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Our Experiences in Ngami-land.

(By Mrs. Wookey.)

Lake Ngami was discovered by Livingstone in 1849, and is situated 450 miles from Khama's Town or Palapye, from which place we make our final start for the North-West. Before leaving there we overhauled all our stores to make sure that we had not forgotten any necessaries. For people who are going so far from civilization must be careful to have everything with them that they may require both in sickness and in health. As a big addition to our load, we had to take all our breadstuffs, as well as groceries, etc., for a year and a half; for there would be none to be bought after leaving Palapye.

I found it a very good plan before starting on a journey to make a number of plain plum-puddings, allowing one for each

child exclaimed, 'Mother, what is that?' and there, with its head up ready to spring, was a snake coiled round a gun which was hanging close to where the child was sitting. We stopped the waggon, and the children and I got out, and then my husband killed it.

We saw a good many antelopes, and now and then one was shot, which provided us with meat for a few days. But the natives will eat the flesh of almost anything except crocodile. Monkeys are eaten readily. When outspanned for the night we often heard the hippopotami in the river near by, or the howling of a hyena.

Our progress was often very slow on account of the deep, heavy sand. Then at other times the road would come too close to the edge of the river, and all the men would have to go to the front with axes to chop a new road through the bush, and often up steep banks.

weariness resulting from a long, hard waggon journey can understand what my feelings were to be at the end of it, and to lie down at home. I, with my sister, at once set to work to get our little house in to order.

We had two rooms and a pantry and kitchen, and our waggon made an additional room. The house had a verandah, where a short service was held each morning which included a kind of class.

Whilst living in the south of Bechuana-land, I always had a good number of girls living with us, being trained to work in English ways; but I had now to take to boys, for the girls had no taste for anything so tame as living and learning in a missionary house.

The boys were very raw, indeed, but with good superintendence they soon become useful, although not perhaps very efficient, helpers. One day I found a boy scrubbing the kitchen table with the stove brush. Life can never be monotonous with such aids to help. Missionary work in such a place is of a very primitive kind.

I was called 'Mother' by all in our little settlement. They came to me with a good many of their needs. A bit of soap for one, needle and cotton for another, patch for mending a shirt for another, scissors for cutting their hair, etc. Some of them were very earnest in learning to read, and when any of them had mastered the rudiments, they were promoted to reading at our daily service, at which we read in turns.

A good many Bushmen lived in the neighborhood of our house, and drew water from the same wells as we did. They are a very interesting people. They neither sow nor reap. They live on berries and roots, and any animals which they can kill, or on the leavings of lions and tigers. They are very thin, with arms and legs like sticks, and have very small foreheads. Their stomachs are very large, accounted for by the indigestible food they often eat, as well as by the huge quantities they can consume, alternating with periods of great hunger.

The firing of a gun in the early morning generally brought some of them to our house to see if any game had been shot, in hopes of getting a bit of meat, and they were not often disappointed. Leopards (African tigers) troubled us a good deal, and my husband shot several. One evening, after the moon had gone down, one came and killed some goats and a number of fowls. He kept us awake with his depredations most of the night. He came again the next night and took possession of the place. After some hours, as I stood by my husband's side at the door, we saw him jump a fence and stand in front of us. His eyes glared in the light of the bull's-eye lantern which my husband held, and by the light of which he shot and disabled him. Next morning he was followed and despatched and brought and laid at the front of the house with rejoicing. His flesh was cooked and enjoyed by boys and dogs, and though the smell of the cooking was very good, I could not bring myself to taste it.

I had a little class of learners; some learning to read and write, and others to read and sew. Sewing they learn quickly.



MRS. WOOKEY'S HOUSE AT PALAPYE.

Sunday; and to ensure their keeping I tied them up in the waggon tent, and as the Sundays came round they were cut down one by one.

The journey from Palapye to the lake occupied us two months. The first half of the way was through a corner of the Kalahari desert, where we oftentimes had difficulty in getting water for our oxen, and where we might have easily come to grief ourselves if we had not been particular to replenish our tank and water-barrels at every opportunity, and we had to exercise great economy in the use of the precious fluid. Only people who have been in such a country can understand the joy when a river bursts into sight.

After reaching the Botle River we had no more anxiety about water, for we travelled the rest of the journey along its banks.

Some bits of river scenery are beautiful, and very lovely water-lilies float on its surface. The roots of the lilies are pulled up and used as food by the natives.

But you dare not wander far from the waggon an account of lions, tigers, etc. Snakes, too, of course abound. One afternoon, as we were riding along, our youngest

If possible, our Sunday camp was made under the shade of a big tree, and there we held services, inviting any people in the vicinity to join us. Help in the way of doctoring was often given, too, at such times.

The Makoba make their villages on the margin of the river, or on mounds in the marshes, where they are often hidden by the reeds, so that you may be close to a village and yet not know it. Their houses are made of reed, and are often very wet inside, and the consequence is a great deal of malarial fever.

We could sometimes buy maize, native corn, pumpkins, melons, etc., with beads or bright-colored handkerchiefs. They have canoes, and one day we were taken a little trip by the owner of one, at the end of which was a large hole stopped up with a sod.

Like all other natives in Africa, the Makoba are very fond of tobacco, which they grow; and the tobacco patch is always very carefully tended.

We were very glad when we reached the lake. Twenty miles from the south of it, at the Kgwebe hills, my husband had built a house and only those who know the