had done this, we had plenty of occupation in his store-hut. We had learned enough of book-keeping from Mr. Welsford to be of the greatest use to him. In course of time, therefore, he enlarged his general warehouse; and the wayside inn, still retaining its designation of "the Thatched House," gave every promise of success; for Bertram Hall and his "brother Lane" entertained the same principles touching the "circulating medium," holding that small profits, short credit, and strict probity were the true secrets of fortune in the long run.

Peace reigned through Kafirland for many months. The pleasant road to Llanina lay open and safe. And often did Sandy and I, as we rode thither, armed only for sport, and mounted on our stout nags,—often, I say, did we sing merrily on our way, light of heart, and full of thankfulness that God had sent us to a land of milk and honey, where all might go well, as Mr. Hall always said, if British settlers would only come out and work.

"Here is the real gold, my lads," he remarked one day to some youthful colonists. "You must read the fable of the old man who left his money-bags to one son, and his fields to the other, and then you will understand what I mean."

The fate of poor Ned Darley was not only deplored for his own sake, but it made us thoughtful, I trust, for life. The rushing of the stream, when it woke me at night, always filled my heart with sorrow; and, besides this, caused me to debate in my own mind, whether some remedy might not be found for the constant inconvenience to which we were subjected by the treachery of this river, which our friends the Tortoises had to cross whenever they required stores at their outpost barracks, and which cut off communication with the towns only too frequently.

I must not omit to say here, that Fanny Dean, preferring to remain near her lover's grave to removing elsewhere, had accepted the situation of housekeeper at the Thatched House.

Bertram Hall had wisely sold his cattle in Glen Lion, thus realizing a handsome sum for investment in Klipspringer's enterprise, or

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“notion,” as he termed it; while his brothers turned the grazing land to agricultural purposes.

There was, of course, plenty for all hands to do. Soldiers came from the barracks, on furlough, to help in thatching, brick-making, carpentering, &c. Sandy and I, by turns, officiated in the store, now a general warehouse of some pretension, fenced off with stout palisades; or we treked into Graham's Town, to deal with Mr. Masterman and other merchants for sundry commodities—from rakes and spades to gaudy ribbons, such as soldiers delight to deck their wives in. Gradually a way opened from the towns to Llanina, where Meggie Hall was about to marry and open a store; and where my mother's school was increasing daily in such numbers, as compelled her to decline pupils till further help was obtained, as she would by no means neglect her little dusky pupils.

Well, one night, as I heard the stream foaming and fuming, certain thoughts struck me.

The next day, Sergeant Fanning would come with his comrades for the groceries, ready packed for the barracks. There was, too, a crock of butter from Llanina for the officer's wives and children

of the garrison, and a present of quince jam and vegetables, to say nothing of sundry letters for the first English mail.

Rising, I opened the window and looked out.

Up jumped Sandy from his heather couch.

“Sandy,” said I, after we had both peered out for some minutes, he wondering “what folk were about;” “I have a notion in my head.”

“Aye?” said my comrade.

“I hope the stores may be got across the river this turn; if not, I will show you a scheme in the morning.”

But Sandy would have me tell him what the “notion” was at once, and sat up in bed listening till dawn, when we rose and hastened to the bank of the river, where we soon ascertained that my plan was feasible. Klipspringer was delighted with it.

The result was, that on each bank was driven down a stout post, of such an altitude from the bed of the river, that no flood could affect the strong rope stretched across from post to post. On this rope was slung what sailors call a *traveller*—*i. e.*, an iron ring with a hook appended. Attached to this ring were ropes for hauling it

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either way, so that when a basket was suspended by a person at one side, he who was opposite drew it across, and, if necessary, sent it back empty to be replenished.

This simple invention was most important to Klipspringer; and he never rested till he obtained from the Government a small grant of land for me as a reward for my ingenuity. His Excellency admitted that the plan might be made available for the transmission of Government dispatches, &c., and there were not wanting intelligent officers to recommend it in "proper quarters;" but, as Klipspringer said, "it was the old story of great men scorning little things, because they are too short-sighted to anticipate the results; or because they do not like to further any one's ideas but their own."

We had been about four years in the colony, when one day, as Sandy and I were riding into Graham's Town on business, we met Major Montrose. He did not recognise in the sturdy young settlers, well clothed, and mounted on excellent horses, either the stunted, freckled letter-carrier of woollen-kilted memory, or the long-armed, sallow-visaged, dreamy Paul Hardy.

whose feat of saving Sandy from the loch had always been a marvel to the Laird.

We touched our hats, and Sandy's salutation in a broad northern accent made Kilgarry draw rein at once; then turning back, he would have us recount the outline of our story as he rode down the hill between us.

At parting, he said he should soon have to visit the detachment in our neighbourhood, and would come on with some of his brother officers to Klipspringer's.

And so he did.

My mother happened to be with us at this time, for Mrs. Staunton had joined her in the management of one school, and Letitia had an assistant in the other, and well pleased was she when she saw how interested Kilgarry was in my "notion," as the baskets filled with eggs, vegetables, poultry, and all manner of stores, were slung on "the traveller," passed over from our side of the river to the other, and then hauled back for another supply, for the Tortoises were capital customers, having much spare money at times.

I think Mrs. Bertram's fare astonished Kilgarry and his friends, who never expected to

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meet with such lamb outlets and jam tarts in Kafirland, not to speak of good beds and snowy dimity draperies. Mrs. Bertram prided herself also on her table-linen and glass, and although her husband was a tee-totaller, he knew what good wine was, and took care to have it for those who called for it.

Kilgarry and his young officers rode over to Llanina, and came back as much amazed as delighted with the peace, the plenty, and the industry they saw there. "Ah!" said the Laird, as I led out his horse for him next morning, "*if we had more men and less cattle in this country*, Paul Hardy, there would be no difficulty in finding 'room to sit,' as the Kafirs say;—but, ha!—is it possible?" he cried, suddenly rising in his stirrups, and looking over the palisades of the stable-yard; "there are mounted Kafirs at the drift, and—and—the vagabonds are armed, and there are others on the bank above, who have struck down the post and all the gear, and are dragging it towards the river; and now," he exclaimed, strongly excited, "now they are hurling it down, and all the tackle with it. What can this mean? By Heaven! there comes

half-a-dozen smart Totties of the Cape corps—they are far up the road; but they ride at full gallop—now they are out of sight—now in the dip. My God! what *does* it mean?"

We soon knew what it meant well enough. The mounted green jackets, seeing two or three Kafirs tampering, as they supposed, with our telegraph—for occasionally we managed to work signal flags from bank to bank—dashed at the enemy, unslung and presented their carbines, intending merely to intimidate the miscreants, but the gallant Totties were instantly answered by a yell from below; in one moment the drift was deserted by the savages, the next a volley from their musketry brought every one to the outbuildings, and finally the loud ring of the war-cry proclaimed that Kafirland was *up and doing*. As soon as the smoke cleared, we descried three riderless horses galloping distractingly along the crest of the ridge, and when they turned to retrace their way to the garrison, all was still as heretofore.

It was months ere we heard the result of this "brush," as the Totties called it, in which two of their number were killed and one wounded.

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This time the enemy had matured his plans with a secrecy that indicated a terrible unity of purpose. We had scarcely put the settlement in a state of defence, by bricking up the windows, strengthening the palisades, and throwing up some earthworks at the feeblest points, ere the hills gleamed with wreaths of fire, and the loud clear battle-cry of Gaikas and Islambies echoed from the Amatolas to the Kei.

My mother's resolution at this period astonished me. I thanked God that Jack and Marion had followed her to Klipspringer's; she could not have been so calm had they been absent. I see her now, in her plain dark dress, her simple cap and neat collar, moving noiselessly about with provisions and ammunition, as Mr. Bertram directed, and while counting percussion caps from her apron, rocking the cradle in which Mrs. Lane's baby slept, all unconscious of the awful signs of strife without.

She was thus occupied one morning, Marion by her side, assisting her in the strange task, and Mrs. Lane reposing peacefully after a night of alarm, when Klipspringer looked in through the open door upon the dim, quiet room, for the only

light admitted came in at the top of the window, which was bricked up almost to the eaves.

He beckoned, and she crept towards him.

He was accoutred in the burgher dress, so suited to the warfare of the bush. Across his jacket of dusky brown were slung his shot-belt and other accessories; his wide trousers, faced with untanned leather, and his spurred heels betokened him ready for the trek. In one hand he carried his good rifle, in the other his jaunty hat, looped with a gilded bugle, and set off by a dark ostrich feather. Never was a smarter type of the true Cape Burgher than—an' so please you—Captain Lane of Klipspringer's Own Rifles. Some one called them *Yagers*, but Peter Lane disowned the foreign nomenclature. "British riflemen we are, my lads," said he; "British riflemen we'll live; and, if God wills it, British riflemen we'll die!"

"Hurrah!" was the Amen of the jolly burghers to this address. It brought my mother to the window to see me equipped and in the ranks.

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Captain had said, "and you must lend the colony your son. These things are hard to bear; please God, we'll have better times some day."

Whatever my mother thought, she only lifted up her lips to my brow—for I far out-topped her now—and having signed the blessing which she could not speak, she bestowed a similar salutation on Sandy. My last look of her was as she stood within the palisades, waiting for Captain Lane's word, "March!" I turned my head as the men moved on—her hands and eyes were raised in a silent appeal to Heaven. The attitude said, "God spare the widow's son," more impressively than words could have done, but I stepped out, determined not to give way to the throbbing sensation at my heart, which had been as much touched by the sight of Mrs. Lane with her baby at a window, and our Captain's momentary look of agony, as by any sorrow of my own people.

Jack bore up bravely; the last glimpse I got of the settlement showed me the lad wiping the tears from his little sister's face.

"Right shoulders forward!" shouted Captain Lane, and wheeling round a dense clump of

bush, we were immediately out of sight of the station, whither, by-the-bye, I must not forget, Major Montrose had despatched a small party of invalid soldiers, whose red jackets were to be a certain safeguard against the enemy.

Bertram Hall's name stood for a great deal with the Gaikas, and the very look of British *roed batjes* (red jackets) daunted them in those days, when they were not "flush" in arms and ammunition.

Kilgarry and his brother officers had contrived to clear the drift, and return to the outpost, on the night of the first skirmish. When all was ready, the Laird marched cautiously to Fort B——, where a large force was concentrated, and where, in due time, Klipspringer's Rifles joined the Tortoises.

It fell to our lot, on our march, to burn that vagabond Matabela's village. We found it quite deserted; and a happy chance it was for our gallant burghers that Sandy and I were of their party, for the instant we sighted the kraal, what did Klipspringer himself do but ride straight up to a certain hut, with a lighted brand in his hand.

Fortunately, my chum and I had got mounted on two stray nags, which had fallen to our lot on a foray, so, after the leader we dashed, shouting, at the top of our voices, "The magazine! —the magazine! Stop him, for God's sake!"

We were only just in time; another moment would have blown us to atoms, for Captain Lane had always been deceived by Matabela into the notion that the large, well-thatched hut near the centre of his kraal was a store-house for corn! Sandy and I, as the reader remembers, knew better.

We were obliged to give up the project for that day, but returned next morning, provided with a slow-match, and had the satisfaction of viewing, at a safe distance, the whole of the hamlet in flames, and such an explosion from the magazine, as no doubt brought many a scout to the Wolf's Kloof and other hiding-places.

Among Klipspringer's riflemen were some lads even younger than ourselves, so that he was cautious about leading us too far into the dense bush. Sandy and I got our first reprimand from him on the occasion of our sally after the two nags, little dreaming their masters, not their

owners! were lying in ambush watching the effect of the stratagem; but he could not help laughing when the rascals got up only to find us out of reach of their assegais, and, on discovering our force, decamped without their karosses.

Then did not we shout, "Yiza, apa!—" "Come hither, vagabonds!" to which a distant voice impudently responded, "Ku naninake oku?— Well, and what then?"

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CHAPTER XX.

THE KOONAP PASS.

HAD I space to relate many incidents of this period of my life, I might weary the reader with a repetition of events familiarized to him by many histories of many Kafir wars. Among the last pages, however, of a record now in the possession of my aged relative, Mr. Nicholson, are to be found, as in the winding-up of a drama, so many names which have figured in the earlier scenes of my adventures, that they would be incomplete without a last glimpse of Matabela and his people.

Famine and defeat having—after a desperate attempt to “drive the white man to the sea”—brought all the refractory chiefs to the feet of the victorious British troops, with the exception of Matabela, who was said to be beyond reach of negotiations, we—that is, Klipspringer’s Rifles—in company with Kilgarry and his Tortoises—now, alas! much reduced in number—were one sultry

day wending our weary way through that well-known defile in the Albany district of South Africa, called the Koonap Pass. Here Matabela, who had evaded a squadron of colonial cavalry sent after him, suddenly surprised us by planting his warriors on the top of a mighty wall of rock, which flanks the Pass on one side; and thence pouring down such a rattling fire, coupled with a shower of assegais, that the oxen of the foremost wagon of the cavalcade fell dead; and, what was worse, several sick and wounded soldiers perished helplessly within the vehicle.

Thus outflanked, the strait was fearful. In front, the way was blocked up; on our right flowed the river, bounded by tall hills; on the cliffs to our left, and in the rear, swarmed Matabela's warriors, grown expert in musket practice, and pouring their fire upon us from every ledge and cranny.

The second wagon carried Sergeant Fanning, scarcely recovered from a severe wound, with his wife and child, and several married women, who had foolishly followed the division, with the sick and wounded. This second vehicle could neither move to the right or left.

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What with the yells of the Kafirs, and the shrieks of terrified baboons, mingled with the groans of prostrate men and oxen, and the clamour of frightened women, neither Major Montrose nor Captain Lane could make us understand for a time, that the first thing to do was to clear the dead oxen from the foremost wagon, while the troops under Kilgarry should engage the Kafirs in the rear; for the latter were now venturing down the rocks, among the bush and scrub bordering our route. Having given his directions, Major Montrose rode off.

We had succeeded in drawing Sergeant Fanning from the wagon, and he had placed his wife and child in the bush, the other women having fled forward, when Major Montrose's charger galloped by, with blood streaming down its saddle; at the same instant I saw Sandy fall. Out then rushed Fanning upon a miscreant taking aim at Klipspringer, and then the smoke thickened round me.

"The work is in the rear—the Major is down! Leave those fellows in front—Captain Lane is up still, blazing away with the light-bobs!" cried Jem Butler. "Follow me, Hardy; I see

a chap peeping over the edge of the cliff. I'll have him down, or my name won't deserve to be Jem Butler!"

Though my head and heart were full of Sandy, I followed Jem into a tuft of mimosas.

After a deliberate survey of the ground, he doffed his jacket. "Maybe," said he, "I'll cross the turf, to make sure of him; the scrub is low, so here goes her Majesty's scarlet; and take care of my belt, Hardy; thim's awkward things for the bush, so lend me a loan of your brown jacket, if you please." So saying, he cast his trappings away, and donned my burgher coat, with amazing despatch, ducking his head all the while. "For," said he, coolly, "I wouldn't like to be kilt before I brought that rascal down."

The rascal was Matabela himself; and so I whispered to Butler, raising my rifle instinctively at the same time.

"Thank ye," murmured Jem, "I'll have the shooting of him to myself, if you please. Be quiet, can't ye; sure the brute will be firing at your white shirt-sleeves."

I had a full view of the Chief from my hiding-place, as he stepped from a ledge to the shelter

of a euphorbia. He was plumed, painted, and glittering with glass beads.

There was a strange light in Jem's Irish eyes, as Matabela leaned forward to reconnoitre the ground beneath; a roguish twinkle under his dark lashes, as, without moving a muscle, save his trigger finger, he sent his bullet straight at Matabela's head, and brought him to the ground at our feet.

"Dead as a Dublin Bay herring," remarked Jem, flourishing his musket like a sprig of shillelah over the disfigured remains of the notorious Matabela.

A Kafir scout had seen the Chief fall, and set up such a wail as proved the signal for the enemy to retreat at speed. Jem's manœuvre had gained the day for us; but what the fight had cost us, we had yet to learn.

I was not to come off scot free. A flying assegai caught me in the hand while Jem was flourishing his musket; and in the act of drawing the missile out, I fainted away.

When I recovered my senses, the cliffs had thrown their long shadows over the Pass. I stood up, but felt so weak and giddy that I

sank back; and melancholy thoughts of Kilgarry and Sandy almost overpowered me.

Presently I crawled towards the open road. Troops and wagons had disappeared; the hush of sunset was on the Glen, and nothing stirred but the bats wheeling about me, on silent wings.

I lay with my ear to the ground for several minutes. By-and-bye, a low murmur caught my attention; and now that sound moved me indescribably.

It was the voice of a little child.

“All, all is hushed—until at length
The sobbing of a child
Breaks on the ear, till gaining strength,
More piteous seems and wild.
His little plaintive voice of pain
Doth on his mother call:
Sure on no living mother’s ear
Could it unheeded fall.”*

In that dim solitude, after the uproar and havoc of the day, its wail fell on the heart like mournful music.

* This pathetic incident has been beautifully described in a poem by Miss Sophy Moody.

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oad. It was a sorry sight indeed which met my
hush gaze, ere I drew close to the poor little thing.

rred All white and ghastly, with a gash in her
scent bosom, from which the blood was welling out,

eral I whispered her name, and told her Paul Hardy
ght was near.

me Then the terrified child threw himself upon
her breast and wailed out, "Mammy, mammy—
my mammy!" as if for help from the friend at
hand.

Alas! she was beyond help; but she spoke.

"I hear them coming," she said; "that is
Fanning's voice. I knew, if he was alive, he
would miss me and come."

Her dying senses, yet on the stretch, recog-
nised the loved tones before I did.

There was the crack of a wagon-whip in the
Pass, then the rumble of wheels, and beyond
swelled the war chorus of a Fingo phalanx.

Above these sounds rose the sharp scream of
Nip; and, ere long, through the gloom, I could
distinguish Juli on a wagon-box, driving his

oxen at speed, and Nip as fore-louper, urging on the beasts with frantic gestures.

The child's cry had subsided into a continuous moan of grief and dismay.

Its father's voice, as he drew nearer, roused it; its screams brought poor Fanning to the spot.

His dying wife opened her eyes, and saw him lift his little son in his arms.

“Her deathly cheek, with glad surprise,
Flushed up all bright and warm,”—

but only for an instant; she tried to raise her arms to him whom she had believed dead till his voice awoke her as from a dream, but the movement brought the blood in torrents from her wound, and then all was over.

Day dawned on nine ghastly bodies; and never shall I forget poor Fanning's look of woe, as his wife, scarcely twenty years old, and very beautiful in death, was borne past him by his comrades. The strong men, fine Grenadiers of the —th regiment, wept over their burden; and one would have relieved the invalid of his baby, but the boy clung to his father, kissing him, and crying “Mammy! mammy!” with such sorrow-

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ful wonderment in his blue eyes, that, weak as he was, Fanning would not resign him.

The officer commanding the party, after seeking in vain for Major Montrose's body, took his men to that part of the defile whence the charger had come galloping past us, and throwing his men into extended order, proceeded to search nearer the river, where some Kafirs had been observed to make a stand in the rear.

I was anxious to accompany him, but wished first to make certain that Sandy had escaped, for he was, thank God, not among the wounded or the dead. Burghers and soldiers having, after Matabela's fall, pursued his warriors and separated on the march to the Koonap post, no one was certain of my comrade's fate, though Captain Lane "was well and hearty."

Conceive my joy, then, on seeing him riding his stout *skimmel*,* side by side with Klipspringer himself, at the head of the Fingoes, whose Chief had fallen in their encounter with Matabela's flying warriors. The Fingoes had halted till

* The roan horse of the Cape, famed for its strength and hardiness.

daylight, when Klipspringer brought them on to help, if needful, while his burghers rested on their arms, and kept the head of the Pass.

The lad flung himself off his horse with a shout when he saw me; Klipspringer just ascertained that I was wounded, inquired if Major Montrose had reappeared, and galloped back with all speed.

As for Sandy, he clasped me round the waist, and with tears falling over his dear, sun-tanned face, he exclaimed—"Eh, Paul, Paul! it's greetin' for joy. What gar'd ye leave me in the din? Gin ye had died, what wad hae become o' me, and I could na thole to tell your mither!" Then, half-ashamed of this burst before the impenetrable Fingoes, he drew me into the bush, and, though scorning to weep in good earnest, manifested by his gestures and hysterical attempts at laughter, the joy with which he welcomed me as from the dead.

I began to grow dizzy again with excitement and pain, when I heard Klipspringer calling for me. He had hastened back for the surgeon of the troops, who now dressed my hand, and recommended my returning to the Koonap post;

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but my friends were going in search of Kilgarry, and I could not rest while they were on such an errand.

My comrade and I sat down for a few minutes together till the troops and Fingoes had entered the bush, intending to follow as soon as I had partaken of a biscuit, and a draught of water slightly seasoned from Klipspringer's pocket-pistol; when, on glancing towards a hill beyond the river, we descried what was evidently a flag of truce hoisted from a clump of bush. We called to Captain Lane, whose horse was taking a refreshing roll on the turf, and he examined the object through his glass.

It was a white handkerchief at the point of an assegai. Seizing our rifles, we hurried after the troops, taking care, by the way, to post a guard with the wagon, under which Juli and Nip lay flat on their faces and sound asleep. To do them justice, they had manifested great satisfaction at seeing me alive, and then celebrated the event by feasting on a leg of mutton, hung at the back of the vehicle—a "stand by" of Captain Lane's, but not likely to keep under such circumstances. Juli was perfectly honest

in the house, but in the field—"Oh! the Bass and he were brothers."

We easily traced the spoor of Kilgarry's charger to the border of the rapid stream that divided the pass from a range of green hills, from one of which floated the mysterious flag of truce. The horse had evidently forded the drift and returned—but where had he left his gallant master?

By this time the officer in command had joined us with a remnant of the light company. Under Klipspringer's directions, we prepared to cross the stream Kafir fashion, *i.e.*, by placing heavy stones on our heads to steady our steps; for, though fordable, the river was rapid. We then climbed the hill in skirmishing order, and still keeping the flag in sight, extended ourselves till we formed a semicircle facing the coppice.

Jem Butler, a volunteer from Grenadiers to light-bobs, had acquired a wonderful eye for spoor, and had no sooner pressed the heather than he cried out, "There's a red jacket in the bush, and, by St. Patrick! a pair of epaulettes."

He led the way, we scrambling after, and sure

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enough there was a red uniform and a pair of epaulettes glinting in the sun.

But the wearer of these articles was our old friend, Tois.

"He is dead," said the officer commanding the Tortoises; "and this is Major Montrose's coat."

"Only dead drunk, sir," observed a corporal, lifting Tois's arm, which dropped back heavy as lead on the sward.

"By the powers!" said Jem, leaning over the Kafir, and examining him closely, "I wish I had half his complaint! Sure enough it's only drunk he is."

Close beside him lay Major Montrose's silver flask, empty.

"Now what can that flag mean?" asked the officer, looking up at the coppice.

"We had better see, sir," replied the corporal; "it may only be a decoy, and yet that solitary clump of bush would not shelter any body of men."

We advanced cautiously, and in extended order, and when we got in front of the bower, for such it was, we saw the flag lowered; the

next moment a woman stepped forward and waved it.

In spite of her leather petticoat, and wasted, naked shoulders, Sandy and I recognised Sanna at once, and into the bower we dashed.

In a dim corner of it lay something shrouded in a kaross, but there was not light enough to determine what it was. I struck aside a bough, and the sun streamed in, disclosing the outline of a human form. I raised the mantle; a head turned from me and bandaged with a *douk*, met my view. The young officer pulled the kaross aside, and we saw a fine English linen shirt; the sleeve of the right arm was ripped up, and lo! there was the well-known heraldic device of the Montroses, with its motto—*Perseverantia Victor*.

Klipspringer put his hand on the Laird's heart.

"There is life," he said.

Sandy knelt down and laid his ear close to Kilgarry.

"He breathes," said the boy.

I felt the passive hand; it was warm but not feverish.

By-and-bye the Laird stirred. I ran to the

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ward and opening of the bower. "All right, men," I
d wasted, whispered to the anxious soldiers resting on
d Sanna their arms outside. "All right, I believe and
hope: some one go for the doctor."

All volunteered, but Jem Butler was down
the hill and over the drift "head over heels and
tumble go lucky," as one of the light-bobs said,
in no time.

Limited space compels me to forego many
details of the incident here related. Major
Montrose had been saved by his horse
carrying him over the stream after he was
wounded, fortunately, below the temple, barely
sparing the right eye. As soon as his rider fell
from the saddle into a fragrant bed of heather,
the poor animal, doubtless panic-stricken at the
uproar in the Pass, had recrossed the drift,
dashed back to the wagons, and so forward;
finally, he was recaptured from one of Matabela's
flying warriors by one of the active Fingoes.

After all, Sanna and Tois had been somewhat
humanized by associating with British colonists;
for though they had deserted their masters at
Matabela's commands, they had quitted his
ranks at the first opportunity, and retreated

to the hill, where we found them, and where, most happily, Kilgarry had fallen into their hands.

I should not like to say that Sanna's surgery, though more simple, was quite as skilful as the young assistant surgeon's would have been, but certain it is that when Major Montrose recognised us, he insisted on remaining under the care of his sable nurse, and sent for his tent and camp equipage, beside which Klipspringer outspanned his wagon. Here we established our party, despatching letters by Juli and Nip to our dear friends, who, in reply, assured us that nothing except a distant war-cry, or the tramp of Fingo guards round their settlements, had disturbed their repose. The Halls had held their own in Glen Lion, and the Thatched House had been the head-quarters of the gallant Bertram Volunteers during the war; while the Fingoes, stimulated by the promise of permission to retain all the cattle they took, kept such vigilant guard as sufficed to hold the road between Llanina and Klipspringer's. Latterly, Juli and Nip had been able to conduct the wagons to and fro, between the Glen and the

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where, to their surgery, as the been, but a recog- under the his tent springer ablished and Nip ured us , or the elements, had held ed House ant Ber- while the ermission pt such the road Latterly, duct the and the

towns; and it was on an expedition such as this that, with their trusty escort, they had come upon the spoor of troops, near the Koonap, caught and dispersed Matabela's flying band, and fallen in at last with "the Master," and his Rifles.

Neither Glen Lion nor Klipspringer's had been without the Gospel since the war began. My mother's peaceful vocation had been uninterrupted; my letters had duly reached her, spite of flying scouts and rising rivers; and before we parted from Major Montrose, Jack and Marion wrote my chum a note apiece, with a long history in few words, not forgetting sundry anecdotes of pigs, chickens, pet tortoises, chameleons, a pair of guinea fowls, captured by Nip, and last, though not least, of Dairymaid. The steinbok was dead, but a meer-cat, the more intelligent animal of the two, supplied its place.

My mother said she would not be sanguine till she saw us. I, on my part, was overjoyed to find she had been more fortunate than I in receiving intelligence.

Some colonists had, as they chose to term it, been less "lucky" than our friends. Marcus

Bradley, who had counted on making half a guinea a day by each of his five span of wagon oxen, and who "did not care how long the fighting lasted," was in perpetual warfare with the Gaikas, who, when they did not find as much cattle as they wanted, set fire to his outbuildings, and at last levelled his whole homestead with the ground. Other colonists, as well as he, had counted on making "a lot of money" by trek oxen, and in the end lost more than they gained by the war. Marcus's wife and young baby perished in the blazing house, and another speculator's two sons fell in a skirmish, and their father had to pay for labour ever afterwards.

Old Vanderhout retreated to Llanina, with his wife and daughters, but sent his lads, like a trusty Dutch boer as he was, to fight for a government he was always abusing.

Who should turn up one day, when we were eating our *carbonatje* in Sanna's bower, still distinguished by a white handkerchief of Major Montrose's, hoisted at the point of an assegai, but Master Seo. He was a lad of great importance now—though he crawled to the tent door, naked and thin, and protesting he was "the

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white man's dog"—for he was, as the reader will remember, heir to his father's possessions. He told us his mother was in the bush, waiting till "the confusion" in the land was over. Kilgarry sent for her, and as soon as the Governor came over the Fish River and made peace with "his children," the young scamp kissed hands, and marched off with a present, promising to be a good boy as long as he lived; which promise was not a rash one, because it was made to be broken.

Tois, when he recovered his drunken fit, had the impudence to declare that he did not know who had clothed him in the scarlet coatee and epaulettes. Sanna's story was, that they had taken Kilgarry for dead, which was probably true; that they had carried him off to the copice, and that on Tois stripping the body, she had discovered life in it, and by dressing the wound with herbs, and applying other remedies at hand, had succeeded in restoring him to consciousness. Tois, meanwhile, had secured the pocket-pistol, and drained it to the bottom. Major Montrose permitted him to retain the coat, Jem Butler assuring Tois that "it fitted

him like a sentry-box ;" which remark Tois took as a compliment, and, in answer, grinned his approval.

The sequel to this period of our story is, that when Major Montröse married the Governor's daughter, he took Sanna and Tois into his household service ; and though the latter never could be brought to work, and Sanna loved sitting at the garden-gate with a pet meer-cat, better than sewing in Mrs. Montrose's dressing-room, Kilgarry and his wife never forgot the debt they owed the kindly Kafir woman. She came to England with them eventually, but without Tois, and was so nearly frightened to death by her first journey on a railway, that her master sent her home as soon as he could, deputing Bertram Hall to buy a patch of good land near Klipspringer's, where she and Tois might "sit in the sun and eat honey" for the rest of their days.

Klipspringer's Rifles were welcomed at the Thatched House by a dinner, at the head of which sat the Patriarch, Mr. Hall, of Llanina ; on his right hand Major Montrose, and on his left another officer of the Tortoises. His wife,

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and all his sons and daughters, married and single, were there; so was my mother, seated between Sandy and me, for Sandy was "unto her as a son." Jack was croupier of a juvenile party in the Mission garden; after the great dinner, my comrade and I joined them; Sandy borrowed the pipes of a tall Highlander of the Tortoises, and set up such a lilt outside the palisades as brought the little ones forth to dance under the trees, while, seated on the ground in a semicircle, the grave Fingoes smoked their wooden tubes in silence, wondering at the boy's skill, for Sandy managed his instrument right well.

Juli and Nip did not comport themselves quite as well as usual that evening, for the former fell asleep over his fiddle, and Nip's legs were the tipsiest ever seen. I would have whipped him next day, but my mother begged him off and preached to him instead. Her mistaken kindness was the cause of sundry chastisements afterwards, which the first one might have saved.

Before dusk each Burgher "saddled up" to trek homewards, some to a distance, some to the

towns; and next morning, after breakfast, the Glen Lion party left us—a long cavalcade, reminding us of Jacob and his wagons, his sons and their wives, and his little ones. Some flocks, lately purchased from the Burghers, whose war prizes they were, followed in their wake, and raised a cloud of dust that soon shut them from our sight. How quiet the settlement looked!

“Now lads,” said Klipspringer, who had resumed his moleskin jacket and broad-brimmed hat; “we must set to work in earnest. Go in and wish Major Montrose good-bye for the present; we shall keep him here for a day or two, but you must come to the store. The Thatched House has thriven well already, and I must be off to Graham’s Town and invest my money. You have some fine arrears of pay due, and one of you may come and lay it out if you will, for it is time to begin talking of *shares*.”

Now, indeed, we felt that we were men. Though yet barely twenty, we had had our turn of labour and its profits, of war and its glories, and now peace smiled on the prospect.

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dents connected with my first sight of him, and the influence his motto had had upon my mind from the first moment I knew it belonged to the brave oarsman of the Red gig.

He shook hands with my comrade and myself, and said he hoped to meet us some day in Scotland ; this was not the time to trouble him with my hopes about the Brae farm, so I said nothing then on the subject. The Laird, my comrade and I, were reunited unexpectedly within the year, when we accompanied Klip-springer on a hunting trek beyond the Orange River.

That *was* an expedition !

Never shall I forget the emotions that thrilled to my very soul as I first beheld the paths printed with the feet of elephants. Through thorny forests we penetrated, which we could not have entered but for these pioneers. The first notice we had of their vicinity was the trumpet-note uttered by the great bull elephant one night, marching at the head of the van. At this stirring signal, Sandy and I crept to the rocks overhanging a wide and rapid stream ; and lo ! there moved the leader on the opposite

ridge, the younger elephants and females following him in single file.

Next day we saw these tremendous creatures scattered in clumps about a wooded valley, browsing calmly on the spek boom (*postulacaria afra*) and mimosa bushes. They were in separate families, the different sizes of the young ones exhibiting the magnitude of the elder in the most striking manner.

But I have not space to relate the wonders of the wilderness. How we saw the gnoos disporting, unconscious of the lions waiting for their prey. How Juli was pursued to a tree by a lion, and had to sit there twenty-four hours before the creature gave him a chance of escaping, and would not have done so then, but for the thirst the beast could no longer resist. How we saw a large black lioness spring on a lovely giraffe; and how the latter fled with the awful burden on her back, till both dropping together exhausted, fell an easy prey to our rifles. How the dogs sometimes fought with the beasts, muzzle to muzzle. How one day we came up with such a herd of rhinoceroses as added immensely to the value of our store of skins. And how at last we captured a baboon called



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JULI AND LION.

the Chacman, and brought him home and tamed him, till he became so saucy that he *would* ride the dogs, whether they would or no, and got tipsy, till I cured him by setting fire to a plate of brandy under his very nose! to the intense delight of Nip, to whom I hope it was, as well as the whippings, "a caution." And how, when we returned to Graham's Town, Sandy and I realized by our share of the wagon's contents, two hundred pounds apiece!

But fortune in South Africa does not depend solely on hunting expeditions. The sale of our goods brought us additional work. The storehouse was again enlarged; we became in a position to purchase a share in the Thatched House; and as soon as I was one-and-twenty, I was Laird of the Lindens, where Jem Butler—who was a working Irishman, and who improved his condition immensely by marrying a respectable active English maid-servant—was, in after days, if not my mother's Factor, her Factotum. Jem got a great deal of praise from the authorities for his cool conduct in the Koonap Pass; but it was Klipspringer's Rifles who subscribed to purchase his discharge.

And here let me add that Nip served my

mother faithfully, and was in due time baptized by the name of John, Jack standing godfather. Juli followed his example; and my mother tells me they are both sincere Christians. I hope so; and am sure my mother heartily believes it!

At five-and-twenty I returned to Scotland, but did not then buy the Brae farm, though my uncle was dead, my aunt grown an old crone, in a dirtier *mutch* than ever, my cousins working under another Factor, and nothing cheery about it but—Cousin Effie!

We sat together on the knowe one soft autumn evening, with the glow of sunset kindling the landscape into rainbow tints that varied every instant. A descendant of Brin's rested at our feet; a lamb lay in Effie's lap. Hers was a face that alters little with years; round and fair, and dimpled, and with sunny curls encircling it, like Marion's. Tears were in her eyes at thoughts of our parting, for I had made all my purchases at Glasgow, and Sandy was waiting for me on the Gairloch side, with some sheep from Roseneath, waiting for shipment on board the "Adventurer"—Martin, owner.

But Cousin Effie and I did not part! we have never parted since; and here we are at the

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Brue farm this year of grace, 1857. We have
finished up the old place, but the ancient clock
stands at the head of the stairs, and the napery
chest is well stocked, and the spacious hall is
adorned with many spoils from our hunting ex-
peditions; for now I am Laird here.

Effie sits by me as I write. The table before
us is spread with specimens of South African
treasure, animal, mineral, and vegetable; ivory,
and copper, and coal; spars from the Orange
River, cotton and arrow-root; silk from our
mulberry-trees, and hundreds of botanical won-
ders, for the Members of the Institution who
are in correspondence with Mr. Staunton, and at
whose request and expense we shall return to
Kafirland for a time. By we, I mean my Effie
and myself, Sandy and Marion: the two latter
will, please God, be domiciled some day on that
pretty bit of fairyland, as we were wont in our
boyhood to call a certain patch of country
between the hills on the Kilgarry estate. Mr.
Staunton will be a far more experienced and
intelligent correspondent with the aforesaid
Institution than I could ever be; and I shall have
achieved something in having made him known
where just such a man is needed.

If my mother lives, she, too, may return, but only for a visit. Nowadays, settlers from Kafir-land *can* pay visits to their mother country. These bitter frosts and dark November days of our own dear isle, which have their delights for many, do not suit my mother's delicate frame. Jack, too, hath need of her; and so have many hundreds of pupils, who love the gentle creature as a mother, who are grown up in the settlement, of which the Lindens is one of the greatest ornaments—a circumstance which does not prevent it from being a thriving little farm.

The good Patriarch and his wife died the same day. Mrs. Hall's last words, when she heard of her bereavement, were—"It is well;" and the tablet to their memory in the chapel bears under their names only this simple inscription.

The fine property of Llanina was duly apportioned among their numerous sons and daughters; Sep and Octavius taking possession of the mansion, which bears to this day the same character for hospitality that it did when the stalwart men and comely women played on the *stoep* as little children.

The Stauntons and Welsfords still flourish in Glen Lion. The Bertram Halls and Laner

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have made fortunes, which they mean to spend in the colony; and Fanny Dean has adopted Serjeant Fanning's son—whether she may eventually marry and nurse the invalided soldier is not for me to say.

It was my intention, originally, to have closed my narrative with the last incidents of my boyish adventures; but in Kafirland boys become men in a day, and adventures thicken around them hourly, as they march along the great highway of life. I felt, then, that my work would be incomplete without the war episode, in which I was engaged. But here I take leave to remark, that—for every reason familiar to a good man—I desire to add no more such records to my pages; in which, by the way, if the reader discovers inconsistencies, he must be pleased to remember, that the work has been compiled or collated—I am not learned in literary technicalities—at one time from a boy's pencilled note-book, at another from the journal in Mr. Nicholson's hands—to descend to his daughter by his will—and lastly, from scraps dotted down under the Lindens, or at the idle outspan, or, at a much later date, on board ship.

Here are a few words from the last-named

memoranda. "Ever must I thank God for that meeting of my comrade and myself with kind Peter Lane, which led to a life of honest industry and profit. Try as we may to work out the heavy debt of gratitude we owe him, the good Trader still seeks opportunities of benefiting us; so we are fain to be content with the axiom, beautifully expressed by a poet, whose name I forget, that 'it is good to be obliged to those we love.'"

In spite of sundry Kafir wars, and albeit within the last ten years many a settler's homestead has been laid low, Glen Lion and Klip-springer's—or Peterborough, as that station and the town growing round it are now designated—have been proof against the battle and the brand; for the idle Savage, as he looks down on the valley smiling with corn, dares not approach the well-guarded homestead; nor, in truth, does it present the strong temptations to him that those settlements do where the land lies fallow and cattle swarm upon the hills.

As in the case of the Irish blight and famine, God has chosen his own means of exhausting

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the resources of the once obstinate and indomitable Kafirs. Wonderful news reaches us of the infatuation of these poor heathens, in listening to the voice of a false prophet.* The slaughter of their cattle, and the destruction of their grain by their own hands, is only another proof of the mysterious means by which God works His own ends. The way is open at last in Kafirland; its vast resources and lovely climate invite the emigrant and his family from the crowded streets and noisome lanes of our over-populated towns; and many a stalwart Englishman, now moaning out his doleful ditty of "We've got no work to do," may, on applying at the proper source, step into a land of brighter prospects; where, though there be storms such as I have described, the pestilence walketh not by noon-day, neither flieth the arrow as it used to do; there, by God's providence and the laws of Nature, man may live on to a patriarchal age, untouched by fever or consumption, endemic or epidemic; and there, in due time, by the force

* A descendant, no doubt, of that wicked old Leah's, who, after all her services to Matabela, was turned out by him, to die like a dog in the bush.

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of example, the benefits of a co-interest in commercial transactions, and with the blessing of Almighty God on British enterprise and courage, the white man and his dark brother shall, side by side, turn the weapons of war into implements of industry and labour for good in the same field, and for the honour of the same banner.

Perseverantia Victor.

THE END.

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