

when the world is so full of good, noble women, though mistakes are made sometimes. I have seen men on their wedding-day think they were annexing something more valuable than the Klondike, who have found it out—they got only an album and a fashion-plate, with a mother-in-law thrown in. If any should find himself in such unfortunate circumstances, I have no advice to give him, only, "Whistle to keep your courage up, and put into practice what the old lady said."—She said, "She had a great deal of trouble in her time, but she had always been consoled by that beautiful passage of Scripture, 'Gird and bear it.'—Now, to return to women's duty—well, perhaps, after all, I better leave that for one of the sex, for it is never good policy to meddle too much in a woman's business. SCOTTIE.

Glengarry Co., Ont.

[This is interesting. Are there not some more ideas on the subject? May we ask, however, as a favor, that future contributors will be kind enough to omit Scriptural references or quotations.—Ed.]

Some Old Time Echoes.

ON TREK IN THE TRANSVAAL.
VI.

At Escourt Still.

That pole did take another three days to get itself adjusted before we could start for Colenzo, but at last we were ready for our next move on. My entry of June 10th thus mentions the fact:

"The wagon actually ready for our start at last! This seemed too good to be true, and our new friends had quite the air of breaking it to us gently, lest the exhilaration of such hopeful news might act injuriously." Then follows a post-cart incident—the post-cart of old South African days being a time-honored institution (if anything movable could be called an institution). Without the post-cart there would have been no letters, no meagre supply of newspapers, and except for those who could purchase their own wagon and outfit, and employ their own drivers, no means of personal communication with friends at a distance. To travel by post-cart almost means taking your life in your hands, as perhaps the following little snapshots taken just before we left Escourt may serve to show:

"1 p. m.—The post-cart has just come in with its jaded and battered-looking passengers, who were almost shot out at the door. They all have some pet bruise or chafe, or some angle of their person to guard from chance contact. The cook, at the sound of the driver's horn, rushes frantically at the sauce-pans, tears off their lids, and dishes up their steaming contents. Chairs are dragged hurriedly up to the table, our morning's calm is broken by the clatter of crockery, the rattle of knives and forks, and a racket of tongues, as the news is hastily exchanged in gasps between the mouthfuls which the poor things hastily swallow with quite a hunted air."

"There is no peace for the wicked," I heard one say; one, too, whose features gave promise of a power of patient waiting, which I would have bought off him at any price just then. He heard the horn of the post-cart as it drew up to the door, and knowing he should not have time to finish his bit of rather stodgy plum-duff, which, as everyone knows it is only eatable hot, he quietly pocketed it for a future occasion.

Our landlord apologized for some little mischance by telling me that his wife was away at the diamond-fields. She had been thrown out of the post-cart on her way up to them, and had broken her leg or her arm, I am not sure which. (This same individual actually met with a similar accident on her return journey, and whichever limb she did not break going up she contrived to break coming down. This I have been told as a fact since, and could easily believe it.) However slow-going everything else may be in South Africa, the post-cart is the one exception, I remark, as a few moments after it has left the hotel it appears on the opposite side of the river it has dashed through, and tears up the hill on the road to its next stage, Colenzo.

Its advent and its exodus has done me a world of good. It has been as reviving as a sniff of pungent smelling-salts, or a breeze on a stagnant, sultry day, a state of mind which may serve me in good stead presently.

It was on the morning of the 11th of June, after a really restful night at Colenzo, that we took our first out-door meal by the drift (or river) beyond Blue Krantz.

THE FOOT OF THE DRACHENSBERG.

"This is the point which separates Natal from the Orange Free State. When we reached it after nightfall we were very tired, very cold, and very stiff about the joints. Our horses had continued their acrobatic performances at every fresh start, and our starts were many. The loan of two well-trained horses by a Colenzo friend, which led off gallantly when the others were, as usual, restive and intractable, had saved us from many a mishap. . . . We have crossed at least twenty-two spruets, wet and dry. Under the head of spruets, understand the bed of a river or its tributary, a mountain course, or almost any track made by water forcing its way across the road. Sometimes the descent into these spruets is after a very break-neck, tumble-downstairs fashion, huge blocks of stone, great holes, mud-pits, and such like having to be encountered, before you plunge into the central hole, from which you get out sometimes, and sometimes you don't, until you are almost dug out, with your teeth set on edge by the rasping of the wheel-tires against the stones, with your ears deafened by the shouts of your men, "hup! hup! ah, now! ah, now!" and the cracking of the whip with the sound as of a gun fired off close by, while your eyes "see stars," as eyes will, when the head which owns them seems only held by a thread, as it were, in its usual place, for it has been treated like a football the while."

THE DRACHENSBERG OR DRAGON'S MOUNTAIN.

The very name sounds like a fairy tale. I seem here to be "living out" one of two of those which memory brings back to me from my childhood's store, as we wend our way up that grand old frontier of nature's piling. As we drew up at the "hostelry," cramped, cold, and tired, we counted upon rest and food speedily, but this was what greeted us: The door opened at once into a large, mud-floored room, with open rafters to the ceiling, from which all manner of things were suspended, settles around the room, and a long table in the middle. A youth, Dutch really, but to all outward appearance a Yankee lad, or an Old London "gamin," of the worst type, lounged upon the settle, with a pipe in his mouth, spitting ad libitum, and with a skill worthy of his Yankee prototype. He never rose until pressed to go and see if we could be accommodated, and then he lazily roused himself. "Yes," he ascertained, "the missus could have that room," pointing with a thumb to a door on the right; and "he," meaning Mr. G., that to the left. He'd "see if we could have tea." At last a maid, who might have been own sister to the "maiden all forlorn" in the story of the "House that Jack Built," brought us some lukewarm, undrawn tea, bad butter, bad eggs, and some bread. This unsavory meal cost us 2s. 6d. a head. Our bedroom was indescribably dirty. The mud floors we had had hitherto had been decently covered, our window panes clear and bright, woodwork polished, and bedding clean. Here cobwebs obscured the light; the windows could hardly have been opened for months; and as the three beds had probably frequently held double their number of occupants, the concentrated essence of stuffiness is beyond my power of description.

"There was a delay in obtaining the necessary oxen for the ascent of the Drachensberg, so we did not start until 11 p. m. of the 12th. A and I walked a good part of the way, but sheer weariness drove me at last into the wagon. We were now 175 miles from Durban. Our boys, with the horses, awaited us upon the top of the mountain. They and a band of Kaffir road-makers presented, as we approached them, a grotesque appearance from atmospheric causes. The Kaffirs, standing to gaze at us, leaning on their picks, looked gigan-

tic; and, being immovable from curiosity, seemed more like huge firs or poplars than human beings. Once over the Drachensberg we were in the Free State; out of a dense mist into a steady rain. Oh! the misery of it, boxed up in a little curtained wagon, with no space for one's legs. * * * We are struck with the better roads here, and the flatter surface we have to pass over, the stones being taken out where not wanted, and put where they are, or piled ready for removal.

Harrismith, 12th.—We reached this at 7.30 p. m. last evening, lighted by a bright moon, soon after paying our first "toll," a mile from the town. This toll, under Orange Free State laws, is a local arrangement, and makes of a bad bit of ground, a track fairly good.

Harrismith is quite an important little town, with a good Dutch church. The streets are laid out well, of good width, and drained after the simple Dutch fashion, by a dyke on either side to let the water escape.

The site of an English church is chosen and its foundations laid. We had service in the temporary building, with its mud floor and roughly-constructed benches. The roof, made of plates of zinc, and unboarded, gave us delightful peeps of a brilliantly blue sky overhead, but no one finds fault with gaps and air holes in this country, until the rainy season, when, of course, they have their inconveniences.

I have often wondered if the curious optical illusion from atmospheric or other causes with which we met from time to time in our long trek, had not something to do with the miscalculations made by our British troops in the beginning, anyway, of the Boer war? Here is an instance:

Flat as Harrismith is, there faces our hotel a high mountain, one of the many table-like formations of the country. Height, sizes and distances are very deceptive. There being a spare hour before dinner, I remarked casually, "I should like to stroll up that hill; I suppose I could do so in the time." This created much amusement. I was told that it would take me quite a day, and that I should probably lose myself, even if I had strength to undertake the climb at all. The others started off once, but returned worn out and weary, after a hopeless search for some Bushman caves, of which they had heard, as containing curious inscriptions, carvings, and relics of these daring little people, whose hands, small as they were, seem to have been against every man, as every man's hand was against them. Irritating as gnat-bites, one can fancy their attacks, as they darted their poisoned arrows from their tiny hiding-places, often dealing death from behind a stone barely large enough to conceal a good-sized frog, or out of a hole into which a hedge-hog could barely creep! The South African native is so lithe and agile that, be he large or small, he has a power of compression which requires to be seen to be believed.

In my next instalment I shall hope to introduce another Good Samaritan.

H. A. B.

To be continued.

Alone.

(An Irish Mother's Lament.)

The mist is creepin' up the hill, the gloom is stealin' down;
I look into the valley, where the bog lies brown;
I look and look along the path that's windin' to the door,
But there's n'er a one o' mine comin', n'er a one more!

Oh I mind when they were babes and I held them to my breast,
I mind the song I sang when I'd be hushin' them to rest,
I mind me well the day I stood and watched them from the shore,
And n'er a one comes back to me, n'er a one more!

Is it you, oh my children, I hear cryin' in the night?
Is it you callin', callin', when the dawn is gleaming white?
Is it you—or the weary wind that sighs around the door—
For there's n'er a one near me now, n'er a one more!—P. P.'s Weekly.

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Eating Butter and Honey

The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, when He knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.—Isa. vii.: 14, 15 (R.V.).

In childhood I used to wonder over that text every time Christmas came round, though I never asked anyone what it meant. In the old and familiar Bible version, it seemed as though the effect of eating butter and honey was that the Messiah should know how to refuse evil and choose good, and I see that the old rendering is given in the margin of the R. V., so perhaps it works both ways. One who has eaten the good things which God provides will turn away from evil and instinctively reach out after good; and one who, from a strong sense of duty, refuses evil and chooses good, will be strengthened and gladdened by the riches and sweetness provided by the Father for His own children.

We are given free-will and called to turn our backs on evil—like our Leader—and choose good. The evil may seem profitable and delightful, and the good may seem poor and tasteless; but the world is governed by a just Judge, and those who choose evil soon find that life has lost its flavor, while those who choose good find sweetness hidden even in the most bitter cup. The man who can really know from glad experience the truth of the Shepherd Psalm, is the man who has followed the Good Shepherd trustfully, even when He led straight through the deep darkness, which seemed from the outsider's point of view like the valley of death. It is only a dark shadow, soon passed through, and one who keeps close to the Shepherd hardly knows the meaning of fear. The green pastures and still waters are always provided when a soul really needs to be restored, the table is spread by the Shepherd in the face of enemies who are helpless to disturb the peace of His sheep. Looking back, it is plainly evident that all through life—"goodness and mercy" supply all needed food and happiness for those who follow the example of their Leader. Even in the most desert-like days of life, He tenderly anoints their weary heads with the oil of gladness, and holds a cup of refreshment to their thirsty lips.

Let us follow the example of Him of Whom the prophet said: "Butter and honey shall He eat, when He knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good."

There is so much honey that may be eaten, if people will only refuse injurious sweets and choose natural, God-provided happiness.

I am sitting at present on a big stone beside the clear waters of Lake Simcoe, enjoying the musical lapping of the tiny wavelets, the sweet pure air, the golden sunshine, and the pleasant shadow of a tree behind me, the song of the birds and—best of all—the glad fellowship with God and with you.

There is a good deal of honey to be found in this little summer resort, where I have spent five happy, restful days. Yesterday I saw several people enjoying it. There was the young wife who—after a year of married life—had spent, for the first time, a week apart from her husband. He came up on Saturday (a "week-end"), and they drifted off together constantly all day Sunday, as happy as if their love-making were a brand-new treasure. Then there was another young married couple, tramping along the beautiful lake-shore road to a church three miles away. They were good comrades, very evidently, and cared enough about the worship of God to walk six miles, on a hot day, in order to kneel together before the Throne. Then there were three little negro children sitting on a stile with their arms, lovingly around each other. Three little girls, in gay Sunday frocks and with shining Sunday faces. Then there was another picture to be seen in the garden of the summer hotel—a young and proud father (another "week-end"), with his